

2 Corinthians 5:1-18

Sunday 5/16/2010

SEC: The Neglected Doctrine of the Judgment Seat of Christ

We have been doing a 2010 rendition of the greatest single doctrine or teaching in the Bible as far as you and I are concerned as Christians. I do not know of a more needed teaching today than the teaching to God's people on the doctrine of the Judgment Seat of Christ. We have been coming through Romans 14, and now you have seen how that chapter has opened itself up to the great teaching where it talks about the fact that:

For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

And it says, "For we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ." In my ministry, I try to preach that in some way, shape, or form at least once a year. I think in everything that I do, if you are a regular on Thursday night or whatever we do, I try to infuse that teaching into whatever we are dealing with. I do not know of another greater teaching that needs to be before us today than the concept of the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Yet, as I have already told you, it is probably the most foreign doctrine anywhere in Christianity today. Nobody preaches on it anymore. The idea of preaching today in most churches is to not rock the boat. Do not cause people any problems. Do not get sideways with them. Do not teach anything controversial. Do not make them mad. Do not hold them accountable or responsible. Just kind of get along. That, of course, is the hallmark of the Laodicean church.

I talked to you a moment ago before we prayed for the offering that there is a meaning behind why we call our church Old Paths Baptist Church. In Jeremiah 6:16, Israel was in a similar situation as Christianity is today, where they had departed from almost everything that God had been doing. They were in deep apostasy, much like the church of Jesus Christ today in the Laodicean church period. We know now the word Laodicea means "rights of the people." So, it is the last period of church history before Jesus Christ comes back.

Back in Israel, in Jeremiah 6, Jeremiah's job was much like my job. God sent him to His people, God's people, to preach God's message. But the problem was, the people of God did not want to hear God's message. They are much like Christianity today, where they are just lethargic. They are trying to have a good time. They do not really want to be committed or involved in anything. They are a long way from God and the Word of God. In fact, if you would look at Israel under the greatest period of time of David and Solomon compared to the time when Jeremiah writes some 300-400 years later, you will find that they are almost indistinguishable. You cannot even tell one from the other; they are so bad.

Jeremiah's message there in Jeremiah 6:16 was for them to get back on the old path, the path that was right, the path that God had given them early on. Just like the nation of Israel, God gave them a path that they were to stay on. When you come into the New Testament and you study

church history, like we are doing on Tuesday night, you will find that God had a path for the church. That path for the church was one that was built around the Word of God, the great teachings of the Bible. Just like the nation of Israel has departed off the path, so has Christianity today. So, when we started our church, we decided to call it Old Paths Baptist Church. I can always tell when I meet somebody and they ask me what the name of our church is, and I tell them, if they know very much about the Bible, they will just look at you like you are weird. "Why would you call it Old Paths?" "Oh, because it is in the Bible? That is why." And of course, that is where we are at today.

SEC: Reviewing the Mechanics of the Judgment Seat (1 Corinthians 3)

Last week, we looked at the first of two definitive passages on the Judgment Seat of Christ. We know that day is also called in the Bible as "the day of Christ" or "the day of Jesus Christ." We looked at 1 Corinthians 3. We picked it up in verse 9 and came all the way down to verse 23. We looked at a number of things that we really needed to understand to comprehend and truly understand this day. We found out a number of things. We found out now that it is not what we do that God looks at, but why we do what we do.

We found out now that at the Judgment Seat of Christ, you could win a thousand people to Christ today. You could build a hundred thousand churches a week. You could burn your life out and do everything from the world's standpoint for God, but at the end of the day, if the motivation, the attitude of heart of why you did what you did, was not based on the right thing, it is of no value. We look at quantity, and that is the way the world gears us up today. We look at quantity, but God never looks at quantity. God always looks at the quality of it, and God sees, as He says down through here, when He sorts it out, "of what sort it is." Very frankly, if the motivation is not based on our understanding of what Christ did for us on the cross, then it is not a pure motive, and it is simply of no value.

I want to be honest with you, that is a very hard concept for most Christians today. Most Christians, and this is going to have to be the easiest message that you ever heard in the world today because it is going to be foreign to many of you, but I do not mean this in a bad way, but that just goes to show how little you know about the Bible. That is your fault, not mine. But when you start to look at this concept, most people find it foreign to understand that you can do so much for God and yet you lose everything at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is because we live in a Christianity today that is built, as I said, on quantity and not on quality.

We do not understand today what it takes to get an inheritance at the Judgment Seat of Christ. You have a preacher out here that builds a mega church, and he travels around the world, and he does all kinds of things, builds a building that five, six, seven thousand people come to his church. Then you have a little lady over here that is in a rest home someplace, and she cannot get out and she cannot do anything, but she has been saved all of her life. We get to the Judgment Seat of Christ, and we look at both of them, and we automatically think that the guy who built the great church and did all the things around the world would walk away with it all, where the poor lady down here in the rest home at the end of her life, she just has to get along as best she can and maybe not have anything. But you know for a truth, there will be many, many cases in

Christianity at the Judgment Seat of Christ where the guy who built the big church and did everything that he did gets absolutely nothing, and the little lady down there in the rest home walks away with dump trucks full. You know why? It is attitude. It is attitude. It is attitude. It is not about what you do; it is about why you do what you do.

We are all shallow in the Bible. We really are. The church age that we live in right now cares nothing about the Bible, and that is unfortunate because what happens is that the real depth and the real meaning of so many things that I preach to you about are based on a deeper study in the Word of God. Most people, because they are so out of touch with the reality of the Bible, they do not really study the Bible. They do not really learn the process to study the Bible. They just never get there.

Let me talk to you for a minute about the Judgment Seat of Christ. Back in the Old Testament, in the book of Exodus, you have a great example, and it is in Exodus 27. When you come back there in Exodus 27, you are going to find where it talks about in that part of Exodus the brazen altar. The brazen altar is where they made the sacrifice. That sacrifice, that fire, if you are going to study your Bible, it is a picture of Christ dying on the cross. This is very important, and you want to, and I know most of God's people never hear this anymore because pastors do not teach the Bible. Yet, when you get to the Judgment Seat of Christ, you are not going to be able to use the excuse, "Well, I went to church; they did not really teach me the Bible." You are not going to be held accountable for what you knew or what you did not know, but you are going to be held accountable for what you could have found out but you chose not to. That is going to be the problem.

Now, you take that thing back there in Exodus 27. You know what you have? You have that brazen altar outside that tabernacle. When they brought that sacrifice, the high priest put that sacrifice on that brazen altar and they burned it. That brazen altar is a picture of Christ dying on the cross for you. We do not have time to go into all of the tabernacle, but this is what we are dealing with here. That sacrificial lamb on that brazen altar—brass in your Bible is a picture of God's Judgment. So, when they burned this sacrifice on the brazen altar, the brass altar, it was a picture of Christ dying on the cross for you.

Now, here is the thing that you have to get, and nobody even knows this today. Everything else that they did when they walked into that tabernacle, when the priest went in to do his work, there were no electric lights, no light switch. You had six candlesticks over here. What is that smell? There is an altar of incense up here in the corner, and everything in there was completely dark, and everything had to be lit. Everything had to be lit for the priest to operate. He had to light the seven candles so he would have some light. He had to light the incense and get that because that is a picture of your prayer life. The seven candlesticks are a picture of the Holy Spirit of God. On the other side of the room, there was what they called the showbread. It was baked fresh every day. It is a picture of the Bible, and it was laid out one, two, three, four, five, six, and then another row, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve. Twelve loaves baked fresh every day. Twelve because in the Old Testament, it is a picture of the nation of Israel and the twelve tribes. But it is laid out six and six. Why? Because that showbread is a picture of the Bible, and you have 66 books in your Bible.

Now, imagine you walk into that tabernacle, and everything is dark. All you have over here is the light off the candlestick and that smell, that smell of incense, that is a picture of your prayer life. You are going to do the work in there, and the only light you have is off that candlestick over against the bread, a type of the Word of God. Clearly showing you that the only thing you are going to learn out of the Bible is based on the Holy Spirit of God and your prayer life, the altar of incense.

Before we go any farther, let us stop and just look at this thing in its entirety. The fire that lights those candles and the fire that starts that incense is the fire off the brazen altar out in front. The point is this, ladies and gentlemen, and if you do not really hear anything else I say today, you need to hear this. The point is this: everything that was done in that inner tabernacle that is a picture of what you and I do for Christ—the Word of God, the Holy Spirit of God, our prayer life—the fire that got it going had to come off the sacrifice of the animal and the brazen altar.

My point is simply this: if you and I do not do everything we do, everything, everything we do is not lit, and the fire that fires it does not come off your understanding and your attitude about what Christ did for you on the cross, and His death on the cross is not the motivation for what you and I do based on you understanding it, you are wasting your time. Go be a Mormon. Go be something else. Go do something else. I am telling you right now, as a child of God, you are wasting your time whatever you are doing if you do not trace it back to what He did. The fire on the brazen altar when He was crucified on that cross needs to be the motivation for everything you do. Everything we do as a child of God needs to be based on our understanding of what He did for us. Boy, does that not cause us some problems in what we do?

That is why we studied this last week. The Bible says that the foundation you lay is the day you got saved, and then you are to build on that foundation the rest of your life three things. The first thing you are to build is gold, and we talked about that being a picture of the deity of Christ. The second thing we build on it is silver, the price of redemption, what Christ did for you. Then the third thing is precious stones. That is the people that God puts in your life that you influence based on your knowledge of Him and what He did.

The only way to keep that fire off the altar? You do remember in that story, I think it is back in Leviticus 11 and maybe Leviticus 3 also, you do remember back there that there were some sons of Aaron whom God killed. Why did God kill them? Chris? They used strange fire. What does that mean, "strange fire"? I thought fire was fire. No, no, no. It means that they got the fire to do the things of God someplace else other than the altar. We are like the sons of Aaron today. We offer a lot of strange fire to God and then wonder why at the Judgment Seat of Christ we are not going to have everything that God wants us to have.

I am telling you folks, and I love you with all of my heart, and if anybody does not know that my life is not in this church and committed to the people in this church to help you get everything you need to do, then you do not know me very well. But I am also telling you, this attitude of heart seems like it is the hardest thing to do. Keeping your attitude of heart seems like it is the hardest thing to do, but it is not really when you just simply build on that foundation: gold, silver, and precious stone. You know what our problem is? We build too many other things on it. What

He did for you, we talk about perspective, purpose, and passion. Very frankly, what He did for you ought to drive everything you do for Him. Building these things on your foundation will ensure the right attitude. It is not hard, but it is just biblical. We all struggle with this. We all struggle with doing what the Bible says when our human nature wants to do something else. That is the constant fight that you and I have to come to. You can overcome that, but you only overcome that by putting the things in your life.

We also saw, these are not in the order we looked at them last week, we saw the concept of being laborers together, the unity that we have. We saw the concept of being a husbandman. We now know that a husbandman is somebody who tends to a garden, in this case, God's garden of people. We saw the incredible concept that we are to be a wise master builder, and then it talked about that we are to take heed how we build about our body being God's temple and God's house.

In 1 Corinthians 3, what we looked at last week, this shows you the mechanics of the Judgment Seat of Christ. It shows you how it all works, the cause and effect, so to speak. The complete breakdown of all the crucial areas that we need to see and understand, and it is absolutely crucial that we understand this. Clearly from this passage, and we looked at it last week, we now have everything we need to see and understand as it is related to us. Remember now, just in a brief recap, we saw how that when we got saved, that is when we laid the foundation, and then the rest of our lives we built upon that foundation: gold, silver, precious stone.

God has a plan for your life if you are saved this morning. Something He wants you to do, and the only way you are going to do that is to get in God's plan, and the only way you are going to get in God's plan is to understand that it is gold, silver, and precious stone, and then when you build it that way, you are guaranteed to have the right attitude in what you do. Now, I say that, and let me say this: we always do not have the right attitude. There are things in my life that at times I do not have the right attitude about. I am not saying you are going to be perfect in the right attitude, but I told you last week that God is not looking for perfection, is He? He is looking for consistency, and there is a way that God has put in that Bible that you may have the worst day in your life, up and down in every temptation and everything, and may fall down 600,443 times in a day, but yet you can still end the day in fellowship with God with the right attitude of heart, and of course, we have talked about that in our discipleship and talked about it many, many times.

SEC: The Reality of the Judgment Seat (2 Corinthians 5)

Today, we are going to look at the second definitive verse or passage, really. This one does not deal with the components of the Judgment Seat of Christ but really shows us the reality of it, and it deals with the fact that God takes our salvation and our life after we are saved more seriously than we do. Reality is the thing that we all are missing in our lives today. We need this because that is really our biggest issue: the reality of life. We live in such a world of an illusion. Everything around us today, everything that you see on television, everything that you listen to, even the music you listen to, it is all built around a fairy tale world that just does not exist.

You go to see movies, and most movies, 99% of them, you go through some tough time in the movie, you cry, you laugh, they have some days, but at the end, in most cases, not always but in

99.9% of them, at the end of the movie, you know what you have? It ends well. They get back together, or they fix this, or they do this, or they thought he was dead and then they find out he was not, and all those things, and you go out of there with the up and down of the emotion. "Wow, it started out good, they fell in love or they did this or they did that, and then it looked like the tragedy hit, but at the end of the movie, everything is good, and I feel good about it." We get the illusion that life is like that, and just because you go to a movie and the movie producer and the director have guaranteed the movie is going to end well, there are no guarantees in life, are there?

The reality is that if you are going to take a stand for the Lord Jesus Christ, there is always going to be a price to pay for it, and reality is based on simply understanding what you are doing and what you are trying to accomplish in the light of what God has told you. You hear me talk about perspective, purpose, and passion—three incredible concepts. You hear me talk about accountability, responsibility, and attitude. We talk about understanding the concept of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. You hear me talk about self-discipline, staying focused, and being self-motivated. All these things I talk about and keep before you and harp on you all the time is the reality of what we are looking at here someday when we stand before God and give an account of what and why we did what we did after we were saved in light of what we could have done because of the Bible that God gave us.

There are three terrible places in the Bible. I have a sermon on this. The three most terrible places in the Bible that I have found where God makes an incredible statement, at least on two of them. The most terrible three places in the Bible that I have found are all three judgments. You remember I told you last week or two weeks ago there were seven judgments in the Bible, but three of them are the most terrible judgments that I have ever found any place, and they really mark the most terrible places in the Bible.

Now, the first one is the nation of Israel going through the tribulation period. We are told in the book of Matthew, around 24, that there is no worse time on the planet earth for these people to go through the tribulation. I think the thing that God says about that, it really just puts the hair up in the back of my neck; maybe it will not do much for you. You have to read Deuteronomy 28:63 sometime of what God's attitude is on the tribulation period. When you read that, knowing that there are people, and this is His attitude on it, that thing scares the fire out of you.

The second most terrible time that I have found in the Bible is the Great White Throne Judgment. That is this judgment over here. That is where all the unsaved men and women all down through history stand before God at the Great White Throne, and because of their denial of trusting Christ as their own personal Savior, every man, every woman who has lived their life down through since the beginning of time, Adam right on down, that never trusted Christ as their personal Savior, they are dumped into the lake of fire. I think that is probably one of the most terrible times found in the Bible. In Matthew 25:41, He says something that is absolutely terrifying to me, and I am a saved man, but I cannot imagine standing there before a holy God that you have laughed at and made fun of all of your life, and that you thought you were in control of your life when in reality you were not, and this whole thing is God set up and the way He wants to do it,

and for you to hear those words like thunder come down before you are dumped in the lake of fire where He says:

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

That is a tragic thing that scares me to death, and I am saved.

The third most terrifying time in the Bible, I think, is where we are going to be at today in 2 Corinthians 5, and that will be the Judgment Seat of Christ. The thing that is terrifying to me about that is you are going to see this today that when you come to this point and this judgment, the thing that is the most terrifying to me, when I look at Israel and I see God dealing and judging with Israel and see what He says back there in the Old Testament about that, that is one thing. When I go to the Great White Throne Judgment and I see what God says about it there, that is something else, and those things terrify me. But the thing that really terrifies me from 2 Corinthians 5 and all the verses in the Bible, when we go to the Judgment Seat of Christ and we stand before God, He does not say one thing, not one word. He does not say one thing. You know why? Because there is nothing to say. There is nothing to say. You had everything. An unsaved man, he rejected it, but God has something to say to him. The nation of Israel, they rejected God in the Old Testament sense, He had something to say to them. But you and me, we are part of His body. You have the ability right now that nobody else in the whole history of the world of the Bible had. You can know everything about God, what He thinks, what He says, because God has given you the Word of God, the Holy Spirit of God, and His body, the local church.

When we stand there before Him, there will be nothing to say. Your standing there will say it all. You will either stand there with everything that you have, with the gold and the crowns and all of the precious stones, or that fire will do the speaking, and it will try it, and it will be purified, or you will simply stand there with wood, hay, and stubble, and a fire will come in. There is nothing to say. I think the most terrible, tragic thing in all of the Bible is for a child of God to stand before God when all of his life he or she had the ability to know better, and then to stand there and lose everything, and God says nothing.

When you were a kid growing up, did you ever let your parents down in some fashion and do something that was really bad and really let them down? When they dealt with you on it, you wished they would have whipped you to death, thrown you under the car, backed up, run over you four or five times, thrown you out with the dog, not fed you for six months. But they did not do anything, and you looked up and you saw, without them saying a word, in their face and their eyes was enough to bring you to your knees of you knowing the fact that, "Boy, I really let them down." Well, take that and magnify it a hundred million times when we stand there before Almighty God and Christ on the throne, and we have to look into those eyes and understand all that He had for us and what we did not do for Him. It is going to be an incredible day.

SEC: Exposition of 2 Corinthians 5:1-18

Let us begin in 2 Corinthians 5, and let us look at it here. We will pick it up in verse 1. Ladies and gentlemen, what I am about to read today will be rated R for content maturity. It is a very

disturbing passage. If I was on the radio right now doing this or I was on television, I would tell everybody to send the kids out of the room. This is, without a doubt, the most sobering day in all of the Bible for you and I as God's people. Incredible.

Now, he says in verse 1:

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Now, Father, we come to You today, and we ask You to give us the wisdom and insight into this great passage. There is so much here, and there is never a time that when I preach something like this where I know that eternally these people's millennial inheritance hangs in the balance, Lord, that I do not tremble at Your Word and ask You to give me everything in the right sense, in the right context, with everything I need to say. Lord, I pray now today You will take this, that You will use it for Your honor and glory, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for His sake. Amen.

As we did in the previous chapter last week, let us begin to break this passage down literally almost verse by verse, and we can better understand it.

The first thing here is in verse 1, and it says this:

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

What is he saying? He is saying basically, and we have talked about this many, many times, you and I are made up of a body, soul, and spirit. Right now, if you are sitting here, you have a body, you have a soul, and you have a spirit. He is talking about the earthly body being dissolved, in other words, you die or the Lord comes back. What he is saying is here, if you die, what we know is that inside you, you have an eternal body. We know it as your soul. When Christ comes back, it becomes a glorified body. It is eternal. What he is saying here in verse 1 is that if you lose your earthly body, you are buried in the ground, you are dead, but your soul lives for

eternity, and when Christ comes back and you get that glorified body, it is going to live for eternity. That is why he tells you down here that it is "a building of God, an house not made with hands." You see that thing? Your mom and dad in their conceiving of you had nothing to do with this. This body is made without hands. For those of you that are Bible students or want to be a Bible student, you want to write down along that note over there in Colossians 2:11. You see, you have a spiritual body not made with hands. We have talked about the doctrine of spiritual circumcision in Colossians 2. What really took place the day you got saved? What does it say over there? It says that you got saved by an operation of God, made without hands. You see that thing? Now you want to run those two verses back to each other; that is exactly how this thing begins to build. So, the first thing we want to look at is you have an eternal spiritual body that is going to go before the Judgment Seat of Christ when your physical body goes down to the undertaker.

Now look at the next verse, verse 2:

For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

What he is saying there, there is a desire to have this spirit eternal body clothed. Now, let us take another thing. We studied last week in Revelation 19:7-8. Remember that? We talked about how the bride has made herself ready, and we talked about that being the church going to the Judgment Seat of Christ. What did the Bible say back there that they got? Anybody remember? What the Bible says they got back there in Revelation 19 after the bride had made herself ready, and then it tells you what it was. What was it? Roy? Pure linen. And what did it say that that pure linen was? "The righteousness of saints." Now you want to connect those two passages. Those two passages connect together. Though I do not know why I am even telling you this stuff, nobody is even evidently writing it down except Roy. But anyway, you have the connecting passage going back where now when this spiritual body desires to be clothed, we now know what the clothing is. The clothing is the white linen, which is a picture, as the Bible says in Ephesians, "without spot, without wrinkle," and now that is the righteousness of the saints. So, that is what clothes this spiritual body.

Look at verses 3 and 4:

If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

The thing that I want you to draw your attention to, and basically this whole sermon is going to be built on this verse, is the fact that verse 3 tells us that somebody at the Judgment Seat of Christ is going to be found naked. This is about the greatest unknown doctrine. This verse clearly tells you in the context of the Judgment Seat of Christ that somebody is going to be naked. We are going to trace this thing down and find out. We already know what the clothing is. We already know that if this earthly body is dissolved, we have a spiritual body, eternal in the heavens, which desires to be clothed. Look what he says in verse 4: "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we are being unclothed, but we want to be

clothed." He is saying here, right now in our physical body, we groan, being burdened, not for the fact that we are being unclothed, but we want to be clothed. In other words, right now we need to understand and be burdened about this day so we are not the ones that are naked when that day comes, because we already know now in verse 3 that somebody is going to be naked. "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked," and somebody is worried about not having the clothes on that spiritual body and being found naked.

Now look at verses 5, 6, 7, and 8 here:

Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

What does that mean, "earnest of the Spirit"? It means you need to get earnest about it. Earnest means you need to get moving on it. It means you need to be motivated. What he is saying here is that God has put this thing in here, and you, by the earnest of the Spirit, you need to move on it. You need to be motivated by it.

Now, verse 8 is a great verse by itself. This is one of these standalone verses, and this is a great verse that when you lose a loved one, this is a great verse when people say, "Well, where is my husband? Where is my wife? Where is my child? Where is my grandma? Where is my granddad?" when they pass away. Of course, we know now that this is a great verse of comfort because this verse tells you that if they are a saved person, the moment they are absent from this body, they are present with the Lord, and that is a great thing.

I am going to give you a little verse here that goes along with this, a passage really. You want a great passage to put along that if you are in a situation where you are facing death or you are facing the concept of death, or maybe you just want to learn it so you can help somebody else, the passage that goes along with this great verse will be found in Psalms 139:1-24. If you have any trouble understanding that passage, you come to me, and I will be glad to sit down and break it out. It is one of the greatest, most comforting passages anywhere in the Word of God for a child of God.

Now look at verse 8: "We are confident." I am going to tell you something, and this is not my message, but I always like to kind of throw these things out. A lot of you have a problem, and it is a natural problem, and it is a problem that every young Christian has, and that is the fact that you have a lack of confidence. When we talk about going out, like the kids going down to Wichita, and Aaron and Amy gave their testimony the first time down, and I am sure you got great confidence from that. So now Aaron is going to do it down at the mission coming up here. I just talked to him about it this morning, and I thought, "Are you willing to do it, Aaron?" And he

said, "No, my knees are knocking together." But anyway, it builds confidence. It builds confidence.

If you want confidence as a child of God, let me give you a little insight, and anybody can do this. Go home sometime. I was going to say a rainy afternoon, that would be today after we all eat at the Mexican restaurant, you will be ready for an apple. But anyway, the bottom line is this: take your concordance and simply find the word "confident" and run that through your Bible. You will find of all the limits in there about 14 or 15 things that you and I are told as Christians that we need to be confident in. Take those 14 or 15 things, make a list out of them, and then go to work on them. You think that you just come to church every Sunday and you come to church and do all this stuff, and then someday you just wake up and you are confident? No, confidence comes as you do things for the Lord and as you take the Word of God and you go through that Bible and find out the things that He tells you that we as God's people need to be confident in. Incredible stuff. Make a great sermon. There are about 14 or 15 things in there that He tells us in the Old Testament and the New Testament that we are confident in. Two are right here: one is where your loved ones go or where you go when you die.

All right, now verse 9:

Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

That is a great verse. Notice the key word there, and there is going to be a lot of word studies going on today. Notice the word "labour." We saw that last week in 1 Corinthians 3:9, where we will be "labourers together." He says, "Wherefore," because of what I just said, "we labour that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him." That is a great concept. It says, "whether present or absent we may be accepted of him."

Here is the deal, and this is the reality of the Christian life, is it not? We all know people, and I know nobody is perfect, and I am not again talking about perfection, I am talking about consistency, but we all know people who go to church on Sunday and pretend they are spiritual and then live like hell the rest of the week. Let us just be honest about it. We know people that are one way on Sunday, and the rest of the week they pretty much do their own thing. I am sure we do not have anybody in here that way, but I am sure in times past in your life, if you are about five years old or older, you have met people along that line. The bottom line is this: what he is saying here is simply this: we need to live every day of our lives consistently. We need to live our lives next week as you go out to work, just like if you were standing at Him with the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Christianity, for time and immortality, has been a problem. It has been a reality check. We actually think we can live what we want to live and do what we want to do all week long and then come into church and work with people and do this and do that, but then right back into it. The verse is saying that we ought to live our lives right now here just like we would live them if we were standing before God, and that is the reality of life. We think God does not see. The greatest trick the devil ever pulled on young people was to get them to think that if the smoke was thick and the lights were dark and the music was loud that God could not see what was going on. God knows everything we do. He knows every thought we have, and He knows every

motive behind it. It is good when you build on this foundation: gold, silver, and precious stone, that you develop the concept, the consistency, I might say. You are never going to be perfect at it, but the bottom line is we have to keep our eye on that day and everything that we do.

It is so simple. If all an unsaved person has to do to right his life is to get saved. Romans 10:13 says:

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

And all a Christian has to do is get right. All a Christian has to do is just stop with God and say, "I am out of line. I have not been doing it right. I have been inconsistent, and I want to make this thing work." 1 John 1:9. But he says, "present or absent," we should live our lives now just as if we were in His presence, because the reality, my friend, is we really are.

Look at verse 10:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

I want to stop here for just a moment, and we are going to do a little word study here, but I want you to see the concept of God. You do not want to miss things like this. God is always reading our motives. You notice the Judgment Seat of Christ are the things about "done in the body." You know why God put that little thing in there? Nobody ever sees that. You know why? Because we have a hundred million people out there that are Christians that when they are dead and gone, they are going to leave all their money to God. They do not do anything now because they want to have it all to themselves. They have got themselves to the place where they think that they will live their life now, have all they want to have, do all that they want to do, get all that they want to have, and then when they are dead and they cannot use it anymore, they will give it to God, and they actually think that there is some kind of reward that comes along with that. You better read that verse right there. It says "the things done in the body." Once you are dead, there are no more rewards coming down the line for you leaving everything that you wanted to keep to yourself. You see how God does that? That is exactly how God does that. He reads down. The Bible is the only book, you have heard me say it a million times, the Bible is the only book in the world that when you open it up and start to read it, it starts to read you. It reads every motive we have. Hebrews 4:12 says it can "discern the thoughts and intents of the heart," and there is nothing that is not manifested in His sight. All things are open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. That is an incredible passage.

SEC: Word Study: Nakedness and Appearance

He says, "we must all appear." Now let us look at some words here. Last week, we saw the importance of some words, did we not? We saw "husbandry." We now understand that. We saw the great word "abide," and we talked about that. We saw "God's building," and we ran that one. We talked about "gold, silver, precious stones." I looked at all that and laid it all out for you.

Now look at 2 Corinthians 5:3. Two verses here. Verse 3 says, "not be found naked." There is our first word. And look at 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of

Christ." There is our second word. Now, two little words: the word "naked" and the word "appear."

Let me show you how to do a word study in your Bible. Turn back to Revelation 3, and you want to see this. This is worth the time. Sometimes I say, "Do not bother turning." This time I am saying, "Bother turning." This is called studying your Bible by word association, one of the great ways to study your Bible: word studies.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Let me just explain to you the context here so you understand where I am coming from. If you look at our chart over there, and most of you have gazed over it and looked at it sometime, you will find that in church history, the history of the church starts from crucifixion up to the rapture. We know, if you have been around here any length of time at all, we have talked about it how that there are seven periods of church history, and the last period of church history, as I told you when we started our message today, is the Laodicean church. That, without a doubt, is the worst one. It is the one where the name means "rights of the people." It is basically a church that has just dumped God, and everything about God has lost the reality of God and lost all the central great keys of the Bible. I could preach on it for hours and have over the years, and so most of you understand that. But the Laodicean church is the church period that we live in now.

Let me tell you something, and I mean this. Forty years ago, when I was just getting into all this, and this goes to show you how progressive revelation as time goes on, God reveals things to you that maybe you did not see when you were there. But 40 years ago, when I was just getting into this, I looked at it from the aspect of very basically, when we talked about the Laodicean church back then in my day, that was the groups, the churches that were pretty much non-biblical that came out of the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformation, like the Lutherans, the Methodists, the Presbyterians. In my day, 40 years ago, when I was just getting into all this, when we talked about the Laodicean church, that is what we looked at because from where we were at, and this will be back in 1970, where we were at back then, everybody pretty much had a good handle on things, and it was the churches that had left the Roman Catholic Church for the

right reason and the Reformation with Martin Luther, but now had gone back to the liberal way. So, in our mind 40 years ago, it was those guys; that was the Laodicean church.

As time went on, by the time we got to the 80s, and we got into the and saw the thing going where churches, Baptist churches, were departing from the Word of God left and right, and this whole spirit had come down and just destroyed churches with the Bible. We then redefined our position as we moved on and saw it and said, "Wow, you know what? It was not them guys. It is the churches that were once Bible-believing, that the pastors started out really believing the Bible, and 20, 30 years later now they do not believe it anymore. There is the Laodicean church."

Now here I am in 2010, and today I want to, and I mean every day I am saying here and with all my heart, and maybe most of you will not get this, but for the young men and young ladies that are someday going to run this church and already helping me in the ministry and taking on everyday responsibility, I am telling you today, to me it is very clear that it is not just the churches that have dumped the Bible, but honestly, our own church. Our own church today, Old Paths Baptist Church, has the danger of falling into being a Laodicean church. It really does. It really does. It is an incredible thing.

He says in Revelation 3:10:

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

You see that great verse there, chapter 3, verse 10? That is an incredible verse because it tells us that this is in the period before, in the Philadelphia. You have heard me say many, many times that what I want to do, well, we talked about this before we even officially started our church. My concept was to build a Philadelphia church in the middle of the Laodicean church period, and that was really a catchy little phrase, and I really threw that around a lot. Little did I know how hard that was going to be, and now I have come to the conclusion where it may be almost impossible to do. It may be impossible to do. But in that Philadelphia church, I want you to notice that God told them that there was a time coming that was going to be the hour of their temptation, and He says, "which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth." Now, that temptation is basically to cease from going and living your life by the Word of God and getting another set of standards in there that looks Christian and looks spiritual but has nothing to do with the Bible.

Then we saw in verse 11, chapter 3, last week, the other warning:

Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Here is not, and you look at that verse, here is what he says: "Hold that fast which thou hast." He is not saying, "Hold fast and hang on." That is not what he is saying. He is not saying, "Well, just hold on, I am coming," but "hold on and hold fast, and I will be there." "Hang on by your fingernails if you have to, put your legs around and hold on to it, hold on." He is not saying that. He is saying, "You have something, and somebody wants to take it from you, and you will be tempted, pressured, advised to give it up." It is not just the Bible; it is your millennial inheritance.

The Christianity that we live in today, the Christianity that this church tries to survive in, is an area where this is so true. There are years and a week go by that somebody that you do not talk to at work or from another church looks at how stupid you are because you believe one book, because you do the things that you do and believe the things that you believe, and you will be tempted to give those things up. This church will be tempted to compromise with the stands that we have. I want to be very honest with you. To you young men and young ladies, for the next 20 or 30 years, if Jesus carries His coming, and you have to take this work over, I want you to know, I feel sorry for you on one hand. This is why I understand some things that probably most of you do not understand. That is my job to see those things, and I know what is going to come this way to this church, and I know what has happened to every church where a strong leader came in and believed the Bible and laid it down and got the thing going. When he passes off the scene, almost in every case, the church just folds up and goes into the apostasy and into a mess.

The reason why they have had that happen in the past, I will also tell you this, it is because the guy, even though he may have been a great preacher and a great Bible teacher and great at a lot of things, he did not have the balance that he needed to have that he was training individuals up to take the thing over. All he was seeing was short-sighted where he was. He was not looking long down the road where he may not be there. But I am telling you, I feel sorry for it. It is going to be a fight. My biggest fight within the ministry, hands down, my biggest fight within the ministry, is to keep that attitude and spirit of Laodicea out of our own church. This church is not immune to it. It is not like a 500-pound rhinoceros coming down the steps and coming in here, and everybody is saying, "Wow, get out of the way, there is a rhinoceros!" Laodicea creeps very slowly. If you do not have the things in place to catch it, it is in before you know it.

I look at, and this is no attack to the new people coming in, but I understand that the new people getting saved and coming in, we have to be patient with them, and I will tell you why. Because many times we do not see this because we are in a world where we have everything around the Bible. Many of us have grown up in churches for years. We do not understand that the new people coming in absolutely understand nothing about what is going on in the Bible for the most part. Every once in a while, you get some people come in, and they have been in churches, and they have been around, they just got a short end of the stick, and they have a good handle. I am talking about the abundance of people that we keep getting saved to keep coming to this church. For the most part, they know absolutely nothing, and it is real easy for them to come in and just bring in and not understand what they have got to get out of their life. It happens a lot of different ways, and our job is to help them.

I taught you when we talked about the book of Nehemiah, remember the last two prayer group meetings that we had? I took the guys and I took the gals, and I quantified for you the thing in Nehemiah, and I showed you the nine gates, and I showed you the wall, and I made the comparison of what we are doing in our own church. I told you that the wall around that city, the city being a picture of the church, was the doctrine that we stand for, and then within that wall, you had nine gates where people came in and people came out. We went through all of those gates. But I told you that the job of the people that were in that city, the elders of that city, we talked about elders, the job of the elders, you had some elders that stood on top of that wall 24/7.

They worked in shifts, and their job was to look way out long range to see if there was anybody coming to attack their city. Then you had elders that were standing at the gates, and they watched as the people came in.

Remember that story back there in, well, there are two in the Bible. One is about the story of Rahab where she hides the spies, and the other one is the story of Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah, when the two angels come in and he takes them up in his house. If you notice, in both cases, everybody comes, they come right to Rahab's house, and the Sodomites in Genesis 19, they know right to go to Lot's house. Now, how did they know that? You know why? Because there were people standing at the gates to watch everybody who came in and everybody who came out, and he basically tells them over there in Genesis 19, "There are some new guys in town." How did they know that? Because in the Old Testament, there were elders at those gates, and those elders, have you ever been to a foreign country? It does not happen much when you go to Europe, but boy, I remember when we went to Africa, boy, they went through everything you had, especially if you were American, white American. Boy, they got it because they knew you were rich or they thought you were rich. They were going to hit you for everything. They hit you with an airport tax, a sidewalk tax, a restaurant tax. "Well, I have not eaten here yet." "No, but you probably will." And it hits you with every tax in the world. They all put your, you put everything out there, and everything you wanted and everything that they wanted. If you had two of, they took one, you kept one, and they went through everything you got. They went through your cameras, they went through this, they went through that, and they were looking at everything. You know why? Because they did not want you bringing any contraband into their country. Drugs were big then, and people would come down there, and they would see some of the amazing things. They would hide hash and marijuana and all those things in empty shaving cans and everything in the world. They would tear it apart one side up from down the other. Of course, they were trying to keep stuff from coming in and then keep stuff from going out.

A lot of times I thought to myself, that is what we at a church do, not in the same radical fashion, but that is what really discipleship is. That is why when people come in who do not know anything about the Bible, many times they have a lot of weird ideas about the Bible. Somebody has to go through their luggage, and in this case, that would be sitting down with discipleship, going through the Bible, teaching them the basics, and then working through the things they do not understand. You go back to Nehemiah, you know what you had? Two kinds of elders. They had the ones that look long range and the ones that look short range, and that is exactly what every church needs, and that is exactly what churches do not do. That is the reason for our Ironman groups, our prayer groups. It is a thing where in time, I am going to take you, in fact, this next couple of, this next two weeks, if you are somebody who are actually in your mind thinking, "I am going to be part of this scenario, and I am going to really be part of getting this thing down the line and be here 20 years from now or 10 years from now or whatever, and really help get this thing," because my goal is to take everything apart in this church, every fiber, every piece of it, and to show you why it works, because you are going to be standing up against the day without me looking over your shoulder that you are going to have to know these things. In the next session, these next two sessions, we are going to take, we are going to take maybe the rest of this year, and we are going to start focusing on everything about this church you need to

know from the inside. I am going to show you things that you have never seen in your life. I am going to show you how to read things. I am going to show you how you can all gear, all geared for one thing, and that is to keep you from allowing the spirit of Laodicea to move in, because that is the greatest pressure we have.

I am going to teach you the two greatest words in ministry as a leader or a pastor, especially a pastor. I am going to teach you the two greatest words in the ministry, and you might think they are some great spiritual words like "propitiation" or "justification." No, no, no. The two greatest words you will ever have in ministry in your back pocket to figure out what is going on is simply the word "least" and "most." If you get a comprehension of how to use those two words, you are pretty much guaranteed to be successful. But we are going to start tearing it apart, and we are going to start going through it, and the future of this church is still, as far as I am concerned, is still in doubt. You know why? Because I learned a great lesson years and years and years and years ago, and it is simply this: everything rises and falls on leadership. If the leadership has not developed, if I do not have the vision and the foresight to develop it, if I do not let the young men, the young ladies expand who they are and get full bore who they go, what happens when I am off the scene? I will tell you what happens is what happens in every church: it folds up. Everything in this church, as everything in life, ladies and gentlemen, rises and falls on the leadership of it. That is true of your families. That is true of your job. That is true whatever you do in life. You hear the Chiefs, and they talk about the Royals, and they talk about this, they will talk about this football player, and you will say, "You know what? He is a great, he is not only a great football player, he really pulls the team together. When they have an issue, he is there." Everything rises and falls on leadership. Everything. That is one of the greatest lessons I ever learned many, many, many, many years ago when I built my whole philosophy of ministry and life around that concept, because I am telling you, we have been already warned that there are some things that we have to hold fast or somebody is going to take them from us.

Now let us look at our word study here, Revelation 3:17. Watch this now. I already showed you that in 2 Corinthians 5:3, you found the word "naked." In 2 Corinthians 5:10, you found the word "appear," as in "appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Now watch this thing, Revelation 3:17.

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Now mark that right there: somebody is naked. Look at verse 18:

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

There it is, Revelation 19, the clothing that they are worried about in 2 Corinthians 5:1-2, "that thou mayest be clothed." And "that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Do those words appear? Naked, shame, white raiment. Because 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, "we shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," and somebody is afraid, verse 3, they are going to be naked. That warning is to us. That warning of 2 Corinthians 5 is written to us. You can take those words

and run them right back to 2 Corinthians 5, 1 Corinthians 3, and run them right back to Revelation 3:17-18 in the Laodicean church period, the church period that we are living in right now. And you can run those words back, those white raiments to clothe you. We found them in 2 Corinthians 5:1 and in Revelation 19:7-8, and we now know that they are the righteousness of the saints. "Shame of thy nakedness," Revelation 3:18. We found out in 2 Corinthians 5:3, "desiring to be clothed that we should not be found naked." "Nakedness not appear," Revelation 3:18. 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Oh, it is to us, man, it is to us. That is a word study. That is taking the words here and comparing them here and knowing the two appearances talking about the Judgment Seat of Christ.

SEC: Gold Tried in the Fire: Bearing His Reproach

Now I want to talk about another concept. If you had a problem with what I have said so far, we do not have any seat belts on these things, but can you buckle them in because you are not going to like this at all. He says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." What a foreign concept. What I am about to talk to you about right now in this next section is so foreign to God's people, I do not expect many of you to get it. I really do not. What I am about to say to you, we are so out of touch with the norm and so radically out of reality of where God's people are living their life today that the verses that I am going to show you, we probably do not even know they are in the Bible. Part of that problem is because the Bibles they are in, they have been changed so radically, you cannot get the context out of them anyhow.

Now these next couple of verses we do want to look at. Turn to Hebrews 13. We now do know that the gold is Christ, God, and we know now that when we lay that foundation, we are to build on that foundation: gold, silver, and precious stones. We now know that gold is who God is. The silver is what God did for us. And then the precious stones are the people that God puts in your life. When we come to the Laodicean church, we are also told that this church, you and me, and I am telling you, this is what we have to fear. This is what we cannot take our finger off the trigger. We have to always be on the watch for this because it is always going to be trying to creep in. The devil will find every back door that is unlocked, every back basement window that there is no latch on, and he will seep it in somehow, some way, and come in, and before we know it, it will be here, and it will do its irreparable damage. That is why we need elders on the wall, elders at the gate.

"Gold tried in the fire." Hebrews 13:12:

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

What does that mean? It means that He was crucified outside the city. That would be Gordon's Calvary if you are a historical Bible student. Everybody else teaches today that He was crucified inside the city, and we studied that when we came through church history with Constantine being the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Well, the Bible says that He was crucified outside the gate. That would be Gordon's Calvary, and that means something in the Bible. That means that when He was outside of the city, it means that His own city, because we know that He is the King of Jerusalem, it is telling us that His own city threw Him out. The Bible says He came unto His

own, and His own received Him not. He came to Jerusalem as the King of the Jews, and the importance of seeing that He is crucified outside the city is the fact that the very city and the very people who He came to threw Him out. I think we have the phrase today, "on the outside looking in."

Verse 13:

Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

This old world is not your home. Why are we so comfortable here? Why do we get along with unsaved people? Why do we get along with worldly God's people who do not like the Bible or get an attitude? How can you and I, if we are suffering with Him, they threw Him out of the city? We try to walk right down the middle of the road in Christianity today. We do not want to take a stand for nothing. We are afraid we will lose some friends. We are afraid we will lose some family members. We are afraid we will offend somebody. We are afraid that we will do this or we will do that, and this will happen. But I am telling you, if you want to buy gold tried in the fire, which is told to you and me, it has to be Him on that foundation, and the trials of your life that you go through right now, the persecution of being outside the norm, being the radical, being whatever they want to say when somebody gets their nose out of joint about this or that, you stay true to the principles of the Word of God. That is how you buy the gold tried in the fire. It is tried in the fire of this life, and it gets purged in the fire of that life. Nobody even knows that today. I will be out on a windy day with a 60-mile-an-hour gale in my face screaming into the wind.

Look at Philippians 1:29. My dear friends, my dear brethren, what do we do after these verses with our lives?

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

What are you going to do with that? Oh, you like the first part, do you not? All right, up to the fact that you have to go against a friend of yours that maybe is not doing what is right, or you have a family member, or you have this or you have that. Oh, we like the first part, we will do it on His behalf so we can believe. How about the suffering part?

Let me just say this because I know in every situation, I am not talking about suffering because you are stupid. There are a lot of God's people who are so immature, they shoot their mouth off or do things or say things, but because they do not have any, they do not have a zeal, but certainly not according to knowledge, and they are constantly getting themselves into trouble because they are an idiot, and they will grow out of it in time, and they will grow up in time, and they will learn it hopefully. But the bottom line is, I am not talking about that. I am not talking about you just reacting to something and doing something and then causing all kinds of chaos in your life, and you say, "Oh, I am suffering for Christ." No, you are suffering because you are stupid. You are suffering because you have not learned to choose your battles. You are suffering because in most cases, you have not learned yet that in every issue you deal with, I do not care who says what, I do not care who accuses who or what, I do not care what anybody says, you are

absolutely brain dead if you do not understand there are two sides to every story and get both sides before you open up your mouth. My mouth is not as big as I thought it was.

The Bible says He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. Philippians 1:29 says:

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

That is righteous suffering based on the principles, holding the line, holding fast what you have that no man take it.

Now look over there, Hebrews 12. Let us look at another one. Hebrews 12:2:

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The Bible says for the joy He endured the cross. He despised the shame. He did it for you and me, and He became the author and the finisher of our faith. Now He asks you and I to do it back for Him. I am telling you, and I have told you this before, I do not have a lot of respect for modern-day Christianity. I have met a lot of good people who love the Lord, and they are a whole different ballgame, but I will tell you what, on the average Christian that I come across in my life, it is an absolutely effeminate Christianity. It is absolutely effeminate. There is no steel in her backbone. They cave into their godless Christian friends because they do not want to make any enemies. They always take the path of least resistance. They walk the middle of the road. At the first sign of an issue or controversy, they put their tail between their legs and play the innocent bystander and run for cover. I see husbands who cannot rule their wives, wives who will not follow their husbands, and kids who will not do anything right. It is absolutely a mess, absolutely a mess.

Yet I know that it is just like it was back in the nation of Israel. I find God's people who are saved, are on their way to heaven, and they could care less about what the Bible says about their own life. The nation of Israel had the same issue. Once we finish Romans, which will be probably in another year or two, I am going to take about a month, maybe a month and a half, and we talked about this Easter when I talked about the old throwback messages, and we are going to have a month of revival messages, maybe a month and a half. We are going to literally tear the paint off of these walls. I am going to take you back to some old throwback messages that I preached 30 years ago, and I am telling you what, for about a month, just maybe a month and a half, we are going to go back down memory lane, and one of the messages I am going to preach you is found in Ezekiel 22:30. I first preached it, I have a date in my Bible, I first preached it 32 years ago. In that great passage back there, Ezekiel was faced with exactly what we are faced with today: a nation that claimed to be God's people, but they were all messed up and about as worthless as it could be. And God said in verse 30 through Ezekiel:

And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.

You know what God is looking for today? He is looking for the same men and women that the Bible says to make up the hedge, to stand in the gap. You know what that is? That is a breach in the line. That is a military concept. They have a breach in the line, and the enemy is pouring through, and He needs one man, just one man, that will make up that hedge, that will stand in that gap, and He could not find any.

Reality, it is not about coming to church. It is not about coming to Bible study. Those things are obviously going to help you. It is about you getting the right attitude of why you are even saved. It is about you getting the right concept of it is not what you do, it is why you do it, the motive behind it. How in the world are you ever going to stand in the gap for God when some of you men cannot even stand in the gap in your family? We will have session after session after session after session, we will go through the same stuff. I am making five tapes this next week, and the next time some of you come over, I am just going to give you an hour plate of tape for an hour, be the thing I said last week, because I have nothing to say. Why should I waste my time again? You want to come over and listen to the tape, listen to it. But you know what? At a certain time, you have to start taking what you hear and you start applying it to your life to solve the problems that are there. That is the reality. We do not do that today. We do not do it at all. God is looking for a man. He cannot find any today, just like He could not find any back there.

Do you, in any stretch of the imagination, based on the verses that I have just given to you, what you really have here, God has got a plan for you, and probably the very most you are going to live your life that you really have quality time to give God is maybe 20, maybe 30 years out of a whole life. Most of us do not get saved until we are 20. We fool around and dink around for another 10. Most people do not realize you sleep a third of that time. You really work it all down, we have done it on Thursday night before, probably even done it on Sunday morning. You probably got 10, 15, 20, maybe 25 years of quality time to give God. But God wants that quality time because He has got a plan for you. He has got a plan for you, and He has got something He wants you to do, and here is what it is: it is not to build a church. It is not to win people to Christ. Not that, you see, that is what we think of it. That is not reality. It is not to be part of this ministry and help me. It is not to say, "Well, I am going to be one of those ones who are going to take this church over when Bob is good, dead, and gone." It is not even that. The job that He has got for you to do, the job that He has got for you to do, is to bear His shame and reproach. That is what it is. Get in the attitude that everything you do, ladies and gentlemen, goes back to that fire off the brazen altar. Every decision you make, everything you hook up with, everything you do in your life goes back to what He did for you, and you do that by building on that foundation: gold, silver, precious stones.

Most of us cannot get past ourselves. That is our problem. We are too much in love with us. We could never fall in love with God because we love ourselves too much. We pamper ourselves too much. We would not think of suffering through anything. Well, let me tell you something, folks, you can bear the shame and the reproach. You see, I told you last week, the Judgment Seat of Christ is God's great evening out process. Do you actually think that He is going to let people all down through church history who died, tortured, martyred, gave up everything, we talked about some of them last week, do you actually think He is going to allow them to suffer and go through

and lose their families? They lose their families to typhoid fever on the mission field. You lose your family because of stupidity. You think it is going to weigh out the same? There were some of those guys that buried their wives on the mission field. You just bury yours in divorce papers. You think it is really going to, when I told you last week that everybody has exactly the same stuff to do that everybody else has, that you can actually do this, and there is no reason why you cannot, that you have everything you need? The problem is us.

I do not want to. Do you think that at the Judgment Seat of Christ, if you do not, that what people are being naked and bearing the shame and the reproach down here, that when you get to the Judgment Seat of Christ, you are going to stand next to them and you are going to be clothed? God's great evening out process. It told you in verse 3, somebody is going to be naked at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and you better groan right now and be burdened at it. It is big. Sit back and smile behind that fat face. It is big to kind of smirk when you hear things like this and you say, "All right, where do you stand in that day?" So you can blow me off. I am just a two-bit little tinhorn preacher. But where do you stand before Him? You will not blow Him off.

Why do you think it is called the terror of the Lord? It is real simple. He hung naked. He bore the reproach. He suffered. He was ridiculed. He was made fun of. He was falsely accused. He was lied about before the whole world, and they finally kicked Him out of the camp. Now you and me in this life will do the same for Him. How are you doing today? Are you bearing the shame? Are you bearing the reproach? Do you have some of your friends that will not talk to you anymore as Christians because you are going to do what is right when they are not? Or do you cave in? Are you such a lily-fish jellyfish that you cannot stand for anything? That is the Laodicean church. Told you you would not like it.

I am telling you, Bible Christianity today reminds me of homosexuals. I do not mean they are all homosexuals, whether they are men or other women. I mean, there is just an effeminacy there that they just, they do not talk like real Christians. They do not, they do not have the steel in their backbone. They do not have the gravel in their gut. They just cannot stand for anything. But there is a day coming. If you think, and it is real quick, real simple, you either bear the reproach down here for 10, 20 years and bear the shame and the nakedness and the burden here, or when you get to the Judgment Seat of Christ for a thousand years, I cannot think of a more shameful thing than a glorified body in the image of Jesus Christ that everybody on the planet earth into the millennium and however long it goes, everybody knows everything of what Christ did, and now know the reason why you are naked is because in this life what God had you to do, you told God to stick it, and you would not bear the shame, you would not bear the reproach. You were too busy doing your thing. Well, now He is going to do His thing. You bear the shame here, or you bear it over there. 1 Corinthians 3 told you the mechanics. This one shows you why it is called the terror of the Lord. He is going to even it out, folks.

SEC: The Ministry of Reconciliation and Future Accountability

Get mad at me all you want. I do not care. I am just telling you what the book says. You can get mad at me all you want. You cannot like my style, the way I do things. That is your call. But I am

telling you right now, you may not know it, I am your best friend you have today. I am telling you about a day that is coming your way.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

That is what I am doing. That is all I do. That is all I am doing. I am trying to persuade you. If you are unsaved here, I try to persuade you to get saved. If you are saved, I have had to try to persuade you to see there is a Judgment Seat of Christ coming. I try to appeal to your conscience. Can you sit there, and you know today, he says, "and I trust also I am made manifest in your conscience." What does that mean? I will tell you what it means. You can have a smile on your face. You can pretend like you are happy that you are all taking this in, and the bottom line is simply this: right now, what I have said, take me out of it, what I have said from the Word of God has made manifest with your conscience. You know you are either in or you are out. There is no middle ground this morning. There is no pretending. The pretending is on the outside. That is why this body has to be dissolved, and the one that goes before the Lord is the real one. You are not getting it.

My whole life, your whole life, 24/7, is to persuade men to get saved, and then people who are saved, to persuade them to realize that there is a day coming. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are manifested unto God." He says, "I am just preaching what God told me to preach, and I trust also that what I am preaching, not only is that God manifesting with me to preach it, but God's Spirit is manifesting in your conscience that you are either right with God this morning or you are not."

Verse 17:

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

That is a great verse. And because that all things are of God, watch this:

Who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

You see, I am not preaching today because I am mad at you. I am not preaching today because I think I am better than you. I pray I am probably worse than you. I am not preaching today because I am some hunchback, three-headed monster up here that just likes to get up and get everybody's face, though I do enjoy that. I am persuading you to reconcile yourself to God. If you are an unsaved person, you need to reconcile by getting saved. It is just that simple. If you are an unsaved person, you need to reconcile to God and get the attitude right. Get whatever you have to do, change whatever you have to do, get whatever problem you have with whoever it may be taken care of. I am telling you, brother, you better listen to me. There are some things that you and I better reconcile with God and with each other before He gets here, because the ministry from this verse in 18, I will read it again: "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." The ministry is simply two things:

1. The ministry of persuading men and women.
2. Once we persuade them, we persuade them to be reconciled back to God, and then we reconcile each other through the process.

That is the concept. There is going to be a day when you are going to stand. I cannot think of anything more shameful and anything in any context of the Bible for a child of God who is saved to stand before that Judgment Seat of Christ and God take everything from him, and for the next 1000 years you walk up through the millennium stark naked where everybody looks at you and you bear the shame of the one. Here is the problem: this is why you do not like this, and I am telling you now, because some of you do not. One of the things old Sabach taught me early on in preaching was, "Watch people's faces when you preach. It will tell you where to go and what to say. It will tell you what not to say. It will tell you when you need to back up and say what you thought you should not have said." I know why you do not like it. You do not have the reality of it. You think that is a terrible thing for God to do. Some of you are back there sitting like, "I just do not think God could do that." Oh, no, no, no. God will let His Son hang on the cross, agonize on the cross, be ripped naked on the cross, and go through all that He would for you. But He wants you, you want to get there, you want to get there in a Lincoln Continental. You want to live your life the way you want to, while somebody else out there in Africa or someplace in the world is burning their life out, or even here in this country, burning their life out for God with the right attitude, and you want to get there. You see, that is the problem. We do not have a reality.

That is what a pastor ought to do every Sunday and every time he gets in a pulpit: turn from whatever channel you are watching to the reality channel and bring a good dose right to you, because in this world, we go out of here. By the time you leave here, turn on a radio, watch TV this afternoon, visit with your friends, call them, and do all the things that you do. The reality will start to suck right out of your life. Maybe go right back where you were. The reality is this: this is why you do not like it, but you do not know that the only thing that we can get the right attitude about the Judgment Seat of Christ and see this thing for what it is, is building on that foundation: gold, silver, and precious stones. Getting to understand what He did for you in its entirety. When you understand that, you will have no problem with what I am preaching this morning. You will have absolutely no problem with you or somebody standing there, me standing there naked before the 1000 years because we refused to give it up down here.

Let me close with this, and I use this many, many times, so it is old to some of you, but it makes the point. Let us say that I come up to you right after here and I say, "Hey, look, I am in a jam. I do not have an ATM card. The banks are all closed, and I have to have \$20. I just have to have \$20." Now, I do not know if you know this or not, but I just won a big sweepstakes, and I have \$100,000 in the bank, but I cannot get to the bank, and I have to have \$20, and I do not have a dime. I will tell you what I will do. I am so desperate for you to give me \$20 that if you give me \$20 now, tomorrow morning you come to my house, we will go to the bank, and I will give you \$1,000 back just to show you that I really need this, and you are trusting me and giving me this. I am going to give it back, and I am going to reward you for that. Now, who would not do that? If you knew the person, if somebody comes up on your porch at two o'clock in the morning, do not do it, but you know the person, and sure enough, tomorrow morning you get there, you drive to

the bank, and he writes you out a check for \$1,000. He gets out of there, you have \$1,000. Wow, \$20 for \$1,000. Who cannot grasp that concept?

Okay, here it comes. God wants 20 years of your life, maybe 30, but probably no more than 20. By the time we get done fooling around and do all the stupid things we do, we probably have 20 years left to give Him. But if you give Him that 20 years over there, He will give you \$1,000 back for a thousand-year reign. You will reign with Him. If you want to live like a servant down here, if you want to bear the reproach down here, you will look like a king over there. If you want to live like a king down here, then you will live like a shameful servant over there. It is just simple. What is so hard about that? You have already seen the passage that says somebody is going to be naked. You have already seen the passage that says that we are to bear His reproach without the camp, that we are, it is more than just believing on Him. We have been called more than just to believe on Him. We have also been called to bear His shame. What are you going to do with that?

Next week, I am going to close out this series, and I am going to show you in the Bible at the Judgment Seat of Christ there are six questions you are going to have to answer. He is going to ask you six basic questions. Next week would be a good time to get sick. You might as well stay home and be sick as to come here and not do what is right and be sick. Next week will put us all on our knees. Next week is going to violate and invade every secret part of your life and everything you have. I am telling you right now, it will search down into every crevice of your life, and it will ferret out everything, and none of us, none of us, none of us, it is not like, "Well, I am going to preach to you." None of us will be left standing when we are done. It will be a throwback message before we get to the throwback month, but I am guaranteeing right now, it is the only way to end this thing. I am giving you every answer. I am giving you every Bible verse. I am giving you everything. You know now, I am going to give you answers to the questions and the answers on the test, and yet with all of that, with all of that, we still will not do what is right.

Let us pray. Father, we do thank You.