

## I. Introduction to the Wisdom Books

Every book of the Bible has a natural breakdown. For instance, on the board back there is the book of Numbers. We just did that Thursday night. I take the first 10 or 15 minutes on Thursday night and I give you an outline of how each book of the Bible, starting from the beginning, actually breaks down so you can put it in your Bible.

I also told you that the Lord Jesus Christ is the predominant character in the Bible, along with the devil, of course. I told you that when God put the Bible together, He wrote His Son into every book of the Bible. Moses wrote about Christ. In fact, Jesus Himself said, "If you believe Moses, you are to believe Me, for he wrote of Me."

What I have been trying to do on Sunday mornings is take three or four books of the Bible, not to go through them in any great depth or detail, but to show you how Christ is portrayed. This is why we have some of the tables set up back here, because some of the folks want to try to get their notes down right now. Others will use those little digital recorders, as we talked about, or get their notes the best they can here, or get the CD back there and go home and work it out.

I told them, if you stay up with us on a weekly basis, book by book, and simply get each book down, the material you are going to have is invaluable in helping you understand the Bible, and that is really the key. We have come up through the Bible now, and now we are going to enter into what we call the wisdom books. We are going to go through and look at these, and you are going to see that these five books go together as a complete set as portraying the Lord Jesus Christ.

I also told you that we looked at Esther last time, I believe, and I showed you how Esther stood alone. But many of these books follow a pattern or a series, showing you how Christ is portrayed, and the wisdom books are probably the greatest section you will ever get into. I personally believe that the wisdom books are the key to your understanding and getting your Bible and your relationship down.

As I said, they are called the wisdom books. If you study them carefully, you will find that the thing that makes them so valuable is that they basically contain every emotion, every feeling, every issue of life, every up, every down, every struggle. Within these five books, you are going to find unearthed and uncovered every emotional thing that you are ever going to deal with. You are going to find that these books lay out every issue of life. You are going to find that they will give you advice on how to deal with circumstances, and they are all based on the wisdom of God.

I have always thought that was an interesting thing about these, and you want to get this material down and put it someplace, I would say at the first one, maybe Job, where you have some room and just some things about the wisdom books that you will want to know.

> 1.) There are five of them.

➤ 2.) I always thought it was interesting who the authors were. Solomon writes three of them. Solomon is a type of God the Father in the Bible. So we find that Solomon writes three of those wisdom books. David writes one of them, and David is a great type of Christ in the Bible. So there is the second part of the Godhead. Then the book of Job is written by Elihu, and Elihu is a type of the Holy Spirit of God. So the wisdom books in your Bible are written by three men who portray and picture in type God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. That is very important for you to understand and to see that.

We talk about core values in our world today, as I mentioned a few moments ago. That is a big word today. We talk about things that are grassroots, going back to the fundamentals of things. Many times you talk about the baseline of something, the baseline being the bottom line on the thing. As far as I am concerned, these five wisdom books are the core value system of the Bible. I believe that everything else in the Bible comes back to these five books, and I am going to show you that as we come through this this morning.

## II. Overview of the Five Wisdom Books

For instance, take the book of Job. In the book of Job, you have a picture of you and I going through the trials and tribulations of this life. That is what the book of Job is about in an inspirational application. In the book of Job, you have a man who, for seven days and seven nights, loses everything in those seven days and feels all the emotional expense of those seven days, everything that you and I will never experience in a lifetime.

So when you come to the book of Job, you find the trials of life laid out for you, and Job portrays for you and me the unhappy man, a man whose life has turned against him, a man or a woman who has lost everything. Many times it is hard to imagine the emotional trauma or the depression or all of the emotional swings that Job must have gone through. When you read Job, you can see that. Not only did Job lose his health and all his material possessions, but he got a disease in his body that was so painful that it was absolutely unbelievable what he went through. On top of that, his three friends show up and accuse him of going through what he is going through because he was not right with God and there was some sin in his life, when the Bible says that there was no sin in his life. Add to that his lovely wife, who, as she brings him aspirin, looks at him and says, "Curse God and die." So, he is a picture of somebody like you and I who goes through some trials in his life and makes us unhappy.

Then we have the book of Psalms. Where Job lays out the trials of life, the book of Psalms lays out the blessings of life. We are going to look at it as we get to it. I am just giving you this. As I said, you need to put this someplace in your Bible, and you will find in Psalms a happy man, a contrast. Job was an unhappy man; Psalms will be a happy man.

Then you have the book of Proverbs. Where you found in Job the trials of life, where you found in Psalms the blessings of life, you find in Proverbs the understanding of life. Proverbs is about a wise man. We will talk about that when we get there.

Then the next book we have is the book of Ecclesiastes. Where Job helps us understand the trials of life, and Psalms helps us understand the blessings of life, and Proverbs helps us understand life in itself, the book of Ecclesiastes helps us understand the world in this life. So in the book of Ecclesiastes, we see the worldly man.

Then we have the book of Song of Solomon. The Song of Solomon helps us understand the Lord Jesus Christ in your life. So in the book of Song of Solomon, you have a picture of the heavenly man.

In these five books, in my humble opinion, you will notice that these five books are stuck right in the middle of your King James 1611 Authorized Version. They are right in the middle; in other words, all the rest of your Bible is built around and built around the centerpiece, which are these five books of the Bible.

I do not know if you know this or not, but the center verse in your Bible—and you cannot get one center verse, you have to get two—the center two verses in the middle of your Bible are Psalms 103:1-2. I think it is very appropriate for these two verses to be the center of your Bible, because this is really what life is all about.

*Psalms 103:1-2*

*Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*

*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:*

Do you know that is a great verse to be the central verse in the Bible? That is exactly what you and I should do in our lives. That is a great verse. These five books are going to really lay some things out. The 66 books of your Bible are centralized around five wisdom books. These five wisdom books form the complete balance for you and for me as a child of God. I believe these five wisdom books are the heart and soul of the Bible. I believe that just as they are the heart and soul of the Bible, these five wisdom books ought to be the heart and soul of every child of God on planet earth after you get saved. It ought to be your goal to get these five books down to the place where you understand, because certainly you are going to have to go through the trials of this life, and the only thing that is going to get you through is going to be the wisdom of God.

### III. Five Missing Elements in Christianity

I believe these five wisdom books, stuck right in the middle of your Bible, are your key to God in our relationship and our walk with Him. I have observed God's people for many, many years. I have been in ministry for almost 40 years, and I have dealt with a host of people. God has been good to me in my ministry over the years, and I have gotten to see a lot of people get used to God. I have gotten to see many, many young men and young ladies go into the ministry, and yet I have seen many people who did not make it.

I look at Christianity today, and if somebody would ask me, "What do you think is missing in Christianity today that God's people, who ought to have the victory in Christ Jesus, who are the aristocracy of heaven—the Bible says that we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ—why are God's

people so defeated today in their life? Why cannot God's people, who are saved and on their way to heaven, not have the victory that the Bible says we should have?"

I have come down to the conclusion over the years that there are five reasons for that. There are five missing elements in your life and my life that keep us from ever having the victory or being what God wants us to be. Ladies and gentlemen, these five missing elements are found in these five wisdom books. This is very important, and you want to get these things down.

➤ 1.) The first thing that is a great deterrent to our relationship with God, and we are going to talk about these in a little greater detail as we work through them, so I may give them to you now and we will come back and talk about them later. But the first thing that God's people are shallow on, and this is one of the absolute missing ingredients in God's people's life, is that we do not understand the price that was paid for you and for me on Calvary's cross. We think about Christ dying on the cross with the same thought process we do about going and ordering something through the drive-through of McDonald's. We do not have a thought process about the sufferings of Christ on that cross for you and for me. Without that concept of understanding the suffering of God, you will never understand your part in this life. You will never understand when things come into your life how to deal with them, because the suffering of God will always bring you in direct relationship to what you are going through in your life. The suffering of God is found in the book of Job. We are going to look at it here in a little bit. You will want a book in your Bible that lays out and begins to lay out for you the suffering of God. It will be the book of Job.

➤ 2.) The second missing element in the Bible that I see all the time in Christians is the fact that we do not understand God's heart. We are so far from what God wants us to be. Have you ever noticed an older couple that has been married for 50, 60 years, how they just understand each other's movements and after a while even begin to look alike? They have done everything together for 50, 60 years, and they think alike. One knows what the other one is going to think, and they have got it all worked out, and that is because through the process of 40, 50, 60 years of marriage, they have learned each other's heart. I know that is hard to believe in the world that we live in, because most marriages do not last past two or three years anymore. But you find a couple that has been married for 40, 50 years, somebody that has really been through some things together, raised some kids, lost some jobs, went through all the heartaches of life, and are still together and still pulling together and working together, you are going to find that the thing that got them through was them two becoming more like each other. That is the same

concept we ought to have with God. The longer you walk with Him, the more you should be like Him. The more you walk with Him and go through life with Him, the more you ought to begin to think and get His heart and look and see where His heart is. Most of God's people do not even have a clue today where God's heart is. The heart of God, that will be the book of Psalms. We will talk about it.

➤ 3.) Then we have the third missing element: the mind of God. Knowing what God thinks, knowing how God looks at things. Do you realize that Christianity today is in a terrible mess because Bible Christianity, as it is called today, is so far from where God wants it to be? It does not even resemble what it was in the early New Testament church or in the greatest period of time just a couple of hundred years ago, which was the Philadelphia Church Age. When you talk about the Philadelphia Church Age, most Christians just look at you like you are a tree full of owls. They do not even understand. They have no point of reference or relevance to the greatest period of time in the history of the church and the greatest Christians in the greatest church who understood what God's mind was. Do you want to know where God's mind is? That will be the book of Proverbs.

➤ 4.) Then we have the mind of the Spirit. The mind of the Spirit has to do with what the Spirit of God is doing today. What is the job of the Holy Spirit? What does the Holy Spirit of God do for you? What does He do before you are saved? What does He do after you are saved? What does the Holy Spirit of God do all day long when He does not have to deal with you and me? What is His basic foundational job? What does He do? What is His function? There will be some parts all the way back in the book of Genesis where the Bible says that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Do you know what I find interesting about that? That is the first place. That is called the law of first mention. That is the first time you find the Spirit of God in the Bible. The first time you find the Spirit of God in the Bible, it is moving. Do you know what? It never stops. Do you know what the book of Ecclesiastes does for you? Do you have any clue? It tells you the direction of the Holy Spirit of God and shows you the pattern of the Holy Spirit of God. These books are quite incredible. They really are.

➤ 5.) Then the last thing, the fifth element that most shallow Christians do not have today, is they do not have the mind of Christ. You probably think that the mind of Christ and the mind of God are one and the same, but they are not. For the mind of Christ, you will find the book of Song of Solomon. We will talk about that when we get there. But the mind of Christ, the mind of the Spirit of God, and the mind of God are three different minds which blend together, which cover the

whole expanse of that Bible which is laid out on that chart up there. When you want to talk about the mind of God, we are going to talk about God's dealing with Israel. When you want to talk about the Holy Spirit of God, you are going to talk about God's dealing with the movement of the Holy Spirit of God down through this world and down through history. When you want to talk about the mind of Christ, you are going to talk about the church, you and me, and putting it into that perspective. So these three books, or these five books, make a complete set unto themselves that the rest of the Bible and our Christian life should be built on.

That is basically the intro material that you want to get, and you want to get that stuff down because that stuff is incredibly important. That kind of gives you a prelude to these wisdom books. I could stand up here probably for four or five weeks just going through all of the things about these books, but that will get you going and get you in the right frame as far as when you look at them, and then we will talk about how Christ is portrayed in each one of these.

#### IV. The Book of Job: Christ Our Suffering Savior

Let us talk about the book of Job for a moment. I know that historically the book of Job is about a man named Job, but let us step beyond that for a moment and let us look at it as Christ being typified in the book of Job. In the book of Job, Christ is typified as our suffering Savior. The New Testament verse that you will want for that will be in Hebrews 13:12.

*Hebrews 13:12*

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

That is a great verse in Hebrews, and it shows you a number of things, but it shows you most important of all that Christ suffered. In the book of Job, you begin to see that suffering as it is laid out. As far as the sufferings of Christ, Job chapter 30 is probably the premier chapter in the Old Testament. I have given you these before, and I will run through them again just so you have them, you new folks, but we are going to look at Job chapter 30 here in just a moment, and I am going to show you how the suffering of Christ is portrayed there.

When you look at this through the sufferings of Christ, I want you to hear what I am saying now. The theme of this book in a New Testament light, the theme of this book for you and for me, forget about the doctrine on Job being a type of a tribulation, forget about the historical. Let us just look at it as the book lays itself out for you and for me, and in a practical application, how this book relates to us, the suffering of Christ.

The only way, and this is what you get out of the book of Job once you get it nailed down, the only way to get through and to endure the sufferings of this life as a Christian—and I am going to tell you, the Bible says that all that live righteously in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. God's people think that because they get saved, because they go to church, that that exempts

them from suffering. It is just the contrary. It is the suffering of this world that we must suffer with Christ, that we are to be in fellowship with that suffering, the Bible says.

When you realize that in this life you are going to go through some things, most of God's people do not handle the problems of life well. They do not. Something will come into their life that will make them depressed, or they will get into some kind of bipolar concept, or they will get into some kind of deal where they just do not deal with life basically the way that they should. The reason why they do not, very frankly, is because in many cases, not because they are bad people. I think that most of the problems God's people have simply stem from the fact they have never had a pastor sit down with them and open up the Bible and help them walk through their problems, help them see in the Word of God not only what their problem is but how to fix their problem.

You cannot solve the problems that you have, no matter what they are, with the same thinking that got you into those problems. Somebody has to help you reverse your pattern of thought. Somebody has to help you not only deal with your problem but show you out. I mean, I could throw out a thousand. You come to me and say, "Well, I have this problem." I could just write you out a prescription just like a doctor does. But you see, the doctor does not ever check up on you afterwards. I mean, he cannot. I mean, he just cannot, but would it not be nice if you had a doctor that gave you a prescription and said, "Take your pill before meal," and right about five o'clock the phone rang and it is your doctor saying, "Hey, I just wanted to see. Are you taking your medicine okay? Did you take it with the meal like it said on the deal? Are you feeling all right?" Wow, what kind of doctor could we hope to have like that? They do not do that, but preachers should do that. We need to come to the point where we help you get through whatever issue you are going through.

The book of Job will show you that the only way to get through to endure the suffering in this life as a Christian is to understand and comprehend, first of all, the suffering that Christ suffered for you. You will never deal with your problems in life until you have something to match it up against as far as a reference point. You will never deal with suffering. You will never go through. You will never put up with it. It will defeat you every time if you do not understand and comprehend the suffering that Christ suffered for you. That is why the book of Job really does.

Job got to the point in his life where I have been at many times in my life, where God's people should be in their life all the time. In Job 13:15, I think it is one of the greatest verses in all of the book of Job, and Job is going through the height of his turmoil. He is going through the height of his agony, his depression, his suffering, and all that he is going through. His wife has already nailed him. His friends are clobbering him up left and right, and what does he do? He says:

*Job 13:15*

*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.*

The key to Job's success and ultimate victory was understanding the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, Job chapter 30, I want to read this to you here. It is the whole chapter. It is worth going through. I want to point out some things to you. Along with this, you will find that the Old Testament is filled with the sufferings of Christ. Most people only read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to get a good picture of the crucifixion, and very frankly, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have no picture of the crucifixion at all other than just the sketchy outline. There is recorded for you in the Old Testament the very thoughts, and I do not know if you know this or not, but on the day the Lord Jesus Christ is crucified, which is Wednesday, He is taken in about four or five o'clock in the morning before Pilate. He goes to the cross about nine o'clock in the morning, and then He is crucified, and the Bible says from the sixth to the ninth hour that is when God turns His back on His Son, and He winds up dying right before the sixth hour.

All those events can be very carefully sketched out for you in the four Gospels without any question about it. What you cannot get in the Gospels is what is going on in His mind when He is on that cross. The Gospels show you the concept, but it is the Old Testament passages that take you in and literally, ladies and gentlemen, show you exactly what He is thinking, what He is feeling, what He is enduring, His fears, His ups, His downs, His fear of God forsaking Him. Every agony and suffering on that cross is not found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It is found in the Old Testament. It is found in the Old Testament. That is where you begin to understand in places like Psalms 89:35, the great places like Isaiah 53:4, Isaiah 52:13-15, Psalms 22, Job 16:10 is another one, and Isaiah 50:8, along with that we have Job chapter 30.

Now let me read this for you here, and we will make some parallels here.

*Job 30:1-31*

*But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.*

*Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age is perished?*

*For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste.*

*Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat.*

*They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;)*

*To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.*

*Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.*

*They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth.*

*Up through verses 1 through 8, it is talking about basically the nation of Israel. It is a short, concise history of the nation of Israel as far as how they have always been against God and always tried to get around God. Within the nation of Israel, there was always an element that hated God. That element now has brought itself forth at the final, when they are going to crucify the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Now look at verse 9. Here is where it picks it up.*

*Job 30:9*

*And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword.*

*A byword is a disparaging thing. It is not a good thing. It is making fun of somebody. It is belittling somebody. Of course, if you know your New Testament, this would line up with Matthew 27:41-43, where they mocked Him when He is there and made fun of Him.*

*Job 30:10-11*

*They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.*

*Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.*

*It is all recorded for you in the New Testament. That is a picture of God taking a bridle off a horse. The horse can go wherever he wants to do. In other words, what he is saying here is up to this point, God had bridled them. They could not do whatever they wanted to do. They could not kill Him whenever they wanted to kill Him because God had a bridle on Him. Now He is saying God has taken off the bridle, and of course, they are going to crucify Him, and they are going to put Him under all the suffering of the cross.*

*Job 30:12-15*

*Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.*

*They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.*

*They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me.*

*Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.*

*Showing them Matthew 27:35, Psalms 22, where they are piercing their hands and His feet and crucifying Him. Now there is a good emotional statement. In the Bible, water is like emotion, and in here, it is a picture of Him in terror being taken by the Roman soldiers. God turning His back on Him. All the fear and all of what He knows is coming, and all the emotion and all the struggle, and He is talking about the people and all that is happening comes over Him like a giant wave.*

*Water in the Bible can be a picture of your emotional stability or instability. Have you ever noticed water? Water can basically, you take a big bucket of water and you pour it out on this pulpit. It just runs everywhere, and that is a picture of our emotions many times. Water and emotions are much alike in the Bible. Many people's emotions have no containment. They just go. Water will get into everything. Water will find its way. It always seeks its highest level. It will get into every crack, every crevice. It will show up. You may have a leak on the other side of your roof, and it will show up in your bedroom on the other side of the house. Water always finds a*

way to get where it wants to go, and it is uncontrollable. When you get a leak like that in your roof, try to find it and isolate it. It will take you. You have to get an expert to come in to track that thing back or stand up there with a flashlight and watch it run down the eaves to where it goes and comes out the other side. Water is very hard to deal with. Emotional problems are very hard to deal with, and so he is saying here that his emotions are sweeping over him, and it is like water.

Now you take that same gallon of water and you put an aquarium up here, glass sides on it, dump that water in that. Water does not go anywhere but in that aquarium. Do you know why? The aquarium is built with walls that contain the water. That is the way your life and my life are supposed to be. It is the Bible and the Bible principles that help contain your emotions so they are not all over the place. When people do not have that containment, they do not have the Bible principles, then their emotions, just like water, spill out everywhere. The only way to control your emotions is to get some kind of containment for your emotions, and that containment has to be something that has structure to it that keeps the emotions, as water here, just going everywhere.

*Job 30:16-18*

*And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.*

*My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest.*

*By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.*

See that thing? Like water. "Now my soul is poured out upon me." That would be Matthew 27:28, where they strip Him of His coat. They take His coat and give Him the robe of Rome instead of the garment that He wore. But yet look at verse 18, "By the great force of my disease." Most people probably would not know what that word disease means, but let me, you want to put this note in your Bible. He says there in verse 18, "By the great force of my disease is my garment changed." Now His disease was not like He was sick of the flu or He had some kind of ailment. The disease that He took upon Him was your sin and my sin.

That is a great key in your Bible that sin here is called disease, and the reason why it is, is that when you go back in the Old Testament in the book of Leviticus, there are certain diseases, leprosy and things like that, that are legitimate diseases, but they are a picture of sin in a person's life. Leprosy starts, it can only get a ground, a foothold, and grow in completely filthy, dirty places. It comes from uncleanness of not washing and coming to the place where you do not wash your body, and it becomes filthy, and that is where the leprosy began. That is where sin begins spiritually. Leprosy is something that eats your body till it consumes you. Sin is something that eats your body till it consumes you, and of course, one physical, one spiritual, but that is why the word disease, that disease that He is talking about there, is your sin and my sin being put on Him on the cross of Calvary.

*Job 30:19-21*

*He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.*

*I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not.*

*Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.*

*We know that dust and ashes is a picture of the lamenting back in the Old Testament. Talking about crying unto God, "and thou dost not hear me." "I stand up, and thou regardest me not." Of course, this would be Matthew 27:45-46. This is where the sixth and the ninth hour, when God turns His back on His Son, notice, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Got no answer from God. "Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me." Jesus Christ talking about God the Father and God dealing with Him on the cross.*

*These are things that you need to see, that God turned His back on His own Son, and if you are going to go through the sufferings of life and face them and deal with them, you are going to have to realize, may I say this candidly, you are nothing special. I am nothing special. Why should Jesus Christ go through the agony and the sufferings of the cross for you and for me, but me not be willing to go through it for Him? That is really the bottom line. The difference is He related to the Word of God and never gave up on the principles. We have to learn those principles to contain ourselves within the structure by which we are going through.*

*Job 30:22-25*

*Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.*

*For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.*

*Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.*

*Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?*

*That is a picture of Him picking up the cross after He is nailed on it. This is an interesting thing. Here is a good comparison. Here is Christ thinking these things while He is being crucified. Do you know what He is thinking? He is thinking, "All my life I did absolutely nothing but help people. There was not one thing in my life," He is saying, "that I ever did to hurt anybody." It is a true statement. Jesus was the only man in the world who never did anything wrong to anybody, yet He is the only man in the world nobody wants anything to do with. It is one of the greatest enigmas that you are ever going to find down through history. He said, "Did not I weep for him that was in trouble?" He wept for Lazarus. He wept over Jerusalem. He wept over Israel's spiritual condition. Did He not help the poor? He gave eyesight back to the blind. He helped blind Bartimaeus along the roadside. He did everything that He was supposed to do.*

*Job 30:26*

*When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.*

*Have you ever had a day like that? Oh, you are relating to what I am saying this morning. Have you ever had a day, have you ever had a part in your life where you did good for somebody, and it just comes back and you get the short end of the stick? Do you ever help somebody and be there for somebody? That is what the ministry is. The ministry is giving out yourself to people so*

*they can come back and clobber you with a telephone pole. That is what Christianity is. But you see, you do not understand how to deal with all of that, and what happens, you wind up taking it personally. I guarantee you, most of the problems we have this morning, and I do not even know what all your problems are, but I can guarantee you this, most of the problems we have this morning are based on the fact that we are trying to deal with them our own way instead of understanding them through the sufferings of Christ and getting some kind of reference point in it.*

*Job 30:27-31*

*My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me.*

*I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.*

*I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.*

*My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.*

*My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.*

*This will be John 19:28, Luke 23:44-46, where the sixth and the ninth hour again, where there is darkness, no sun, the earthquake comes in. This is where He cries out, "I thirst." This is where He says, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and gives up the ghost. This is where He pays the price for you and for me. I will never fully understand this. I do not understand how that in three hours, the sixth and the ninth hour, Jesus Christ could have paid for the sin debt for every man and woman that ever lived on planet earth for all of eternity in three hours' time. When you multiply that agony of one man and put on that everybody who ever lived down through history, and then add to that the magnification for all of eternity, I cannot even imagine, but the Bible gives you a hint here as it does in Psalms 89 and Isaiah 53 and Job 16.*

*He says, "My bowels boiled, and rested not." "The days of affliction prevented me." "I went mourning without the sun." "I stood up, and I cried in the congregation." "I am a brother to dragons." That is a devil. Isaiah 27, Revelation 12 and 13, that is the devil. "I am a brother to dragons, a companion to owls." Owls in the Bible are unclean animals. They are a picture of demons back in the Old Testament. "My skin is black upon me." Black from being burnt. "And my bones are burned with heat." You see, this is on the cross. This is that sixth to the ninth hour when He is on the cross, and He is feeling the heat and the burning of what you and I would have suffered all of eternity. "My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep."*

*Understanding the suffering of God in this life for you and for me that we have got to go through is based on your understanding of God's suffering for you and me in this life. Death is the great reality. It really is. I deal with people all the time, and people, they just have a complete misunderstanding with God. I have talked to people over the years, and they have lost a boy or they have lost a loved one, and they actually get mad at God about it. I have had people look at me and say, "Why did God take my son?" I have had people say to me, "I look at the, I have seen guys get killed in Afghanistan and Iraq and those places, and it is a terrible thing, and they come*

*back and people say, 'I do not understand why God let that happen. I do not understand why God took my uncle, my mother, my father, my son, my whoever.' I do not understand why God did not let that happen."*

*Do you know what? That is the first indication you do not have a clue about God. First of all, God did not let that happen. That was not God's plan. Have you forgotten that God's plan had no death in it? Have you forgotten that God's plan was back in Genesis 3 where everything was fine? You had no problems whatsoever. It was man that brought sin into this world, and the Bible tells you when sin came in because of one man, death came along with it. It was not God's plan, it was man's plan.*

*Do you know what God did? After you and I screwed it up, God had a perfect plan that we were going to be everything that God wanted us to have. We were going to have everything and just as fine as you could want it. No death, no hospitals, no cancer, no tuberculosis, no nothing. But oh no, no, no, just like today in your life and my life, man thought he knew better than God and brought sin into this world, and when sin came, death. Do you know what God did? Do you know what He should have done? He should have just said, "I am moving on to the next planet." That is what He should have done. He said, "I said, man, I made a lot more of those suckers out there. I am going to go find me one and start this whole process over again and just let these people do whatever they are going to do because in 500 years they will kill themselves off." That is what He should have done, but that is not what He did. After you and I screwed it up, then He came down and died so you and I could get out of the mess that we got ourselves into.*

*The audacity for somebody to say, "Well, God killed my son," or "God did not kill anybody." If you had been Adam and Eve and I had been Adam and Eve in the garden, we would have made the same choice. You say, "How do you know that?" Because we make the same bad choices every day. You have God living in your life just like I had Him in mine, like Adam and Eve had Him there, and we still make the bad choices today. There is nothing wrong with God, ladies and gentlemen. Have you not figured out yet there is something wrong with us? We are the problem. We are the problem.*

*I talked to a person one time, years ago, that lost a son, and they said, "Well, you know what, I just do not understand why God took my son." I said, "You do realize that God lost His Son when He was 33?" He looked at me like he was serious and said, "Yeah, but God resurrected His Son." I said, "Hey, pal, He is going to resurrect your son someday." That was the whole process. God knew because we screwed it up. He came down and made a way that you could, you might die now, but you are going to live forever. You have to get your eyes off of this world now, and you have to see the one that is coming. It is not about this. The book of Ecclesiastes will tell you when we get there, people are born, people die. It is a cycle that comes into this world because of sin. God did not bring the sin in. We brought the sin in, and with sin came death. God made a way that you could have an eternity with your loved ones just past this little bit of time in life.*

*Do you know what our problem is? We look at where we are living right now because we have got so many, we are like the pharaohs. Have you ever studied the Egyptians? Have you ever looked at the great pyramids or the great tombs? Did you ever see over there when they buried*

*the pharaohs or somebody that was very rich or very powerful or very political, man, they buried everything with them. They found their horses buried with them. They found their servants buried with them. They found boats buried with them. They found food caches buried with them. They found all of their artifacts. They found all of their clothes put in the tomb. Do you know why? Because they thought they were going to need those things in an afterlife. Boy, what a great reality check that was when Pharaoh the fifth or whoever he was stepped out of this life and was in the pit of hell burning and realized that none of that stuff was going to do him any good.*

*Let me tell you something. I have done a lot of funerals, many, many funerals, and I get to ride the car right behind the hearse, and I will tell you one thing I have observed of every funeral I have ever done: there are no trailer hitches on the hearse. No boats. I did read about a guy down in Texas one time, he loved his '47 Cadillac or '57 Cadillac, and they had him buried in this Cadillac. That is one way to get great gas mileage because you are not going anywhere. It does not matter. It is not about this life. It is about focusing on the next life. It is about realizing that you have to get through your suffering.*

*God lost His Son. He had all the agony. He went through all the grief. He went through all the turmoil. I guarantee you, I am telling you this right now, that day when Christ died on the cross was the hardest day in God's world, anytime, any place, anywhere. In 1 Kings, one angel, one angel in one night, killed 186,000 men, one angel in one night. And God is standing there. He turned His back on His Son, and He let the world abuse Him and mock Him and pull out His beard, put the nails in His hands and His feet. I just see that event so many times when I am reading this. When He put Him on that cross and He cries out to His Father, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Your mind, you and me, was on the mind of God. That is why He forsook Him.*

*I guarantee you, my friend, they are sitting around there and they are shooting dice for His garments, and they are going through everything. Those soldiers got the detail to stick around Him. I know soldiers. They wanted to get down in town. They wanted to do something and have a great time. They were stuck with this detail. Everybody was disbanding and going away. Christ was hanging on that cross, and those soldiers are standing down there guarding it, and they are talking about, "Well, we drew this blankety-blank duty and this blankety-blank Jew." God is standing up in heaven, and God is looking down at His Son, hanging on that cross for you and for me. God just about had all He can take. That soldier said, "Yeah, we cannot get away from here until that old blankety-blank Jew dies." And the soldier said, "Yeah, we are going to be downtown for you now." What do you mean? Watch this. He walked out about 10 feet around, looked up at that cross, took that spear, boy, and threw that spear in His side. The Lord went for that pain, and He pulled up on that cross. About that time, God raised up His hand to send down a hundred million angels to wipe off the population of planet earth that was doing this to His Son, but right before God sent them down, He thought of Bob Alexander. He thought of you. He thought of every man and woman sitting in this room, and God stayed His hand.*

*Then you wonder why you have to go through some things in life. You might lose a child, God forbid. You might lose a mom and a dad, God forbid. You might lose a brother or a sister, God*

*forbid. But I guarantee you, it will never be at your own hand to torture them, mutilate them, and then to kill them. That is what God did for you. You will never understand and comprehend the suffering of this life until you understand and comprehend His suffering on the cross.*

*Philippians 3:10*

*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*

*Why does God make me go through tough times? It is all about your perspective. A better way to say it was, "Why does God allow me to go through tough times?" Now keep in mind that 90% of our tough times are caused by our own stupidity. I have to get that in there. I do not want you to think because you, 99% of our suffering is because we are idiots, me included. But for you 1% out there that is suffering because of God, let me tell you why He allows you to do that.*

*Christianity is a rare bird today. It says in that great verse, "That I may know him." That is salvation. The job that God wants you to do, if you look at this thing, there are four parts to your walk with God and your relationship with God.*

*1.) The first part is that you get saved, "that I may know him." That happens in your life the day you trust Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior.*

*2.) Then the next process is what my job is. My job is to teach you the Bible. My job is to make sure that every sermon, every Bible study, everything I do is centered around giving you the most out of it that you can get. Because out of that, you are going to get "the power of his resurrection." You see, there will be no power of God in your life until you get saved. Once you get saved and you get into the Bible, then you get the power of God in your life.*

*3.) But oh, the third thing, "the fellowship of his sufferings." The power of God without the suffering of God in your life will always lead to a disaster in your life. The power of God in your life without the suffering of God in your life will always puff you up with knowledge. It will always make you think you are better than you are. It will make you think you are better than other people. God has to allow you and I to suffer, and through the process of getting saved, knowing Him, and then becoming, getting the power of His resurrection through the Word of God, and then going through the things in life, the fellowship of our suffering, it brings about the fourth concept.*

*4.) That means it makes us "conformable unto his death." That is the end result of the Christian life.*

*The book of Job, through the suffering, a picture of Christ's suffering, shows us the fellowship of God's suffering. The missing element, number one, the missing element in our life, is the fact that we do not understand what God suffered for us; therefore, we are not willing to suffer for Him. Oh, we will get saved. Oh, I want to know Him. Oh, I want the power of His resurrection. Oh, I want to be like Him, but I do not want the suffering part. There can be no relationship with God without the suffering. Do you know why? Because the suffering of Christ was the number one key thing that Christ went through to have the relationship with you. So you will not have one*

*with Him without it. You just will not. Anything else other than that, ladies and gentlemen, is a fairy tale for you.*

### *The Book of Psalms: Christ The Blessed One*

*Now that is the book of Job. You have seen the suffering of God in Job. Now let us look at the blessing of God. In the book of Psalms, Christ is typified as the blessed one. Obviously, the key word here in Psalms is going to be the word "bless," "blessing," or "blessed." You will find some variation of that word 102 times in the book. The New Testament verse is in Colossians 3:16.*

### *Colossians 3:16*

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

*God's blessing is the key to all happiness in life, and this is what we all look for in life. I never met anybody who started out their day wanting to have a bad day. We usually wind up with a bad day, but that is not our intent. The sun comes up in the morning, you get up, you get a good night's sleep, you walk out, air is nice and brisk, sun is beautiful, the birds are singing, you are ready to go. That is just the way that it is. Everybody wants to be happy in life, but let me just say this to you. The happiness in life is simply based on the book of Psalms. If you do not understand the book of Psalms, you will never be happy. You may have moments of what you think is happiness; that is when you buy something new.*

*Have you ever noticed how people get depressed, they go out and buy something new? You do not want to go buy something new because for a short period of time that new thing makes you feel better until the newness wears off, and then you are right back to the old way it was. You need something much more than that, much cheaper than that, by the way, too.*

*Now look at Psalms chapter 1. I remember years ago I heard a guy preach by the name of Fred Brown. I was just a young guy then. Fred Brown was one of the greatest Bible teachers; he is long dead now. He was one of the greatest Bible teachers that you could ever hope to hear, and Fred Brown was a great practical Bible teacher. He really had memorized the whole New Testament, an incredible guy, and he was preaching on Psalms chapter 1, and it was a great, great message, and he read it this way. He says:*

### *Psalms 1:1-3*

*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

*But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*

*And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*

*He said, "You know," he said, "the book of Psalms, as the book of Proverbs, is built around two kinds of people. It is built around people who are wise and people who are foolish." He said, "We think the Bible is built around people that are saved and are lost." He says, "But that is not true.*

*That is true in a sense, but," he says, "foolish people can be saved." He said, "You know, no unsaved person can ever be wise, but every saved person has the potential to be a fool." He said, "You know what? Psalms chapter 1, as I read this," he says, "Psalms chapter 1 is really a prelude to the whole book of Psalms." It really is, because Psalms chapter 1 basically tells you how to get the blessings of God and what it is all about.*

*But then he said this, and I thought this was a masterful stroke, and I never forgot it. He says, "It is true." He says, "Psalms chapter 1 is a prelude to the rest of the book of Psalms, but I will tell you something else, dear people. Psalms chapter 1 is a prelude to life, because in the book of Psalms, you are going to find that the blessings of God, the happiness that we all want to have in our life, only comes through this little formula here in Psalms chapter 1."*

*The book of Psalms is where people go in time of trouble, and the reason for it is because every human emotion is found in Psalms. You have loneliness, you have joy, you have fear, you have sadness, you have disappointment, you have happiness, you have weariness, you have times that people are in fellowship, times that people are out of fellowship, all right in the book of Psalms. The whole key here, as far as I am concerned, is found in verse 3, because this is where the blessings of God are going to lie in your life.*

*I am going to tell you something. You can do what you want to do in life, and you probably will. But I know that many of God's people try all their life to make things make them happy. Bigger house, bigger car, nicer this, nicer that, bigger boat, bigger cabin, and I am not arguing with any of those things. I am just telling you those things will not make you happy. Those things will not make you feel content.*

*Do you know what is wrong with most of God's people that are struggling today? It is really simple. You are saved, you are on your way to heaven, but you are not content. You are not content because you are not doing what God saved you and intended for you to do. So there is no way you are going to be happy. You have a Holy Spirit of God inside you crying for you to do what He wants you to do, and then you have yourself ignoring that, trying to do what you want to do, and to top it all, it is just like living in a house with a woman who just, or a man who just, you cannot, you fight all the time. It is like being in a home where marriage is where they just are at each other's throat, constantly, 24/7. That is what is going on inside you. Your new nature wants to do what is right. Your old nature wants to do what is wrong, and there is a cat fight going on 24/7. The only thing that is going to satisfy you is understanding that God saved you for a purpose. I think it is the greatest concept probably in all the Bible.*

*Look at verse 3. Verse 3 says, "bringeth forth his fruit in his season." Have you ever noticed in the Bible that people are likened to trees? People are likened to grass. People are likened to flowers. People are likened to wheat. All those have one characteristic, or really two. They all go through a season process, and they all have a harvest at some point. Somebody picks the flowers, somebody cuts down the trees, somebody mows the grass, somebody harvests the wheat. Those things are pictures of you and I because you and I go through a season in our life, and most people live their whole life and never even understand it. Your life is on a schedule, and you have a point in your life to bear fruit, and then you have a point in your life where you do not bear*

fruit anymore. You have a springtime in your life, you have a summer in your life, you have a fall in your life, and you have a winter in your life. You do not find apple trees bearing apples in February. You do not find orange trees giving oranges up here in Missouri or any place else in March or January. There is a season for everything, and in your life and my life as a New Testament Christian, there is a season in your life.

The book of Psalms teaches a great truth that when you get God's mind and you begin to get God's wisdom and you get God's understanding, you realize that we are all up against the same thing, a winter time in our life. I went home last week, and we had to see our parents, and my mom is in a rest home. She is almost 90. Barb's mom is in a rest home, and my mom is doing as good as I have ever seen her do. Barb's mom has gotten pneumonia while we were there. She was having a very hard time, and she was not doing well at all. But I could not help but think. I could not help but think. I knew Mary Alice when she was strong and she was vibrant and she was the glue that held her family together. I looked at that frail little body that probably does not weigh more than 60, 70 pounds, looked like a skeleton, and her mind is gone, and she stands there and she cannot walk. She needs help to get a shower. She needs to go to the bathroom. I think to myself, "You know what? That is the end of every one of us at some point in our life." She is at the end of her season. She may live for another five years, another ten years, but she is at the end of her season. Everybody is going to go through it. I could not help but walk through there and look at the men and the women in those side rooms and thinking to myself, "You know what? If Jesus does not come, there is a room someplace now with my name on it, just like there is one waiting for you." Because we have a season. We have a season.

I think one of the greatest sermons I ever heard in my life, it was a sermon that literally, there have been about five or six sermons in my life that literally changed my whole direction and course and thinking in life. One of the greatest sermons I ever heard was at a Bible conference I was preaching at up in Rochester, New York, and Dr. Ruckman preached that night. He preached one of the greatest sermons that I ever heard. It just really changed the course. It was at 2 Timothy 4:21. It was just a simple little verse there. But he took that thing and he built it into an incredible. I have preached the message probably 20, 30 times myself over the years. It was such an impact on my life. But it is where Paul said to young Timothy, Paul is in jail. He is writing to young Timothy. Paul cannot get what he needs. He cannot get out to get what he needs. So he writes to Timothy. One little phrase, "Do thy diligence to come before winter." Old Pete took that message and he said, "You know what, folks? There is a winter time coming in all of our lives." He says, "And I am going to tell you something. There is nothing worse than winter time. The trees are bare. That old wind blowing down the street. The snow piling up. All the problems that you have with traveling. All the problems you have and all that." He said, "You know what? There is a winter time." He said, "There are some things that we better do before winter gets here." It was one of the greatest messages I ever heard in my life. He laid that thing out and he talked about how winter was and how the Bible teaches that, you know, in Psalms that you have a season to your fruit bearing, and then it is over. He told, he said, "You know what?" He said, "There are some things that you better do before winter time comes." He said, "There are some things that you better do for God before winter time gets here and you cannot get it done." He

said, "There are some things that you better say to some people before winter time comes that you cannot say them anymore."

He told the story. I never forgot it. He told the story about the old farmer back in the Midwest that, a good old honest guy and his wife working hard on their farm, and they would go into town every once a month or whatever to buy groceries or supplies. He was very frugal with his money, and he was in there, and he was over there getting the stuff that he needed. His wife was over in the linen section where they had the ladies' things, and she was looking at all this gingham lace, and just on rolls over there, and she was thinking about what a dress she could make with that and how pretty it was, how women are. She is looking at that thing, and her husband came over, and she wanted to know if she could buy some of this, and it was, "Oh, we cannot spend any money for that, we cannot buy that." She just quietly rolled it back up and went over there and helped carry the stuff out. About three months later, the wife got sick. About a month after that, she died. The old man wept bitterly. The only friend he had in life, he had lost. He lived up there, not too far from on the other side of the church, a little church where she was buried in the graveyard, and some folks went by to check on him one night with a violent rainstorm, violent rainstorm. They drove up there, and the old man was not home, and they got worried about him. So they started to go down in town, and as they were passing the church, they saw his horse tied up to the front of the church. They got off there, rain coming down, and walked around to that little graveyard and walked around where that lady was buried. Do you know what they saw? On that tombstone and all around there was yards and yards and yards and yards of gingham lace. Too late! Winter time. Winter time.

There are some things you better say to some people now before it is too late that you cannot say it. George Patton was a great general. George Patton in his book, Patton Papers, talks about the relationship that he always wanted to have with his father, but his military family showed no emotion. George Patton talked about how the things that he wanted to say to his dad, but he never could say them. His dad died, and George Patton talked about going to that grave, sitting there with tears streaming down his face and saying, "Daddy, Daddy, I love you, Daddy, I love you, I love you." Too late. Winter time.

I will tell you folks, there are some things you better do for God before winter gets here, and there are some things that you better say to some people before winter time gets here when you cannot say it anymore. I am telling you, your life is a season. There are some things in your life that you better forgive some people for. There are some things in your life that you better put behind you and move on that are holding you up. There are some things that you better look at that are just roadblocks in your life, and you better get past it because there is a time coming in your life when winter time gets here, you are not going anywhere. "Do thy diligence to come before winter." Greatest message I ever heard. Greatest message I ever heard.

You see, the real happiness in life is built around this concept of the seasons. The springtime in your life will be when you first just get saved. How excited you are about the Bible. How you just cannot leave it alone. Have you ever noticed that when you first got saved, how excited you were, and now you do not care whether you pick it up or not? Do you know that something happened between that point and this point? I will tell you what happened. You got out of your

season cycle. You are headed into winter. You ought to be young in your life when you first got saved. Bible says in Proverbs 20:29, "A young man's strength is his glory: and the beauty of old men is the grey head." In other words, a young man has strength, but he has no light. An old man has light, but he has no strength because there comes a winter time in your life when you cannot get things done anymore. You better get them done now. You have a season. The whole book of Psalms is built around that concept. A wise man and a foolish man. A wise man figures it out; a foolish man never does.

Springtime in your life. Exciting, it is all new. You just got saved. The strength, the zeal of a young Christian wanting to get in and learn everything he can. Then you move into the summertime in your life. That is when you get a good handle on the Word of God in your life, you see. That is when you start seeing God use you. That will be the first time in your life when maybe you preach your first message or you win your first person to Christ. That will be the first time in your life when you really begin to get your feet down into this thing. You get your emotions a little settled. You get some experience under your belt. You are not somebody with a zeal but not according to a knowledge. You have a balance in your life of your zeal and your understanding how to use that zeal. You move into the full summer of your life.

Then you move into the fall of your life. Personally, I think the fall of your life is the most productive time because in the fall of your life, you are not in the winter yet, but you have the advantage of all the things that you have learned to this point that makes you more effective. I used to think that 25 years ago that I was at the peak of my ministry. Boy, how foolish that was to see where I am at now. I had no idea what I was doing then. God was preparing me for what I am doing now. I have never been more focused. I have never been more understanding of what my own call is and what I need to do and what God has called me to do and what a church is and how you build people and solve people's issues with the Word of God. It is the fall time in your life. Now you add wisdom and you get understanding, and now you have the ability to put it all together, but there is coming a winter time.

I think of my old father and Lord Mel Shabaka. I got a call a couple weeks ago that I told you that my buddy Jim Lake told me that he put him in a rest home down in Tennessee. He is now sitting in one of those little rooms just like my mom and Barb's mom are sitting in. Palsy, all kinds of... I will tell you one thing. I will tell you the difference between him and most of us because you see, he is at the point in his life now where he cannot do anything anymore. His winter time is here, but you see, real happiness and real joy are not based on where you are at or what you are doing. It is based on the fact that you can sit there. I do not care if it is a cardboard box. You can sit there and look back at your life. Let me tell you something, folks. The greatest feeling in this world, the absolutely greatest feeling in this world, is the feeling that in your life you figured out the seasons and you did what God wanted you to do.

God give me the grace that I do not miss the rapture and I have to go through this thing, and sometimes I have to be someplace where I am out of gas and I cannot do it anymore. I hope God gives me the grace to sit there and look back over the years that God gave me and the people God gave me and the ministry God gave me and the young men, the young ladies God gave me and the investment life God gave me, and then sit there in that place with nothing now, satisfied

*up to the kazoo because I know I figured it out. I got what God wanted me to do, and by God, I did it. No greater feeling in the world than that, folks. Winter time, winter time, winter time. The whole life of yours and mine is built around this concept of seasons. It is built around the concept of seasons.*

*Psalms is about a man wanting to build a relationship with God. It is a picture of our ups and downs. It is our life to a T. There are three kinds of Psalms in here, all typified by David and his relationship with God.*

- 1.) You have the Psalms of trouble. That would be the tribulation period. That is when David is out of fellowship with God and he is having problems in his life.*
- 2.) Then you have Psalms of deliverance. That is when God comes down and delivers him out of the trouble.*
- 3.) Then you have Psalms of victory. That is when him and God are hitting right on the eight cylinders. That is the way they are supposed to.*

*As far as I am concerned, the key to Psalms is Psalms 119. Psalms 119 is the largest chapter in your Bible. It runs 176 verses. It is the only chapter in the Bible that every verse in it tells you something about the Word of God. I believe that at the very heart, if the five wisdom books are the heart of God, heart of the Bible, I believe that Psalms 119 is the soul because that is where you will build your relationship with loving God and loving that book.*

*When I was a young man growing up and I just got into this thing, I recognized that I knew that I could not do it on my own. I knew that God was going to have to do it. I also knew that it was the book. If you did not learn the Word of God and get it down, you were not going anywhere. I struck upon Psalms 119. I read the book by Dr. Tom Malone. He is long dead now. Tom Malone, a pastor of a church up in Michigan. He was a great preacher, great pastor. I read a book. He wrote a book on Psalms, and I read that. I remember getting in there, and he laid out Psalms 119, and immediately I saw. I said to myself, "You know what? This is exactly what I need to do," because he told me in that book that Psalms 119 was the book that laid out every aspect of the Word of God.*

*I got reading, and I saw David, and I saw David in that Psalms 119 asking God for things. He would tell God things like, "Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." It was showing me David's expression of emotion when he did not do what was right with the Word of God. He looked at places in Psalms 119 and says, "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil." He says, "I esteem thy word higher than gold. Yea, finer than silver, finer than gold." I got looking at those things, and he was actually telling God, "Lord, this is what I think about your Bible." Then you would find Psalms where he would say, "God, if you give me your word, I will do this for you." I thought to myself, "That is it. That is how you learn the Bible." That prayer worked for David. That prayer worked for Bob Alexander.*

*So, do you know what I did? I put me a prayer together out of Psalms 119. I was very biblical back then, and I knew that seven was the number of God. So I had 14 petitions in my prayer, two times seven. I wanted God to be happy with it. I did not want to do five. I did not want to do six. I*

*did seven. I underlined them in my Bible, and I loaded them in my Bible. Do you know what I do with that? Most of you do not have time to do this. Most of you would not do it anyhow. Before I ever open up my Bible, before I ever started studying my Bible, I would sit down, I would put a chair down there in that room, and I would sit over here. I lived by myself at that time. I would put a chair over here and put a chair over here and open up the thing. I would read that prayer to God, and I would say, "God, just like David said, 'Lord, open up my heart and show me the wondrous things out of that law.' 'Lord, I will speak before kings and not be ashamed if you teach me thy word.'" I tell those things to God. Do you know what? God taught me His Word. That is where it comes back to. The book of Psalms is the key, 119, to you building a relationship with the Word of God. Do you know what? There are 176 verses. The mathematical computations of it are in the billions. You could have a billion different prayers in there and never cover the same one with 176 verses. It is the greatest thing in your life you are going to do.*

*As I got on in life, I got a little older, a little wiser. Not only did I realize that Psalms was the key to our life and my own personal relationship with God, but then I got reading and studying church history, and I got reading and studying about the churches. I read in Revelation chapter 3 about the great Philadelphian church age. It is called the Church of the Opened Door. Now keep in mind, the Philadelphian church age ran from about 1600 up to about 1900. It was the greatest period of time in church history. Probably more souls were won to Christ then, probably three-quarters of the world won to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through England and the efforts of the missionary movements in America just across this planet. Well, in 1900, and there are some reasons for it, the door got shut, and we entered into the last period of church history, which we are living in now right at the end before the rapture, which is the Laodicean church. Of course, Laodicean means "justice of the people." Philadelphia means "brotherly love."*

*He comes down through there in Revelation chapter 3, and he contrasts those two churches. He says the Church of Philadelphia was called the Church of the Opened Door. You will find Baptist churches around this city and other places that are called Opened Door Baptist Church. I guarantee you the people running those churches today do not have a clue why they are called Opened Door Baptist Church, but you go back in their history, there was some pastor 30, 40, 50 years ago who understood this concept, and he wanted to... If this church was... This church is called Old Path Baptist Church out of Jeremiah 6:16. If I did not call it Old Path, I would call it Opened Door. Not because the doors are always open, because we want the door there always open, because that church was called the Church of the Opened Door, where the Laodicean church is called the Church of the Closed Door.*

*The key to that Opened Door Church is found in Revelation 3:7. The moment I saw it, I took that concept of Psalms 119 from my own personal life and took it now into my ministry and building a church, because he said that that church had the key of David. Keys opened doors. The key of David opened the door of this church, and no man could shut it. That is why in a little church like this, we do not have a website where you can go find this. We did not have a sign a couple of weeks ago. Somebody asked me a couple of months ago, "How do people come to your church? Do you have a sign?" I said, "Nope." "Do you have a website?" "No." "How do you give it?" I said, "I have 200 signs in my church. They bring people to church." That is what you are*

*supposed to do. That is the way it works. It is a church of the Opened Door. God keeps blessing it. No man can shut it no matter what they say, what they do not like, what they do like. They cannot stop it. God is building, and God's church is operational because it is based on the key of David. The key of David was David's attitude of heart toward that book. You keep your heart toward that Bible, right? God will open up every door in your life, and you will recognize that there is a season in your life. God will keep that season fruitful. It will not matter. It will not matter when you pass off the scene, then your children will carry on. When they pass off the scene, the grandchildren will carry on. You want to learn the Bible? That gets you a prayer. You want to build a church? That built that church on the concept of the key of David. A church that God opened the door versus the church where God closed the door.*

*You see, Psalms is the heart of God. When you get God's heart, you cannot help but get the blessing to come along with it because the blessings of God will always be connected to the heart of God. You all want to be happy. Job shows you an unhappy man, and he shows you that the sufferings we go through are based on the sufferings of Christ. Make a parallel between His sufferings and your sufferings. I guarantee you, when you look at what He went through and understand it, what we go through will be pretty pale in comparison. See, He gives you perspective. But if you do not have that perspective, then you do not understand it.*

*You want to be happy? You want to have the blessings of God in your life? You want to be happy? You want to get out from under the drudgery of life? Then do something for God. Do something for God. Have you ever seen any of the apostles ever in depression? Have you ever seen Apostle Paul depressed? Bipolar? The only bipolar he had was going from the North Pole to South Pole with the gospel. You cannot be under those kind of things when the Word of God is empowering you because it brings along the heart of God, brings the blessings of God, and there is nothing greater in this world. You will never be satisfied. You will never be complete. You will never be everything God wants you to be, nor will you ever be happy until you have the blessings of God, and there will be no blessings of God without the heart of God.*

### *Conclusion*

*Job, suffering. Psalms, the blessings of God. Next week we will look at the Proverbs, understanding the wisdom of God. Next week we will look at Ecclesiastes, understanding the world, and then we will look at understanding Christ.*

*Let us pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. Thank you for the folks here today.*