

## Romans 10:4-8

Sunday 8/23/2009

Back in that great story in Genesis, you have Eleazar, a type of the Holy Spirit of God. Eleazar is going to look for a bride for Abraham's son, Isaac. That story, and that's what that song really depicts toward the end of it, starts out talking about a camel train going out looking for a bride, and winds up talking about you and me being the Gentile bride, Eleazar being the Holy Spirit of God, Abraham being God the Father, and Isaac being a picture of God the Son. What a great preface for our message this morning, because this is exactly where we are in Romans chapter 10.

In Romans chapter 10, as you know, we've been coming to the book of Romans. We've been dealing in this chapter with God dealing with the Gentiles. We saw in chapter 9 how the nation of Israel had everything that God had for them, and then they rejected it. Now we're in chapter 10, where we see, as we've studied in our basic Bible classes and just about everything we've done around here on Thursday night or in our doctrinal studies, we now know that the Gospel has gone to the Gentiles. That's what chapter 10 really is dealing with, showing you the great internal aspects of salvation for you and for me, the bride of Isaac, the Lord Jesus Christ. Then we'll get back into chapter 11, and we'll see how that even though God has kind of put Israel on the back burner, God is not finished with the nation of Israel, and God is going to restore them at a time in the future that we know through the Tribulation period.

Last week, we looked at verses 1, 2, and 3. We've been talking about in these opening remarks here about Ezekiel, not according to knowledge that Paul talks about, making a reference to the nation of Israel. We've been taking that same concept, putting it into a spiritual application, talking about young Christians, how young Christians have a desire, they have a zeal, but they don't always know how to use the Bible in the right way, and we've talked about that.

I showed you last week, I began to walk you through the process, the exact same process that we do here. If you were here yesterday morning in our basic Bible class or have taken those classes, that is the beginning stages of this process right here. We also have a discipleship program; that also is the beginning of the stages. We have a policy in this church where I'll spend an hour a week, or probably every other week now with all the people doing it, that you can come over my house, and I'll walk you through the Bible. Wherever you're at in the Scripture, answer any question, help you any way I can; that also is part of the beginning of this process. A process that carries on into Thursday night when we have any question you want to ask about the Bible. A process that carries on into Sunday morning, and everything that we do in the Bible around here is to begin the five-point process in your life that we talked about last week.

I told you that the first thing you need in your life is sound doctrine, teaching the Bible the right way, giving you the correct understanding of the Bible. Sound doctrine always leads to a sound mind. We talked about that. A sound mind will lead to you being able to use sound words. Sound words will give you the ability to use sound speech, and when you put it all together and you become sound to the core in the concepts of the Bible, it produces a sound faith. A faith that cannot be shaken.

We're living in a day and age today where people's faith gets easily shaken. We look at our own world around us and the events that take place, and it can be a scary time if you don't know your Bible or are not grounded in your Bible. At the same time, I have never seen in the history of my life where there's more screwy, off-the-wall teachings going around about the Bible and God and everything that it entails. It's a very easy time to get confused today if you're a child of God, and that's why in this church we base it on sound doctrine, which will produce that sound mind, the sound words, the sound speech that utterly gets you to the place that I want you to be in your Christian life where you have a sound faith. Nothing shakes you. You're able to get into any scenario and circumstance that God puts you in and be able to fulfill the task that God gives you to do. We're going to see this today in a very interesting way, and we'll get into it here in just a moment.

## I. Christ: The End of the Law

Now today, we're going to look at Romans chapter 10, and I want to pick it up in verses 4 and come down through 4 through 8. Here's what it says. As I come down through this, I want to help you understand these verses. As you know, Romans is a complicated book as far as reading it because of the way it's written, and what we've done is so that you could really get this book down. Basically, we have just almost verse by verse given you what the verses mean, and we're going to do that here today, and it kind of leads to where we're going here.

Look at verse 4, and I want to go through these verses, and you need to mark these in your Bible now if you don't have them already in there, but I want to look at a couple of great concepts that will help us today put this together.

Romans 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Let me explain what that verse means. Here's what you're dealing with. We saw this in John 1:17 for the last couple of weeks, where the Bible says:

*John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

What you've got here in this particular passage is that he's beginning to show now the difference between a Gentile salvation and a salvation that was given under the Old Testament law to the nation of Israel. Let me talk to you about the Old Testament law for a moment. Most people really don't understand what the law really was in the Old Testament. When we think of the Ten Commandments, many people think that would be the law, and that's true, but the law is really much more than that. The Ten Commandments are basically the parameter in which the whole law is written on, and we know the Ten Commandments are ten things that were commanded not to do, and we look at that as the law of God, and that's exactly true.

When you start to come through the Bible and you start to begin to look at the Old Testament and God dealing with the nation of Israel, and you start to look at the New Testament with the Lord Jesus Christ, you begin to realize something about the law. The whole thing that God's doing throughout the Bible begins to come into view and into clarity for you. You know the book of Hebrews is another great book. We're studying the book of Hebrews in our Bible Institute class

right now. We're pretty much knocking it out verse by verse because it's such a crucial book. But one of the things that we've learned from that book is that the whole theme of Hebrews is a concept that tells us that something now is better than what was once here. In particular, it's talking about the Old Testament.

The book of Hebrews basically shows you and me that the New Testament is better than the Old Testament. Almost chapter by chapter in the book of Hebrews, he compares the Old Testament priesthood to the New Testament priesthood, and he tells us that the New Testament priesthood is better. He compares the sacrifices in the law with the Old Testament, and then he shows us the New Testament and basically says the New Testament is better. We come away from the book of Hebrews as a great book of comparison, showing us exactly what he's saying here when he says that Christ is the end of the law.

You see, the law was imperfect. That's what the book of Hebrews tells us. That's what we learn from the book of Hebrews. That even though God gave the nation of Israel the Old Testament law and they had to keep that law, the law was imperfect. The law could not save them on a permanent basis. The law was a temporary thing that God used till Christ came. That's why people get messed up about the Ten Commandments and the law. The Ten Commandments and the law of God in the Old Testament, it was never given for you and I to keep. You've got people walking around the world today saying, "Well, I never killed anybody," or you ask them about going to heaven, "Well, I never killed anybody," or "I never did this or I never did that." You know what? It isn't about that.

The bottom line is when you look at the law, God never intended for you and me to keep the law. When he gave the law, he didn't give it and say, "All right, now this is what you've got to keep. And if you don't keep this, I'm going to whack you." He knew we couldn't keep it when he gave it to us. So you know what he did? In the Old Testament, he gave some examples that when we did not keep the law, then we had to do something because of our imperfection. You know what we had to do in the Old Testament? We had to bring a sacrifice.

When you go back in the book of Leviticus, you'll find that there are five sacrifices that those people back there, they have to use. They have to have a burnt offering. There's a meat offering. There's a peace offering. There's a sin offering. There's a trespass offering. Some of those offerings are against sins against God. Some of them are sins against man. But in the Old Testament, when they broke that, when they broke the law, they had to do something themselves because the law itself was not perfect that could forgive them of their sin.

Now, when Jesus Christ came, he fulfilled the law. People think, "Well, you're supposed to keep the law." You can't keep the law. The law was never given for you and me to keep, even though we ought to try to keep it. I'm not saying you just blow it off and say, "Well, I'm going to go do what I want to do." That's not what I'm saying. The law in its intent was never given for you and I to keep. The law in its intent was for you and I to do the best we can to keep it, but understand that the law really shows how far I fall short of what God expected. You see, the law's perfect, and I'm not. Because the law was perfect and I wasn't, and I couldn't keep it, the law couldn't save me. That's why when they died in the Old Testament, they didn't go to heaven. They went to

Abraham's bosom. Why? Because the law and the sacrifices, Hebrews said, or the blood and bulls of goats could never pay for sin. It can only temporarily cover it. That's why when John the Baptist saw Jesus show up, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." You know why? He was the sacrificial lamb. He was the lamb that finally died that fulfilled the law.

I don't know how people can get to the point in their mind... well, I do know, because they don't know anything about the Bible. But you're going to run across people when you're talking with people who believe, and we talked about this Thursday night, who believe that you can actually lose your salvation. I'll tell you what, I understand the reason why that is, because that person, bless their heart, they don't even really understand how they got salvation to begin with. The bottom line is, you know, you can try all day long to live your life right, and you're going to screw it up. I'm going to screw it up. That's what the Old Testament shows you. The Old Testament shows you that you could go and do everything right and make one mistake, and then you had to go get a sacrifice and kill this or kill that, offer to the priest. Why? Because the law could not purge away your sin. And they did it over and over and over and over all down through Israel's history.

But when Christ came, he died on the cross. When he died on the cross, he died for every man, for every woman, and every child that ever walked on planet Earth. He did for you and me what we could not do for ourselves. He kept the law for you and I who could not keep it ourselves. That's the fallacy of thinking you could lose your salvation. To lose your salvation, you have to come to the point that you really think it's yours to begin with. When David prayed his great prayer in Psalms, he said, "Lord, restore to me the joy of thy salvation," not "my salvation."

I can do nothing to get salvation. People think the fact that, "Well, when you get saved, then, you know, you'll do something that makes you unworthy of salvation, so God will take it back from you." I got some news for you: you were unworthy when you got it. You're no more unworthy when you do something stupid than you were when you were in your best state and God saved you. You're unworthy in both cases. It's not about the fact that you have to live some kind of good, righteous life, even though you should live and want to live for God and be in God's relationship with him. The bottom line is, as far as salvation is concerned, you and I were lost. The law condemned us. We could not keep it. So you know what? God came down and kept it for me. When Christ died on the cross, he said what? "It is finished." You know what was finished? The law. He had fulfilled the law. That's what that verse is saying. That verse in verse 4 there is saying, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." That's what he's talking about. He's talking about how Galatians says that the law, the Old Testament, in Galatians chapter 3, was what? Our schoolmaster that brought us to Christ. It showed me my deficiency. It showed me where I was off base. It showed me where I fell short. And then it pointed me to one who did for me what I could not do for myself. That's what he's saying. He's making the difference, the contrast, the comparison between the Old Testament nation of Israel who had to keep the law, and every time they broke it, they had to go get a sacrifice, a lamb or a turtledove or a bullock or this or that and bring it to the priest every time, where you and I just looked in the one death of Christ on Calvary's cross that paid for my sin,

past, present, and future. And when I put my faith and trust in him, he's the end of the law for me. Oh, that's great news for a Gentile. That's great news.

## II. Salvation: God's Work, Not Man's

Then he says this, verse 5:

Romans 10:5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

There's your little phrase right there. Here he's basically saying that in the Old Testament scenario, they had to bring their sacrifices found in Leviticus chapter 3, 4, and 5. They had to bring the sin offering, the trespass offering. Why? The nation of Israel once a year as a nation had to come before God and a high priest and offer on the Day of Atonement a sacrifice for the whole nation. You don't see us having one day every year where we all come together and ask for God's purging and cleansing and forgive us for our sins as a church. It was all taken care of the day you got God's righteousness by putting your faith and trust in him who fulfilled the law for you. This is what he's saying. And he says those that do those things live by those things. In other words, if you do under the law, then you have to live by those things and bring the sacrifices. That's what he's saying. It's an incredible concept that he's laying out.

But then he says in verse 6:

Romans 10:6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:)

Romans 10:7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

Now, what's he saying here? First of all, I want to draw your attention to the word "ascend." You ought to mark that word every time you find it in the Bible, because that word is always used in context of one thing. The word "ascend" means to go up by your own power. You're going to always find the word "ascend" in reference to Christ raising himself from the dead or going up into heaven. It'll always be the word "ascend" because the word "ascend" is a word that carries with it the fact that it's done by the person's own power. That's why it's so important here, because what he's showing you and me in this verse is that you and I have nothing to do with salvation. Salvation is God's free gift to man by his choosing, not by you and I doing anything.

He's saying here, he's making his point. He's saying, "Who shall ascend into heaven?" like me and you? "That is to bring Christ down from above." In other words, he's saying you and I have no power to go up to heaven and say, "God, would you send your son down?" or make God send his son down. You and I have no power that when he was dead to go into that tomb and raise him from the dead. Salvation has nothing to do with you and me and our involvement at all. There's nothing we can do. He's making a point that is simply based on God choosing to do it through his son and then carrying it out. You or me are out of the picture. We can't do anything at all about it. He did it for us. We have nothing to do with it.

You find this great principle in John 1:12-13. It simply says there:

*John 1:12* But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

*John 1:13* Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Here's what Paul is basically saying here. He says you're born. You have to get born. We know it as born again. We know it as a spiritual birth. He says these people are born, but here's what they're not born of. Now, these are the three things that we're talking about.

1. **Blood:** In other words, if your mom and dad are saved, speaking to you little kids here now, or you teenagers, if your mom and dad is saved, you know what? Just because your mom and dad's blood's in your veins doesn't mean that salvation goes into you like a transfusion. Just because now, you know, when I have children or you have children and you have children by a physical birth, they are your children. But when you get saved in a spiritual birth, you can't transfer that to your children. They have to make their own decision. So the Bible says you have to be born, but not of blood. You can't be any transferring from one family to another like the family jewels.
2. **The will of the flesh:** No works can get you saved. You can't will yourself saved by doing something. Baptism won't save you. That's something you do. Joining a church can't save you. That's something you do. Going out and doing great works. Now, these are all things you should do, but you don't do them to get saved, you see, because these things, the will of the flesh, can't do it.
3. **The will of man:** And this is where we're at here in verses 6 and 7. You can't will God to come down and do anything. He's making the point there that in the Old Testament it was by man's will. God gave the law. Man had to live by the law and do the law when he broke it. But Jesus Christ for you and me is the end of the law. We don't have to do those things anymore. And there's no will involved in you and me as far as salvation. God did it because he chose to do it that way, and that's the way it is, and you and I can't do nothing except accept it and get saved by being born of God. That's what he says. "Which were born not of blood nor the will of flesh nor the will of man but of God."

### III. The Word of God is Nigh

Now look at verse 8:

*Romans 10:8* But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.

That's a great verse, and we're going to look at this, and there's something I want to give you a great concept about God. This is unheard of today. We got the idea, and I talk with people all the time, and I've talked with people probably hundreds of thousands of people in 35 plus years. I know many of you talk to people. The greatest concept that I know about God, my own personal

life, is based on what he's saying here and based on the whole Bible, is simply this: He says that that Bible is nigh, even in thy mouth and in thy heart.

I think one of the greatest things that God ever did was, and he continues to do, is he always gets the Bible to man. We have people say, "Well, I'm on a search for God." You don't have to search for God, folks. I got some great news for you. A guy said the other day, "Well, I'm in a... one time he said, 'Well, I'm in a... I'm on a search for God.'" You don't have to search for God. The Bible says the Son of Man comes to seek and to save that which was lost. He seeks you. Didn't you hear little song? "Oh, the camel train comes in." Here you got Isaac, a type of Christ. You got Eleazar, a type of the Holy Spirit. Abraham, a type of God the Father. And he wants a bride for his son. So what did he do? Did he put an ad in the paper and she saw it, Rebecca saw it, "Oh, there's a bride. I'm going to go." No. He sent Eleazar out to find the bride. Eleazar's a picture of the Holy Spirit of God. You don't have to search for God. I guarantee you, five minutes after you hit the age of accountability, he's knocking on your door.

You just thought, "Well, I'm on a search for the scriptures." What? They're right here. He brings them to you. Man's out there. I've never understood this. A guy said to me one time, "You going down to the Union station to see the Dead Sea Scrolls?" And he said, "Boy, they just revolutionized Christianity." Really? Now we all went. Remember, we all went down there. Well, let's face it, we just went. We were having an excuse to go to Arthur Bryant's when we were done. And I walked through it, and it was nice, and it was great. But, you know, did you notice the smell in there? Dry, dusty, moldy pieces of paper. Looks like your newspapers you wrapped your garbage in. And we walked through there, and everybody thinks that that's some great revelation to God in the Bible. Let me tell you something. When God finished the Bible in 90 A.D., that's all the revelation of God you've got. That's all you need. And from that point on, the next 2000 years, you know what he's doing? He's making sure that Bible is nigh. And if you open your mouth, be careful, that thing will fall into your mouth. It's right here.

You got these guys that go around in all these institutions of higher learning, studying dead languages, trying to find God. It always bothered me that a living God would hide himself in Dead Sea Scrolls. You know what the Dead Sea is a picture of in the Bible? It's a picture of hell. It's always bothered me that a living, vibrant God would be found in dead languages. But that's just me.

I want to tell you something. The greatest story you'll ever find in your Bible about God bringing the Bible to you and illustrating that verse is found in the Old Testament in Exodus chapter 16. You know what the story here is? I don't have time to go into it this morning because it's not our text, but I'll just give you a brief outline of it. The nation of Israel comes out of Egypt, and they come out by the blood being put on the door. Look, a lot like your salvation. And then once they leave Egypt, the type of the world, they move into the wilderness. It's called the wilderness of sin. You may be saved here this morning, and you may be on your way to heaven. But if you're living in the same country I'm living in, on the same planet that I'm in, you're in the wilderness of sin.

When they're out there, they're now God's people, but there's nothing to eat. There's no water to drink. The environment is hostile to them. They're a perfect picture of where you and I are at the day after we got saved. We're now in the wilderness of sin, and there is nothing that's going to satisfy me. There's nothing more to eat. There's nothing this world has to offer to drink. And I am out here in an adverse environment that is going to swallow me up, and I'm going to die if God doesn't come through and give me something supernaturally. And you know what God did? He came through. While they're out there with nothing to eat, you know what God did? One night he rained down the manna from heaven. Looked like snow falling on the ground. And that bread came down all around while they slept. And that bread is a picture of the Word of God in your life and my life. And that manna comes down. It's called angels' food in the book of Psalms. It's where we get the idea of angel food cake. And it fell down all around them, it says. And in the morning when they got up and they threw back the flap of the tent, there was the manna, God's supernatural sustaining food in the wilderness of sin. God brought it right to where they were. And all you do is pull that tent and go, "Whoa, where did that all come from?" Where did it come from? God knew you were in the wilderness of sin. God knew that there was nothing that was going to sustain you anymore in this wilderness. So God supernaturally brought you the food from heaven, the bread from heaven, the Word of God from heaven, and brought it right to where you were. They're not out there saying, "Boy, we need to get some spiritual food. Let's go down to the University of Alexandria, Egypt. I hear they got some old dead manuscripts down there." God brought it right to them. And when they needed water, where did he get the water from? The rock. Incredible pictures.

You see, God always brings the Word to you and to me. Back there in Exodus, if you were to get up in the middle of the night when that thing was coming down, you could have just stood out there with your hands in your pocket like this, and only had to stop every four or five minutes to chew and swallow. God always brings the Word of God nigh. He'll always give his creation that he wants to be saved. He'll bring the Word to them. You don't have to look for it. It'll find you.

I've told you before, the Bible is the most greatest, strangest, weirdest book that you ever find in your life. It's a living book. It's alive. The Bible is the only book in the world that when you begin to read it, it begins to read you. And it discerns the thoughts and intents of your heart. Try that with Time-Life. Try that with some of the novels that you read. I want to tell you something. I said this Thursday night, and it's so true, and I understand it to such a certainty that it drives me in everything I do with you. The most dangerous thing in this world, and boy, I know it, God knows it, and the devil knows it. The most dangerous thing on this planet, the most powerful thing on this planet, is a common man or a woman with a common Bible. And the devil wants to do everything on this planet to take that Bible out of your hands. We ain't going to let him do it.

Supernatural gift. Down all around the camp. Right at the tent door. When they woke up in the morning, they're just like you every day of your life. The Word of God is all around you. You know what they had? You know what God bringing the Word of God to them supernaturally made them? It made them choose. It gave them a choice. It's the same thing with you and I. He says the Word of God is nigh. It's here. It's near. Even in your mouth and in your heart. You know what God, by him supernaturally bringing the Bible right to you and me, it puts us in the same

position it put them. Because when they kick back that tent flap, and it's all across the ground, was the supernatural gift of God. They had to do one or two things. They had to pick it up and eat it, or they had to trample it under their feet and go about their day.

The very fact that he brought that supernatural gift to you and me, and he brought that Bible for you and me as Gentiles, because he wants us to be saved. And he put that thing near, nigh, almost like it will fall into our mouth. Why? You sit around here. I know I prod you to work and I make you do things. But you know what? Every time you and I just... please, I'm not boasting or bragging or anything, don't take it that way. But you know what? Every time you come here, I don't care what it is, I'm popping things in your mouth. You don't have to dig them out. Somebody asks a question, I'll give you the answer. Now I hold you accountable, so I put down the line someplace. But you know what? Where is the great? How would you like it if you came here and you asked a question, and Zach and I looked at you in front of the whole crowd and I said, "Would you like to know that answer, Zach? Well, let me tell you something. When you've been around as long as I have and you've studied the deep things, you'll know it too, my son. You'll know it too. You'll know it too." He asked the question. "Oh yes, yes. Well, you know what? Someday when you really get the Greek nuggets down and you get the aorist tense of the verb of the word, you too will know truth. Not as good as me, but you'll get there kind of under me." Would you come back? The whole key is you come to get something. If you came and just heard a bunch of mish-mash about how bad you were and how great I am, it wouldn't be worth coming back. In a couple of weeks, I'll be talking to myself. But the bottom line is you get it in your mouth. You get it right there. Everything is laid out for you. You have a feast, a bonanza. Every time you want to come, that's my job. That's what it's for. That's what the Bible says the church is for. You're going to see it in a minute. That's the job of a pastor. He's to take the Word of God and not only put it in your mouth, but make sure it gets in your heart.

God gave it to us. No hard trick to it. I told you last week, or it was yesterday morning, we were studying that thing over there, and I told you how in history you got the King James Bible started in 1604, finished in 1611, seven years. You got the building of the temple in seven years. I don't have time this morning to take you back and break down the building of that temple and show you how that building of that temple is a picture of God building you for His work for Christ and for the ministry. But I can guarantee you this: there is no reason that Bible is here, and there's no reason why any young man or young lady, mom or dad, whoever you are, in seven years' time can't know that Bible better than anybody on this planet. Because the model in there is seven years. That's how long it took to build the temple. That temple is a magnificent structure overlaid with gold, seven years. And you ought to be that same magnificent structure overlaid with gold. But inside was the precious things, the holy things of God. Oh, it's a great picture. It's a great picture.

#### IV. The Believer's Ordination to Preach

Now, the second thing I want you to see here and begin to understand is also found in the last part of verse 8. And that is simply this. He says this: "That is the word of faith, which we preach." Now, I want to talk to you this morning about something where most of you are at right

now. And I want to define some things for you. And I want you going out of here with a clear understanding.

There's basically two kinds of people here today, maybe three kinds. There's a good chance, and I don't know this to be true, but it's hard today to get a crowd this size. But there may be somebody here today in this room under the sound of my voice that if you died right now, you don't know for sure you'd go to heaven. So that's the one kind of person we have. And I hope through this that God uses this to help you understand the process. I would not want you just to get saved because somebody told you to. I would like you to get saved, if you ever do, because you understand the need and the importance of how salvation works. So we got those kinds of people.

Then we have another kind of people in here that are the people who really want to learn the Bible. And you're the people who have come in the last couple of years, or so, and you really have a desire. The thing that motivates me more than anything else is you, because your desire to learn and to take those scriptures and to put them into your heart and do something with it is the greatest thing that I have ever seen in that experience in my life. And you folks are just absolutely, I mean, you don't miss a trick. It is so obvious to me from our institute, from our basic Bible classes, from the one-on-one stuff that we do, from our own institute classes, that this church and the people in this church want to know God and want to know the Bible. I would rather be here than in any place on the face of this planet in my life, because this is where God's at and this is where the whole thing is unfolding, and I'm just glad to be a part of it.

The bottom line is simply this. You're at a point in your life now where you need to take and move into along with what you're learning. I've said to you many, many times, we're like sponges. You take a sponge, and a sponge is something that you can put it on the floor and mop up water with it, and you can pick up a lot of stuff. But there comes a point that after a while you're just pushing the water around. Then what you got to do is you got to take that sponge and go to a bucket or a sink, and then you got to wring it out before you can put more on it. That's the way we are. And around here you can mop up a lot pretty quick. But my job is not to only give you the stuff that you get like a sponge, but my job also is to help wring you out. And that comes from you using what you know. That's why we can't ever, you're going to see it here in a moment, but you can't ever stop growing. You can't ever stop taking what God gives you and doing something with it in this church. That's the concept of the ministry.

Now I want to talk to you where it says, "the word of faith which we preach." I want to give you the definition of what it means to be a preacher. I know we think, and you're taught this all your life, and it's because people are not exact with the Bible. We think that women should not be preachers. That's not true. Every woman in this building, if you're saved, ought to be a preacher. The Bible says a woman cannot pastor. If you don't understand the difference between being a preacher and being a pastor, we're going to start another Bible basic class down the line. I suggest you probably get in it. The bottom line is this: you're not the pastor as a woman. That's very clear because of the authority concept and how it runs back to Genesis. That doesn't make you any less of a person. In fact, it puts you, you're still on equal par with a man when you understand how the Bible lays it out. You don't have to buy all that women's lib stuff and all the

liberal stuff. The bottom line is this: you're not to be a pastor, but every woman in this room ought to be a preacher.

Now I'm going to say something to you guys. Some of you may never pastor. I think some of you have a real ability to pastor. And I think that obviously in my mind, I know I ain't going to be here forever, and I've already in my mind, know what I'm trying to do. But I always tell you the first day on a job, a pastor needs to do the first thing he needs to start looking for somebody to be his replacement. I'm not going to be here forever. And I hope we all go together. It'd be nice to go on a Thursday night or a nice to go on a Sunday morning. Rapture came. We just all go. Wouldn't that be a wonderful time? And if you're still here and you've been around the church for a while and there's still some unsaved people here, go ahead and finish out the sermon for me. Would you do that? I'll leave my Bible there for you. I'm just kidding. I say things like that. I really don't need them.

The bottom line is this. You need to learn how to use the Bible. And I want to talk to you. If you're a saved man here this morning, God may never call you to pastor, but every saved man ought to be a preacher. If you're a young teenager here and you're above the age of accountability, male or female, you ought to be a preacher. The problem is we know we have so many bad definitions that we think a pastor is a preacher. Now I've got to tell you, all pastors have to preach, but not all preachers are pastors. I'm going to show you the definition. I'm going to show you one of the greatest concepts that you're ever going to see in the Bible on the aspect of biblical soul winning, leading people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

You know here, in the Bible, there's three types of ordinations. When I got into the ministry, I got ordained. The ordination process in the New Testament is that when a man gets separated apart, the ordination separates that man as a pastor. My ordination goes back to Canton, Ohio, before I left back there in 1975-76. I was ordained in 1975. At that point, the church recognized what I was doing. They set me apart. They went through the New Testament process and they said, "We've set him apart, recognizing that he now can pastor, and this church gives our license to him to be a pastor."

Then there's a second kind of ordination in the Bible, and that's for deacons. Deacons are ordained because of their special role within the church to help them. Now those are the two offices that you find in a church. There's only two. One's the office of a pastor, sometimes called a bishop. The other one's for a deacon. They're called deeks. But anyway, there's a third ordination in the Bible. If you're here this morning and you're a saved man or a woman, here's your ordination:

*John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

Now there's your ordination. If you're a saved person this morning, you've been ordained, and your ordination is to dealing with the winning people to Christ. Your ordination specifically says that you're to go to bring forth fruit and then that that fruit should remain. When you get a church

full of people like this who care about people in the Bible and God and begin to let that process work in their life, that's all you need. Everybody else better just get out of the way.

So the bottom line is this. Once the Holy Spirit of God gets ahold of you and he begins to change the aspect of your life and your thinking process, and you become sound in your thinking and your words and your speech and your faith and your doctrine, look out, brother, because that's when God's going to take you and use you, and that's when your ordination kicks in.

Now I don't say this to make you feel bad this morning because I know many of you come from various situations, but allow me to say this with all the grace that I intend this to say, because I want to say this also understanding that many of you have struggled in your Christian life till you got here, and many of you now, even though you haven't done this yet, you are well on your road to do that. But let me just say something to you. If you've been saved 5, 10, 15, 20 years, oh, this don't even go 5. Let's just say 10, 15, 20 years. And in that period of time you've never won anybody to Christ. There's something seriously wrong with something with you. Now I want to make that statement and I want to explain it here in a moment, but you've been ordained, folks. You have been ordained as a New Testament believer to bring forth fruit and then keep that fruit with you.

## V. The Three Aspects of Soul Winning

Let's look at this process. I think probably one of the most messed up, screwed up concepts anywhere in the world today is the idea of soul winning. I believe it. It's absolutely ludicrous when I see it. You go out here and everybody wants to win people to Christ. That's an admirable thing. But you know, understanding that is as important as doing it. You can go to this church over here and they'll tell you about being a, going to have a soul winning class, you know. And so they'll sit down and they'll run you through all the different things. And I'm not saying that's bad because you need to learn the process by which it goes. But they get the idea that when you learn a few verses or 4 or 5 things that then that's what makes you a soul winner. That's not what makes you a soul winner. I've heard people say that soul winning is a gift. One of the spiritual gifts. That's not true either. I've heard people say that you know soul winning we have a soul winning program. Oh really? I'm not, I don't like the word program very much when it comes to churches. I guarantee you soul winning is not a program.

If any church ought to grasp what I'm about to say, it ought to be you guys. You know what makes a soul winner? What makes a soul winner is simply this: you got saved. Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit came inside of you. And you were him or joined together now. The bottom line is this. Soul winning is not a program. It's not something that you sign up for. Soul winning is the natural act of reproduction between your spirit and the Holy Spirit that produces in time, of the joint union, fruit.

If any church that I understand that ought to be this one. You get married, and if you're not with child in six months after you're married, there's something wrong with you. You people, like I say all the time, I don't know where I gave it to you, I don't know how you got this one verse, but boy, you guys got "be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth" down. I'm happy. But the bottom

line is, you know what happens when a husband and wife get married? When they get married and they have an intimacy, and maybe not the first time, maybe not the second time, maybe not the third time, but at some point through that intimacy, if something isn't done to stop the natural process, the natural process of intimacy between a man and a woman is that they're going to bear fruit in a physical sense. And in the same token, in a spiritual sense, when you become God's bride and he becomes your husband, and you two are joined together in a spiritual union, through the natural spiritual relationship of the intimacy of that relationship with him, you will bear fruit. Maybe not the first time, maybe not the second time, but in time it will. Soul winning is not a program. Soul winning is not something that you learn to do. Soul winning is something that comes into your life through the intimacy of building that relationship of the Holy Spirit of God that just naturally produces fruit.

There's a lot of natural things in Christianity. You're a natural food eater. You're a natural type of person. Bible just for you because there's a lot of things that are natural. We talk about God's will and God's plan for your life. And many of you have come to me and said, "I really don't want to screw up God's plan." And I laugh at that because I think that's cute and it's so openly honest for you. But the bottom line is this. If you work at fulfilling God's will in your life and you become more like Christ every day of your life, and that's your goal, you'll never miss doing what God wants you to do. You know why? Because it's natural. You can't be like God and not do what God wants you to do. It's impossible. And by the same token, you can't be intimate with the Holy Spirit of God and not bear fruit. It's impossible.

Now I say that knowing that many of you are not quite there yet. I say that, and if you're sitting here, and I know how this goes, the ones that ought not to beat themselves up over that statement will already be beating yourself up. And the ones that ought to, it doesn't bother. But the bottom line is this. Many of you in this church are coming to that point. You have not won somebody to Christ yet. Don't despair. You're on your way of building that relationship. It just takes some time.

Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

Soul winning is a natural progression. Now I want to give you a great verse on soul winning that puts this whole thing together in Romans. And then we're going to look at an example in the Bible. But take your Bibles and turn over to 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 6. We have to define from a Bible context what soul winning is. Because we don't want to go to somebody's seminar. We don't want to buy somebody's cassette tapes or their CDs. We don't want to go to a soul winning seminar. We want to go to the Bible. I want you to understand from the Bible itself what this thing called soul winning is that you can better put it into your life. And then I'm going to show you a great example of it in the time we have left.

Now this verse is found in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 6. And I'm going to pick it up in verse 5. And read it all the way down to verse 9. But 6 is what we want. Now let me give you a little background. The church at Corinth is in a sad state here and they're having all kinds of problems. In this particular chapter here in chapter 3 they're arguing about who won who to Christ. And they're not getting it. And they're basically saying well you know Joe Blow won you to Christ

and the Apostle Paul won me to Christ. Because Apostle Paul is a great stature of a Christian and this guy over here is just Joe Blow. I'm a better Christian than you are because of who won me to Christ and that's stupid. But that's where they're at. And Paul straightens them out in no short order.

Now look what he says.

1 Corinthians 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

Now watch this. Three parts to soul winning. Three parts to, three aspects to winning people to Christ, and you need to learn these three aspects.

1 Corinthians 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

1 Corinthians 3:7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

1 Corinthians 3:8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

1 Corinthians 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

All right, now look at verse 6 again. Here's the three aspects to soul winning. He said, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." If you want a biblical definition of soul winning, there's three parts to soul winning. And I'm going to show you an example of that here in just a moment.

The first part of soul winning is sowing. He said, "I planted," sowing. You know there's times that God wants you to put the word of God out to somebody and not actually win that person to Christ. There's times that God will say to you or want to lead you and to give somebody a verse, talk to them about salvation. And you know what? That God has no intention for that person to get saved at that point. That person needs a word from you. He needs somebody to sow the word, but he's not ready to reap yet. God's still working on it. And you know what happens so many times? God's people get so out of touch with the Holy Spirit of God that they not only give them the word, but they try to, because they think that reaping is the most important thing. Let me tell you something. Winning people to Christ is not the most important thing. I told you this last week. We get the idea that winning people to Christ is the number one thing on God's heart. So let's all be soul winners. Well, we all should be soul winners, and I want to see people saved too. But you know what? Winning people to Christ is not the number one thing on God's heart. Number one thing on God's heart is truth. You have to have the truth first. And when you have the truth, you understand what soul winning is. And you understand there's times where you are just to sow the word of God.

The next part, he waters. He said, "Apollos watered." That means you pray for that person. Watering, like tears over them. And you pray for that person after you gave them the seed, gave them and sowed the seed. Then he says that God gave the increase. You're going to find that

you're going to reap people and win them to Christ that somebody else sowed and is praying for. But you get the privilege of winning them or leading them to Christ. You're going to find that there's people in your life that you give the word of God to, that you don't win to Christ. You pray for them, and down the line, six months, eight months, a year down the line, somebody else wins them to Christ.

You see, the intimacy of the whole thing, and here's the problem. How do you know when to sow and then shut up? How do you know when to witness to somebody and then say, "That's enough"? Well, if you think that winning people to Christ is the number one thing in God's mind, you're going to push them and push them and push them and push them. You got to know when to say you've said enough. You got to know when to shut up and shut out. You got to know when to go over and speak to somebody. Now, how do you do that? Do you get a little machine there, a little calculator, like a little Geiger counter that, "Oh, this person here needs to sow, but do not reap. Reap, reap, reap, reap. Water, water, water, water." No, this is where the intimacy of the Holy Spirit of God comes in. I'm going to show you an example in a moment. You ought to be so in touch with the Holy Spirit of God that the Holy Spirit of God can tell you when to open your mouth and when to shut your mouth, when you've said enough and when you don't want to go any farther because you're violating. Hey, I've been preaching places and I've been talking to people in times in my life, and I've been preaching places where I was headed to go one way and say one thing, and God came down just as clearly as the light's coming on and the light's coming off and shut down that thing and said, "You've said enough, let's go." Now, at that point, if you continue on, you're on your own. It's called an intimacy with the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit of God communicating to you and you communicating back to Him through that intimacy of knowing when you are to sow, when you are to water, and when you are to reap.

I don't know if you know this or not. It's not your job to win somebody to Christ. You notice what He said there? He said, "I sowed, Apollos watered. But God gave the increase." It's not my job to win you to Christ. My job is to make sure I gave you the truth. That's my job. Boy, could you imagine the burden we'd all feel if it was our responsibility to win people to Christ? It was our responsibility instead of God's responsibility? One of the things I've learned over the years is that God has His job and I have mine. And I'll tell you what, the best thing you can ever learn to do is learn what that is and stay out of God's business and just do your own. It's not my job to win anybody to Christ. It's my job to let my body be a vessel. It's my job to be intimate with the Holy Spirit of God. It's my job to have a free flowing spirit and the Spirit of God through me that I am in touch and tune with the Holy Spirit of God that in any given situation the Spirit of God can say, "Do this, do this, do this," and it's God's job to win Him to Christ. But when we take on that job, you know what then we've got to do? Every time it happens, we've got to manipulate the circumstances to make it happen.

I know pastors, I know pastors that every time they have a service, if they don't have somebody saved, they feel like they defeated themselves. You say, "How'd your service go this morning?" "Oh, we didn't have anybody." "You had a great crowd, but we didn't have anybody saved." Like, that's the determining factor whether your sermon is good or not? No, I don't put myself on those kind of guilt trips because I know a little thing about the Bible. And I know it isn't my job to get

you saved. Now, every time I preach, you notice that sometimes I'll give an invitation and sometimes I won't. You know what that's based on? That's based on God telling me when to and when not to. It's simply that way. And if I preach up here and nobody gets saved and we go home, I have the best time of my life. You know why? Because I know I did the only thing God required me to do today. I got one job today, and it isn't win you to Christ. You may get saved, you may not get saved. That's between you and God. I can't enter into that. But I can do my job and go out of here knowing that maybe nobody got saved, but I know this: I preached the truth the way God gave it to me to preach. That's my job. I know this. The Bible says in the book of Isaiah that God's word never returns void. It always accomplishes the purpose, where to God's sent it. And I rest in that. I rest in that.

## VI. The Definitive Example: Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

Now salvation to the Gentiles. Let me give you the definitive passage that lays all this out. Because we've got some people here that need to begin to look at building this relationship of the Holy Spirit of God and letting me help you get to the point where you see how to put these things in your life. You're building a sound doctrine, you're building a sound mind, you're building sound speech, sound words, and you're well on your way to building a sound faith. Now let me show you how this works. I'm going to give you the definitive passage. We want to turn to Acts chapter 8.

I want to show you the bottom line. I want to show you the first time in your Bible where somebody gets saved, just like you and me. This is called the law of first mention in our Bible study. You say, "Well, there's a lot of people saved before Acts 8." Not like you and I got saved. No, no, no. When you're in Acts 8, you're in that transition period where he just finished with an ancient visitor on Acts chapter 7. And those of you at Bible Institute have been around for a while, you know now we're transitioning into the New Testament church. This is exactly what Paul is writing about in Romans chapter 10. And right here you've got a place, I've never seen any place like this. You've got a place where this scene unfolds, and I don't know any other place in the Bible where a Gentile man gets saved, that all the ingredients, everything you need is right here, and it's like a TV camera panning down in, right into the middle of it, showing you every aspect. It's incredible.

Let's begin reading here in Acts chapter 8 so we can move on through this. Verse 25 is what we want to pick it up. The story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch.

Acts 8:25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

Acts 8:26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

Acts 8:27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

Acts 8:28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot reading Esaias the prophet.

Acts 8:29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

Acts 8:30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

Acts 8:31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

Acts 8:32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

Acts 8:33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

Acts 8:34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

Acts 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

Acts 8:36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

Acts 8:37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Acts 8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

Acts 8:39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

Acts 8:40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

Now Father, I've waited to this point before I came to you, because Lord, really this is where the message starts. And though it won't be a long message from this point, it'll be everything that we need to know today. And Lord, there are men and women, under the sound of my voice today, that are ready to hear and understand what needs to be said. We have the greatest host of young couples, moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas, and young singles, and teenagers that I've ever seen in my life. All of them, or at least most of them, if not all of them, share one common desire and goal, and that is to be everything that God wants them to be. Lord, help me today to lay this out. I've laid the stage, I've laid out the component pieces, now help me put this all together, through the Holy Spirit of God, that they might be able to see and understand this great passage,

this great definitive passage, that they may go out of here and understand what soul winning is in their life, because many of them are right there, right now. And Lord, help us, in all that we do, and we'll give you the honor and the glory and the praise, in Jesus' name, for a sake we ask it. Amen.

This is one of the, absolutely, without a doubt, one of the greatest passages, and certainly the definitive passage on God's concept of New Testament soul winning, and it is absolutely loaded.

### *God's Hand in Everything*

Now the first thing, as I read this, that jumps out at me, is the fact, and this is something that I think is apparent, but many times we miss it. The first thing I read in this passage that overrides the whole thing, is God's hand in everything that's happening here. You know what? Can you look at your life and actually say that God has His hand in everything in your life? You know, I look at this church and I can honestly say about this church, this church has the hand of God on it. There's nothing that I personally do that makes all this happen. This happens because we made a vow when we started this church, that we were going to stay as close to the New Testament principles and the Bible that we could. It happens because we're not a political church. There's no politics here. There's no upper echelon of hierarchy of religious people. We're all beggars just telling other beggars where to get bread. We're all in the same lifeboat with an oar. Everybody rows. That's where we're at. And we all come to the place that we understand that the Bible is everything to us. And I really believe the attitude of heart of, if not all of you, certainly the majority of you, is the fact that you want to be everything God wants you to be. And the first thing I see that hits me as I come down through here is the fact that God's hand, His fingerprints, is all over this story. And I just want to say this to you. You go to work tomorrow, God's fingerprints should be all over your day. You go into the office and you have people around you or in your neighborhood or whatever you do for a job and whatever. God's hand ought to be all over what you do. His fingerprints ought to be found wherever you go.

### *The Prepared Servant and The Prepared Sinner*

Then there's a second great thing I find here, which kind of builds the whole concept. You notice as you read down through this story, you have two characters here. You have Philip and then you have the Ethiopian eunuch. And that's really what this story is about. But it brings up in context of what we're talking about two things. You know who Philip is? Philip is the prepared servant. He's a man that God has prepared for this moment. You know who the Ethiopian eunuch is? He's the prepared sinner. You know how God works in life? He prepares his servants and he prepares the sinners. And then through his time and through his working and through his timeframe, he brings the prepared servant and a prepared sinner together. He brings the prepared servant based on the intimacy of their relationship. He prepares the prepared sinner based on that man's crying out for something different than what he has in life. And here's a classic example of you going to work tomorrow. Oh, I know what happened in the desert. I know what happened 2000 years ago. I know that we don't ride chariots. I know that chances are you running into an Ethiopian eunuch tomorrow is not very high. I know all of that. But let me lay it out for you. Everything in here

means something as everywhere in the Bible. And when you come down through here, I see a prepared servant and a prepared sinner.

Last week we talked in Ephesians chapter 4 about the job of the church for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. You know what the problem is today? You know what the problem is in churches today in Christianity? I'll tell you what the problem clearly is. God has more prepared sinners than he's got prepared servants. That's the problem. And we need to work to be everything we need to be to be a prepared servant. That God can put us in the right position at the right time. And what follows here is one of the greatest definitive passages on the Bible and the aspect of being God's man and God's woman under the ordination of your salvation and being fruitful.

Now look at Acts 8:25, 26 and 27 here and let's quickly begin to walk through some things. "And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans." I don't know if you know it or not. We're in the middle of a transition in the book of Acts. If you would go back to Matthew chapter 10 and some of those places, you would find that when the apostles originally went out, God told Jesus Christ told them specifically not to go to the Samaritans. And now here we are, Acts chapter 8. Christ has died on the cross. Israel's made its final rejection. And in Acts chapter 7, and now in this next chapter, we see God turning his attention to call it a Gentile bride. A Gentile church. It's like a little song before here. Eleazar is going out bringing in a bride for Isaac, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we see here a great picture of this. Everything is here that we need. Everything to understand. The prepared sinner, the prepared servant, everything that we need.

And as we come down through here, the first thing I want you to notice is in Acts 8:26, "And the angel of the Lord spake to Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, under the way that goeth down to Jerusalem and under Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority, under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem to worship."

Oh, we got to see this. Our first character was Philip. Remember him? He's the prepared servant. Our second guy is the Ethiopian eunuch. He's the prepared sinner. Let's look at him. Where did he find him? Where did the Holy Spirit of God go tell Philip to go find this guy? South Jerusalem in the Gaza. We have a saying in the world, don't we? "Well, everything was going really great. I don't know what happened. Everything just went south." South in our terminology and in the Bible is always the wrong direction. You know where you find people that are ready to be prepared servants? In the south of their life, when everything goes the wrong way. Whenever they go south in their life and they have nothing else that they can look forward to, and their life is now crumbling around them, their marriage is gone, or on its way being gone, maybe problem with their children, their own personal life, whatever the point, whatever the case. When things go south in their life, that's the place where you find prepared sinners. You got to look at that at work. You know what? There's people going to come to you tomorrow, or maybe next week, and they're going to, just in the conversation of things, they're going to begin to tell you about and open up to you about the problem they have in their life. Maybe with their children, maybe with their husband or the wife, and they're going to lay out to you, and you're going to be, if you're

paying attention, if the Holy Spirit of God is saying, "Hey, look what you got, look what I put you into." You see, the problem is not prepared sinners. The problem is prepared servants.

Then the next thing I see about our guy here, our Ethiopian eunuch, look what it says. He's an Ethiopian eunuch with great authority, and he's in... you know what this guy was? He was in charge of all the Candaces, who was the queen of Ethiopia. He's in charge of all her treasures. He's got a really high up position as the Ethiopian eunuch. He's in charge of all the queen's treasure, but you know what? He's still a slave, isn't he? You can have all this world has to offer and still not be free. Why, he had great authority, but he wasn't free. He had charge of all of her treasure, but he couldn't spend a dime of it because it wasn't his. I'm going to tell you something. Real freedom, real freedom is the freedom you come in your relationship of trusting Jesus Christ as your own personal savior. Real freedom is you can have a million dollars in this world. You can have everything that you want, and you're still empty inside, and there's nothing that fulfills. So it just leads you to one thing to another thing to try to make it feel better, and at the end of your life you blow your brains up, you take an overdose of drugs, or you commit suicide, or you just die a wasted life. And after all you spent, after all you had, after all you did, you're still not free. Freedom comes with Jesus Christ in your life. He's a perfect candidate. He's an Ethiopian eunuch, great authority under Candace, but he's still a slave. And he finds him in the south end of the desert where you're going to find him.

### *Philip's Obedience and Discernment*

Now look at Acts 8:28 and 30. Let's look at our second character, Philip, our prepared servant. "Was returning and sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet," this is the Ethiopian eunuch now, "then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran." Now there's a zeal according to knowledge. He ran.

Now I got to tell you this, and maybe you missed this. We didn't read the first part of Acts chapter 8 that we got here, but in the first part of Acts chapter 8, the gospel has now went to Samaria. Philip is the key evangelist down in Samaria. He's having hundreds of thousands of people saved. And yet God pulls out the key evangelist and takes him down to the south end of the desert for one guy. You know why? Because the one guy in the desert is just as important to God as the ten hundred thousand that were in Samaria. Boy, you got to get that.

I know a pastor across the river here away that used to be a big time evangelist. He didn't ever like me and I never liked him. And his whole ministry was based on show, smoke and mirrors and all the things that he did. If you put a Bible in this guy's hand, he couldn't work his way through the Bible. He'd be like a blind bat trying to back in backwards. I mean, he has no concept, but he's got a great charisma. And he was a, for the messages that he had, he preached the same messages because he was evangelist. He could go around the country and nobody ever heard the last message he preached. He had about four or five sugar sticks that he could really lay out. Well, you put the Bible in Ezekiel and Isaiah, a Song of Solomon, a book of Psalms in front of him, he'd be lost. He had a rule because he was so valuable to God. His rule was that he would not come to any city or preach to any church that you couldn't guarantee him a crowd of five thousand people. Because in his mind, his ministry was just so valuable it couldn't be wasted

on less than five thousand people. And I asked him one time how he stacked that up against Acts chapter 8. How do you justify the fact that you won't go to a sound where there's only what, 2,000 or 3,000? Hey man, I went into places to preach where I got there and the pastor said, "Well, I'm really sorry we don't have more of a bigger crowd tonight. We only got, you know, 12 people here tonight." You know what? I don't care. I got some terrible, I got some good news and some bad news. I'm going to preach just like there was 10,000 people here. That's the good news. The bad news is you 12 people are going to have to absorb the punishment for 10,000 people. I don't care. I learned the principle. I don't care if there's one. If I was over here doing something, there was a million people getting saved and God said, "You need to go over here and do this." You know what? That's the difference between the leading of the Holy Spirit of God and the leading of Bob Alexander.

And you notice Philip, he never argued. He never said, "Well, Lord, okay, go down here to the south side of the desert. It's hot down there. And for the easy-opening unit, Lord, now maybe you missed this, but I am the chief evangelist here, you know, and we're just knocking them dead. And boom, I don't know if this thing could even go without me being here." You thought about that? Oh, you're laughing. We've all been there, haven't we? He didn't even think of that. He didn't even think of that. You know why? Because there's an intimacy between Philip and the Holy Spirit of God. He hears what the Holy Spirit of God says. He recognizing what the Holy Spirit of God says. And then when he hears it, he doesn't argue. He runs. Runs. He runs. He runs to where this man is. Because he knows that God is in control of his life. God's spirit is leading him in his life. And when the spirit said unto Philip, "Go join thyself to that man's chariot," Philip ran.

And when he gets there, he hears that man read out of the book of Isaiah. Can God take you like that? Can God take you tomorrow when you go to work, no matter what you do? And can God speak to you like that? Has God got his hand in your life so much and so intimately? Do you work with the Holy Spirit of God based on the principles of the Word of God and everything in your life so minutely? That the Holy Spirit of God tomorrow when you show up, have you not ever been in a situation where you walked into some place and God said, "Go, give that young man, that young lady, anything they need, as much as they need, for as long as it takes." Or are you just a politician? "Hi, good to have you today. Thank you for being here." Yeah, you all look like they're saying. Let me tell you something. There are going to be people that God puts in your life who come into wherever ministry you're in who needs something from you. Your job is to be able to discern what that need is. You love everybody. You love for everybody. You want everybody to get it. But you've got to be smart enough to realize that some people have different needs. And that comes from the sensitivity of the Holy Spirit of God in your life. When the Holy Spirit of God says, "Go join your man, self that that man's chariot."

And Philip comes up in Acts 8:31, 32 and verse 33. And he says, "Understandest thou what thou redest?" in verse 30. What a great opening. I mean, you know what? There's an old guy across the street. He says, "I'm in a wheelchair." And about three days a morning, here's a week over there. I'm out, I do my run and I come back and he's over there sitting in a driveway, in a wheelchair, reading his Bible. And I've never, I mean, I've been talked to him. I take ribs over to

him, you know, after we do our barbecue at Memorial Day. And he's just a nice old guy. And I saw him read his Bible one day or whatever. So after I run down there, I kind of cool down a bit. I walked over and I don't know. I used this. I just figured that's a good line. I mean, if somebody's sitting there reading the Bible, I think that's a great opener. I use it. I used it with him. I walked up and he says, "Hey," I said, "You're reading your Bible?" And he says, "Yeah, I am." He said, I said, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" Now, I really want to hear back, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" It doesn't always come back that way. One guy, one time I said, years ago when I worked at a factory, he was laying on top of a box in his lunch hour, reading his Bible upside down. And I said, "Hey, understandest thou what thou readest?" And he was an older guy and I was pretty young then and I should have knew better. And he was up there and I said, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" And he said, "Yes, I do." And I haven't seen that over 35 years. I said, "Well, see you later then. I got to go." They are all women. But you know what? I talked to that old boy and we talked about the Lord and talked about he saved, talked about salvation and talked about how he's looking for the Lord to come back. Great, great, great way for as an opening.

And the old Ethiopian eunuch said in Acts 8:31, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" And he desired Philip that he should come up and sit with him. See, we got a prepared sinner and a prepared servant. The reason why so many times you find it so hard to work for somebody and you start to witness to somebody in their adverse is because maybe you're not in touch with the Holy Spirit of God and you're pushing it farther than God wanted you to. Maybe there's no leading of the Holy Spirit of God at all. And you're just out there, one of those guys that think everybody you meet, you ought to win to Christ. And you have no concept of the Holy Spirit of God leading you and telling you and guiding you who to speak to and what to say. See, a lot of our soul winning effort that we think God is impressed with, God has looked at and said, "What was that?" There's a process to leading men to Christ.

Acts 8:32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

Acts 8:33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

That's Isaiah chapter 53. And I don't know what you know about the Bible, but the Isaiah chapter 53 is the prophetic passage in the Bible that foreshadows the death and the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, you know what I always wondered about in this story, prepared sinner? Philip gets to reaping. Philip gets to do the job of winning the Christ. You know what I always wondered? Who gave him the book of Isaiah? Who gave that old boy the book of Isaiah? You see the process how it works? Somebody gave him a copy of Isaiah 53. Somebody sowed, and I guarantee you that person who sowed is probably praying for him every day. But somebody else got to reaping because he wasn't ready to get saved. God was still working in his life the process that God does in each of our lives. The Holy Spirit of God was preparing him while he was preparing Philip, and it was Philip who got the call. I wonder tomorrow, it's your job or next week, and whatever you do on a big list clipboard up in heaven. There's a number of jobs that need to be assigned to prepared sinners, and the problem is God's got more prepared sinners than

he's got prepared servants. What a tragedy. Tragedy. And all it takes is the intimacy between you and the Holy Spirit of God. Be able to hear what God says. God's footprints, fingerprints and footprints all over your head.

Look at Acts 8:34 and 35. "And the eunuch answered and Philip and said I pray thee of whom speaketh the prophet this or himself or some other man?" You see what a great example Acts 8:34 is of 1 Corinthians 2:14, which says:

*1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

He's an unsaved man. God brought him so far. God brought him to a point. Now he needs somebody to walk him the distance. That's the way God does it. I have little respect nor do I have little patience with this mass evangelism stuff today. I've seen places that have been in places all my life where at the end of a church service or any place else they have all their heads bowed and pastor talks about salvation and he says, "Who'd like to, who'd like to be saved, raise your hand," and 80 people raise their hand, and then he says, "All right, pray this prayer after me," and 80 people pray the prayer, and then he says, "All right, if you pray that, now hold your hand even higher," and everybody sticks it up, and he's saying, "Bless God. We just got 80 people saved." You're nuts. Is that what the definitive passage said? I believe the unsaved man said when he was asked, "Do you understand what you read?" His answer was, "How can I, except some man guide me?" And the model was he sat down with him and opened up the scriptures. That's how you win somebody to Christ.

Well, I'll tell you what, you live in a dangerous day and age where you just think somebody can raise your hand and you give them a prayer to pray without getting into their world and finding out where they are. You're crazy or you don't know anything about Bible and evangelism with the Holy Spirit of God and you were opposite of the hemisphere. I want a guy, it was one of God, a Christ one time, and I was witnessing to him and I said this, I said, "You need to," I said, "You need," and his marriage was a mess and his marriage was down the tubes and he was a, he was just in a mess and he started coming to church. And he came to one of my Bible studies and after three or four times he raised his hand, they need to get saved. Well, I had him come back and I dealt with him because I knew there was some particular things here that I knew and I didn't want to put on somebody else. So he comes into my office and he says, I said, "What you come forward for, Jim?" And he said, "I need to be saved." And I said, "Amen." I said, "Well, you do need to be saved," and I started to walk down in through the process to show him what the Bible says and I asked him a question, I said, "Jim, why do you need to be saved?" And he said to me, "Because I need to have God make my marriage work." I stopped right there. I said, "Jim, your marriage does need to get fixed, but if you get saved because you want God to fix your marriage, you're not going to really get saved because you don't get God saved that God fix your marriage. You get saved because you're a sinner and you're going to die and burn in hell someday and your marriage has nothing to do with it."

Now can you imagine somebody sitting out there in a day and age that we live in who have some kind of emotional disruption in their life while you preach and you simply just have them raise

their hand and they're having a bad marriage and they get saved and come to God because they want to save their marriage when they had to come to God because they're a sinner and need to get saved to keep them going to hell. They raise their hand and say, "Well, I've been, I've had people that were that were unsaved and baptized in a an unscriptural way in another church and then get saved and actually think that that baptism just kind of like transfers over like your car transfers over like your car title to the next one." You can't just put salvation out there in the world that we live in and hope everybody gets it. There's always internal issues and everybody's different. Somebody may want to get out there and say, "Well, I want to get saved because I want to speak in tongues like my aunt Edna." Or, "I want to do this, I want to do that." That's why the model in the Bible says, "How can I, except some man guide me?" and he sat down and he opened up the scriptures.

And then our definition of preaching. He began at the same scripture. He took Isaiah 53. You know what that tells me? He tells me he was smart enough to stay with what God started already. He didn't try to get fancy and show his Roman road into Matthew Turnpike. He was smart enough to know that if God started in Isaiah 53, I'm going to finish it in Isaiah 53. And he opened up the same scripture. "And he preached unto him Jesus." Now here was the scene, here's the chariot. He sits down here and he says, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" And the eunuch says, "How can I, except some man guide me?" All right. And that was it.

Now here's what Philip did obviously. He said, "Hang on right there. Don't move. I've got to get a pulpit. I've got to get a pulpit. Okay, get a pulpit. All right here. Okay, now let's sing a couple songs. Just as I am. Now we're going to take up an offering. I know your candidate's body guy with all the money so how about." And no he didn't. You know he did. That's what we do in church you see. No, no, the definition of Bible preaching is right there. Pastoring is something else. Pastors preach, but every Christian ought to be a preacher. You ought to take that as your definition right there. He opened up the scriptures. If it would have been a woman situation, you open up the scriptures and preach. And I'm saying at Isaiah 53, lead that man to Christ. That's preaching. That's not my job. My job is the pastor, and as a pastor I preach. If you're saved here, you have been ordained. That you bring forth fruit and that your fruit remain, and you should preach. Just like Philip did here. You don't need a pulpit. You don't need three stands of "Just As I Am." All you need is wherever God gave you and this, take it and go with it. And that's what you need. Every element is here. Every element is here.

### *Biblical Baptism and the Continuing Cycle*

We live in a world where we want to make it real easy for people to get saved. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. I've been in, I've been in places where I've dealt with somebody from another faith. I won a Jehovah Witness one time to Christ. They don't happen very often. But I won him to Christ and he really truly got saved. But when I deal with somebody like that, I don't deal with like the same way like a deal with your garden variety sinner over here, who his issues are drunk drinking, women and smoking and all of those things. I know I got two different deals. When I'm dealing with somebody that may be a foreigner or somebody that from another culture. But you put your radar antennas up real high on that one. We get the idea that because we know the talk, we know the language that they do. It's the difference between talking God's language and the

world's language. And they get about every three words. We talk about, "Well, you got to be born again," if I must be born again. And they're shaking their head and they're saying, "What's born again?" Because you're shot on a bulldozer ride that you want to win into Christ because you think that's your job. You don't take the time to look inside them and see where they're at because there's nothing going on between you and the spirit of God.

I won this Jehovah Witness to Christ and I walked down through that thing and we talked about it and I stopped and I said, "You need to be saved." And I said, "Yeah, you need to be saved." And I said, "All right, before we do, you want to be saved?" "Yes, I do." I said, "Okay, before we do that, let me ask you a question. Are you telling me you're renouncing your baptism as a Jehovah Witness?" "Yes, I am." "You're telling me you're renouncing anything to do with a Jehovah Witness? Any church, any religion, and simply as a sinner coming to Christ?" "Yes, I am." Now you would think that would be pretty good and you'd move on that. I'll move on that but I ain't done yet. I went into Christ. I'll lead him to Christ. I lead him in the prayer. In the middle of that prayer, you know what he says? And I got my hand on him right like this so I can feel if he tenses up. He's part of this technique. If I say something he don't like, he's going to wince and I'm going to grab him with a knee right in the face before he knows what happens. So I'm down there and I'm and I'm and I say we're praying. He's asking now the prayer of Christ to come into your heart and save you. And I give people the option either they can do it or I'll do it. But in his case, I said, "You're going to pray this after me, but you're going to pray it to God, not to me." And I led him through the prayer. Right in the middle of that prayer, I said to him. I said, I said it went like this: "You're a heavenly father. You know that I'm a sinner and I can't get to heaven on my own. And I need Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior." So he's repeating it back. And I said, "Father, right now I renounce my baptism in Jehovah Witness Church. I renounce the Jehovah Witness Church and any religion no matter what it may be, any church. And I simply come to you as a lost sinner without anything in my hand asking Christ to save you." And when he went through that thing just as clean as a whistle, you know you got through to him.

You've got to understand where each person is at. You've got to realize that everybody is different. You just don't run in. Soul winning is not like quail hunting. You don't use a shotgun. I've even shot quail and pigeons in the past where two pigeons would fly up and you got a wide enough choke on a shotgun you get two or three one blast. You can't soul win that way. We don't live in the day and age of soul winning anymore where you can do mass evangelism. Too many screwed up ideas and concepts out there. You can't just have them raise their hand and say a prayer. You've got to do what the Bible says. Open up the scriptures and then guide them through it and find out what you're dealing with. It's the only way to do it and do it the way God wants you to do it based on the Holy Spirit of God. Get in there and find out what you've got. That's why it takes knowing the Bible. That's grace and truth. That's why it not only takes you to have the ability to be able to use the Bible but the ability to be able for you to have the grace to use what you know.

Now look at Acts 8:36, 37, 38. Why this picture is so complete that it even shows you the concept of biblical baptism.

Acts 8:36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

Acts 8:37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Acts 8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

Now there's a great, I mean what clearer could you get? Not only does it walk you through and show you the prepared servant, the prepared sinner, the aspect of that even though he's got many riches he's still a slave. And all the aspects of your intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit of God, dealing with the situation and reading it the way God wants you to and having God's fingerprints over everything in your life, now it even shows you the mode to be baptized.

Now they're in the desert, ladies and gentlemen. Let me just ask you a question. If sprinkling is the mode for baptism, then what in the world do they need a large body of water for both of them to get down into it? Are they not in the desert? Hello, what Nimrod goes through the desert without a canteen of water? Anybody? Why, if he needed to be baptized, he could have said no problem. He just stopped and put a little water in his hand and said, "You're okay." Why did the Holy Spirit of God put in this story where the chariot comes up and, "See, here is water. What doth hinder me to be baptized?"

Now, this passage teaches some things. First of all, this church teaches that baptism is by immersion. That's what the Bible teaches. We also teach that baptism is only for saved adults or any child that's over the age of accountability. In other words, we don't baptize babies. Somebody asked me one time, "Why don't you baptize babies in your church?" And I said, "Well," and he said, "Are you against baptizing babies?" And I said, "No, I'm not against baptizing babies." I said, "I would," and I love this passage because this passage helped me out of a jam. The guy says, "Are you against baptizing babies?" I said, "No, I'll baptize babies." "Well, why don't you baptize babies?" "Because I never found a baby that could fit the criteria to be baptized." He said, "What do you mean?" And I said, "Well, the Ethiopian eunuch here stopped the chariot and says, 'Here's water. Question, what doth hinder me to be baptized?' Philip looked back and said, answer, 'If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest.' You show me a baby who can believe with all of his heart, I'll baptize you." And then he tells you what that quantification was where he says, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." That didn't sound like a baby would say. Baptism is for adults who understand in their heart what has transpired, what has taken place. And then the qualification for baptism comes in after you're saved. It isn't part of your salvation. He already believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. That was the precursor for his baptism.

And then, I mean, let's just make it simple. When we baptize somebody, we put them up there and baptism symbolizes Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, right? So we stand them up in the water, put my hand on their nose or their hand on their nose, and I say, "Buried in the likeness of Jesus' death," under the water, pictured Christ dying and going under the ground. And then I say, "Raised in the likeness of his glorious resurrection," Christ of Christ resurrected. So your

baptism, when you put them under the water, it's a picture of somebody's death and somebody's burial. Everybody grab that? And I apologize for being so technical. I should have just said this at the very beginning. How many people have ever been to a funeral? Anybody? Everybody been to a funeral here? Okay. I mean, the whole distance. I know some of you folks, when you really don't like them, you go to the calling hours, then you skip the funeral. But you ever went to the whole funeral? You went to the whole funeral. Good girl. Went on this person in the place. We got the whole funeral. You know what happens? Here's how a funeral works. And now remember, baptism is a picture of a funeral. You ever been to a funeral when they're going to bury the guy, they put him up in the side of the thing and everybody throws dirt in his face? No. You take him and you put him under the ground. Do you not? And then you cover him up with the dirt. Do you not? That's a picture of baptism. That's why you got to go under the water and get covered up. And then you come up out of the water. No, no burial in the world is stand a man up. We're going to bury him now. Throw dirt in his face. You bury him. Buried in the likeness of his death. Raised in the likeness of his resurrection. That's why I put him under the water. Everything is covered. Everything you need.

And then the last thing. And I think this is probably the most important part right here. Acts 8:39 and 40.

Acts 8:39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

Acts 8:40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

You see the cycle never ends. The Ethiopian eunuch goes his way rejoicing and Philip goes his way still preaching. It never ends. It never ends. When you got saved, you entered into a cycle that will never end until Jesus comes to get you. He gives you the word of God nigh into my mouth. You're to preach the word of God of faith. Romans says. You're to have a zeal according to knowledge. And you're to take the word of God through the intimacy of the Holy Spirit of God. You let God put you into scenarios where men and women need to be saved. Prepared sinners who need a prepared servant that will open up the Scriptures and take the Bible and guide them. And show them and work through it with them and bring them and lead them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ that the process continues. Problem is more prepared sinners than we have prepared servants.

Now personally, I don't believe that's true in this church. Personally, I believe that the men and women sitting under the sound of my voice this morning. You have everything in your life right now to make this thing and take it where it needs to go. I've never seen more people excited about the Bible in your own personal life. I've never seen people work harder to learn that they weren't because they want to have that relationship. They want to be pleasing to the things of God in their lives. And I'm saying to you today the next step now is to take what you know and do something with it. The next step now is to let God take all that you've done. Grace and truth. God's given you the truth. Now let God bring the grace into your life and help you use the truth that you already know. That God through that concept can put you into any scenario. Tomorrow

you go back to war. Tomorrow you go back to the front. You got a little respite for Saturday and Sunday where you get a little retreat. But now you're back on the front lines tomorrow. You're back to work. You're back with your unsaved friends. You're back in scenarios that God has for you that He wants to put you in that He can bring the people in your life that you can be the prepared servant to a prepared sinner.

Every head bowed and every eye closed. Father, we thank you and praise you for today. We love you.