

1 Corinthians 16:9-19

Sunday 11/13/2011

I think one of the things I like about the style of ministry that we have here is that it gives God all the freedom to change what He wants to change and do what He wants to do. So many churches, and I have seen this all of my life, are so rigid in everything that they do that if God wanted to do something, He would have to wait six months just to get on the planning schedule. I really appreciate how the Lord has orchestrated not only where we are as a church, but where we are in the open opportunities that God has given us, and then where we are in the Bible at the same time. This ties into the restructuring of our prayer groups, redefining that, and looking at all the things that God has given us.

As we are closing out this book, we have seen that Paul gives instructions to this church regarding young Timothy, who is coming to be with them. Paul is sending Timothy to them, and Paul tells that church that Timothy is his helper and that they are not to be negative toward Timothy, but they are to help him and not hurt him.

We focused last time on a couple of things that Paul told the church at Corinth and then what he told Timothy. He told the church at Corinth to let him come to you without being afraid. Then he told the church at Corinth, "Let no man despise him." Paul is smart enough to know that in this church there were people who did not like him, Paul. There were people that despised Paul, and you see that throughout this whole book and even in 2 Corinthians. So he knew that if they did not like him and would not accept him, they were going to try to do the same to somebody that he sent there. So he makes it very clear.

Paul is someone who, if anything goes wrong, wants to document it. I think documentation is always important in dealing with people. He wants to make sure he can pull out the letter and say, "What part of this did you not understand?" He is kind of covering Timothy. Yet at the same time, we saw in 1 Timothy 4:12 that Paul gives instructions to young Timothy. He says, "Let no man despise thy youth." We talked about that, and that sets up for us a tremendous lesson on how God wants to use young men and young ladies.

I showed you last week that God has a special calling for young people, something that they can do that older folks cannot do. A lot of what they are, if they are done right, is infectious to other people. I think it keeps the church young and healthy. It is an old saying that if you have an old dog and you want to make the dog live longer, get a young pup to hang out with the dog. I believe that is true. I think that in a church, to keep the church from getting creaky and old and becoming an old folks' home, is the lifeblood of young men and young ladies who really fire up the thing and keep it going. We all kind of help each other through the thing, and it sets up a tremendous lesson of being young and being used of God.

I showed you how God has a real place for young people in the Lord's work, but we also talked about a couple of vital issues that young people need to know. I gave you a great verse, and I hope you mark it in your Bible, in Proverbs 20:29, where it talked about the glory of young men was their strength, but the beauty of old men was their gray head. I focused on the fact that young people have the strength to do the work of God on a great high level, but they do not

necessarily have the experience of life. The job of the church is teaching young men and young ladies how to see this and to work on this, as it is really key in their life.

How many times have we all heard it said? I have heard it all my life, and I am sure you have too. Somebody who is now in their fifties or their sixties looks back at life and is talking to somebody, and they say this: "If I had only known at 20 what I know today." Then we hear the little phrase that hindsight is always 20/20 and perfect vision, and that is so true. We saw two different aspects of young people and how to view their youth.

The first one he talked about in 1 Timothy 4:12 was, "Let no man despise thy youth." That is by doing dumb things. I think the number one failure of young people today, young men and young ladies alike, is that they do not learn while they are young to glean everything they can from those that are older. There are some things that I wished I would have gleaned from my father before I lost my father. There comes a time, folks, when you, and you may have saved parents or lost parents, but if they are good, decent parents, that means you can learn some things from them. Just because they may not have salvation does not mean that they do not have some street smarts about life and things on this planet.

I think many times kids, young people, make the mistake that they do not glean from their parents everything they can before they get into life themselves and become parents. Many times parents have told young people before they got married, "You should not do this," or "Maybe you should not even get married," or after you get married, "Maybe you should not do this, you should not buy that, you should not do this." They are not saying that to us because they do not want you to have it. They are saying that because they have been through life, they have seen some things that you do not see yet, and they are trying to help you and protect you from that. I think failure to glean those things is true within the ministry.

The greatest thing I thank God for every day of my life is that God gave me the ability to be smart enough in the time that I was young to realize that I had before me probably one, maybe two, of the guys who probably were the greatest minds on the Bible and the ministry. There were times that you would call them up and you would ask them questions, and you would try to, when you got into a tough spot and you were not sure what to do, or you wanted to make sure you did it right. Those people are gone in your life at some point. You cannot just pick up a phone anymore and say, "Hey, what do I do about this?" The failure of young people, I think it is the number one failure that young people, male and female, have is they do not glean while they are still young from the wisdom of those who have it, whether it be about the Bible, whether it be about life, or whether it be about whatever.

I thank God every day of my life, one of the smartest things I ever did was glean from Mal Sabaka. I cannot call him up on the phone anymore. He is still alive, but it is impossible at this point, as weak as he is. It is gone. It is a gone resource. Many times, it is like the old true saying, you do not really, sometimes you have to lose something before you really know how valuable it was. I think that is an issue, and I think that is why young men and young ladies continue to do dumb things. I know you are young, and I know that is a good excuse. The Bible tells us that even in ministry, you do not put somebody in that is a novice; they have got to have some

experience. But I think one of the things that young men and young ladies can do right now, while you are young, is to learn and to glean everything you can from those around you who understand and make things work and happen the way that they are supposed to. I think it is just the way that it is.

The other thing that he says is found in 1 Corinthians 16:9. This is the second element, and this is where he says, "Let no man despise him." He tells that to the church at Corinth. I told you last week that you need to know, no matter how good you are, no matter how well you try to be everything and do everything that God wants you to do, there is always going to be God's people out there who want to sandbag you. They want to keep you from growing because you are growing past them, and they do not want that. That makes them look bad. You will find that. We talked about that last week. These are great lessons for every young man and young lady in our church to learn. I really mean that.

I think the proof of where you go with the Lord and how well God is able to use you really comes back to how well you are willing to learn through your difficulties now and to glean everything that you can and put it in a concept where you may not be able to use it right now, but I guarantee you, you will use it down the line someplace. That is why, if you ever thought about this, in its simplest form, it is so hard for you to win your family to Christ or minister to your family, because they know more about you than other people do. They have seen you all your life, and they do not respect you. The Bible tells you that. Jesus Himself said, "A prophet hath no honor in his own country." It is a thing where that becomes my favorite phrase, that you become smarter than the problem. You just have to learn these things.

I can tell you about the Bible, and you come over and lay it out. When I try to tell my mom something in the Bible, she just looks at me and says, "Oh, you are nuts." You cannot do it. Then I told you that 1 Corinthians 16:12 talks about three or four people, basically three people groups. He talks about Timothy, who is single. Then he talks about a guy who is older. Then he talks about a couple. He tells you in no uncertain terms that they are key to his ministry.

I am sure that even though Paul references Timothy, there are probably thousands of young men and young ladies that Paul ministered to. When he talks about these other two people groups, I am sure that there are literally probably thousands of other people that would fit into this category. But the Bible has a way of taking one particular person. In this case, the example of three represents the many that Paul is dealing with. In fact, you will find in this very chapter that Paul names a lot of other people.

My point to you is this: learning your Bible is more than just sitting down and reading it or gleaning notes off of some other guy's thoughts, which is really good. You have to learn to look at things that do not always appear to be right on the surface. In my mind and experience, these three people—we talked about Timothy already—we are going to talk about the other two here today. They really represent to me what makes a healthy, viable ministry and makes it work in a healthy church. I invite you to just kind of listen to me today and follow along and watch what I say and see if you do not see the same similarities that I am talking about here, and you will see how it works in our own church.

Now, I want to read a little farther today in 1 Corinthians chapter 16. I will again pick it up in verse 9, and I want to look at these other people here, and then we will make some comments about it. Pick it up in verse 9 here. We have already read this several times, but it kind of goes with the context. Our real text is going to start in verse 12, but let us put it together here.

1 Corinthians 16:9-19

For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.

Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.

As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Let all your things be done with charity.

I beseech you, brethren, ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints;

That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.

I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.

Now Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We love you. We thank you for our time today. We pray that you will take the Word of God and teach us. We thank you for where you brought our church to and for the great host of men and women who love you and love this Word and are committed to us fulfilling what you have done for us, given us to commit to. We love you. Pray you will bless this time now in Jesus' name. For His sake we ask it. Amen.

I. Apollos: The Experienced Minister

Now in verse 12 we have our second guy, and it says, "As touching our brother Apollos." I do not know what you know about Apollos. He is not one of the most prominent characters in the Bible, but let me say this to you: Apollos is one of the great studies in the Bible. Not every great study in the Bible is going to jump out at you. When you look at certain things, at least when I do, I want to look more at what Paul is doing. I want to see who Paul continually references in

his life, because there are going to be keys to that in what I want to look for as a pastor and what God has given me to do. The background of Apollos, this guy, he is quite an incredible guy.

The first time Apollos shows up, and you probably want to look at this, it will be in Acts chapter 18, verse 24. This is the first time he shows up in the Bible, and it is interesting to see some things about him.

Acts 18:24-25

And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord; knowing only the baptism of John.

All right, stop right there. Put it into a context. This guy, we know that when we start the beginning of the Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we basically start with the ministry of John the Baptist. John the Baptist is the forerunner of Jesus Christ. He is born six months before Christ is, and his ministry takes place six months before Christ's ministry starts. John the Baptist comes to the nation of Israel. John the Baptist is not preaching salvation by grace. John the Baptist is not preaching, "You have got to be born again." John the Baptist is coming to preach to the nation of Israel that their Messiah has come, and he is telling them that that Messiah is Christ. That is what his mission is, and that is what he does.

You know what happened to John the Baptist? The devil intervenes, like we know he does, and John the Baptist gets his head cut off. But Apollos was somebody back then who had heard exactly what John was preaching, knew enough about the Old Testament Scriptures. The Bible says he was an eloquent man, fervent in the Scriptures. In other words, he is one of the ones that stayed online with the Bible through the disposition where the Jews were scattered, and now he has still got this Bible believing it, the Old Testament, and he is looking for the Messiah. When Jesus comes, or John comes, and he is preaching that this is the Messiah, and he offers Israel the baptism of John, which is a baptism not of individual salvation, but a picture of the cleansing of the nation of Israel as a nation, he immediately gets baptized under John's baptism, and he goes on from there. That kind of brings you up to where we are at.

Look at verse 26.

Acts 18:26-28

And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue, whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren exhorted the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

Now, this is a great study here, because here is a case where Apollos goes into this church. This is after the resurrection of Christ. This is some 40 years after he was baptized with John the Baptist. He walks into this synagogue, which is now a church. They are there to preach about the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and Apollos gets up and says, "Can I give a testimony? Can I say some things?" They say, "Great, brother, go ahead." Immediately, you know what he starts to preach? He says, "You do not need to be baptized in John's baptism. You need to follow Him to mind." He has not even heard yet that Christ has even died or anything has even changed. This is where Aquila and Priscilla pull him aside.

Look what the Bible says. They explain to him the Word of God more perfectly. They now tell Apollos that, "You know what, you got, don't work no more." John's baptism preached repentance unto Israel, but since that time, you have not heard. The Messiah came, He was rejected. He died on the cross. Now we have moved into the Gentiles taking the Gospel, Paul the Gospel. He had not heard that.

Let us follow on here. "And when he was disposed to pass through Achaia, the brethren wrote exhorting the disciples to receive him." Watch it very carefully now. "Who when he was come, helped them much, which had believed through grace." See that thing? Salvation is not the same way all through the Bible. That verse tells you right there that those people had received the Gospel through grace. Apollos did not. He got it through John's baptism. But when Aquila and Priscilla pull him aside, explain it to him, he got it. Then he goes right on with the new message of the Gospel just as fervently as he did with what he knew. The Bible says in verse 28, "For he mightily," there it is, "he mightily convinced the Jews that publicly showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." There it is.

Now, there is an example where Apollos is somebody who comes into this church only knowing the baptism of John, which has been out of date now for 40 years. I do not know where he has been, but he has not heard of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. So what happens here is they pulled him aside. They explained the Word of God more perfectly. He gets it. Then he moves on, and he has a tremendous following from that point on.

Now, in Acts 19:1, we find that right after his conversion here, that he follows Paul down to Corinth. Now, he is not here when Paul is writing what we are reading in 1 Corinthians 16, because Paul says he is going to come when it is more convenient. But he goes down the first time that Paul is there in Acts 19:1. He goes with him. From 1 Corinthians 3:6, we see that Paul makes a reference that he had some kind of real impact there when he was there. He made a great impression on them, and many of them, I am sure, in that church, stayed straight with the things of the Bible, even though the church was falling apart around him. I think probably Apollos was a great anchor in that church.

But I want you to notice something about him. Paul does not give that church any instructions that when he comes back, "Now you make sure you do not despise him. When he comes back, you make sure you listen to what he says and do not make him afraid." He did not say that here. You know why? Because Apollos is older. He represents our older guy. He had been around when John was baptizing. Like I said, that is 40-plus years ago. They accept him.

Now, you want to see this, catch this. You do not want to miss this. In Acts 18:28, it says, "For he mightily convinced the Jews." Why? How did he convince them? Because he had been there from John the Baptist. He had followed Christ from the beginning from John. He had come up through the crucifixion, and now he has moved into the church age. Some 40-plus years of experience that he had. Brother, he had some perspective, and the Bible already tells us that he knew the Bible. So when he stands up and speaks, he is not like somebody that just got saved a week ago. This is somebody that can step back and look at the absolute, complete perspective of Christ's ministry. He saw John and believed. He had come up through that period of time. Now he understands about the crucifixion, and now he realizes that he has come all the way past the nation of Israel into the church age. When he speaks, people are going to listen. You know why? Because he has got some experience. Experience is absolutely key.

You see, he said to Timothy, he says, about Timothy, he says, "Let no man despise thy youth." Young people have the strength, but Apollos had the experience. I have to tell you, in ministry, these kind of guys, male and female, are absolutely invaluable. They really are. All of you young men and young ladies in time, if you stay the course, you will grow right into an Apollos. There is a process that you grow from being a Timothy, which there is nothing wrong with, into Apollos, which there is nothing wrong with, but it is the natural process. Because I am going to tell you, as valuable as the Timothys are, and they really are, they are like the spark plugs of the engine. They make it fire. But the Apollos are the gas that make it run. It takes everything together. You cannot make an engine run without the spark plugs. You can have all the gas in the world, you have no spark plugs. You have all the spark plugs in the world, and have no gas, that is not going to run. It takes a combination of both.

But guys and gals like Apollos are absolutely invaluable because they are older. You see, in the ministry, I learned very quickly, you have got to learn where your bread is buttered, so to speak, as the saying goes. If I have a deep issue that I have got to deal with, whether it is in the church or whether it is with somebody, and I have got to make a decision, or we have to do something and deal with something that may have bad aftershocks or ramifications that may cause some ripples, or some big decision that has to be made, somebody comes down and says something, that we have got to do this, we have got to do that, or we have got to change this. I know exactly in this church who I am going to sit down with and get their advice because the Apolloses of any church are absolutely incredible.

This ministry is no different than Paul's ministry, and he has to have people in it who have heat. That is the young people. He needs to have people who have light, and he has to have people who have experience. You are going to find in his writings, throughout his writings, he makes reference to these people over and over and over again. They are three people here, representing three people groups that are absolutely invaluable to him, and he makes no bones about telling people in the books that he writes to them how important they are. You have Timothy, who has got the fire, Timothy who he is teaching, who is gleaning everything he can from Paul, his father in the Lord, and he is getting him up and getting him ready to go. But then he has got guys like Apollos who have been there, who has the longevity of seeing the perspective of it all that

Timothy did not have, and you see how invaluable they are. It is just like any church needs to be, and that is how it works.

II. Aquila and Priscilla: The Ministry Couple

The next people he talks about is a couple, and their name is Aquila and Priscilla. If you are a young couple here in this church, this is a great model for you. Yet, when is the last time you heard a sermon on Aquila and Priscilla? They are one of the, about the last time you heard one on Apollos. They are two of the greatest studies you will take in the Bible if you want a model for ministry, no matter where you are at. If you are a young person, the model for you is Timothy. If you are a middle-aged guy or gal, then your model is Apollos. If you are somebody who is married, no matter where you are at, it is Aquila and Priscilla. Boy, I will tell you what, this is a special couple. They really are. Paul makes reference to them in five different books that he writes. He may talk about this guy or this guy once or twice, but when it comes to Aquila and Priscilla, they are all over the place.

We can learn a lot about them, and just studying their life, you say, "I did not even know their life was in the Bible." I know you did not, but I am telling you, it is. You can piece it together. I am going to piece it together for you in a little bit here, not the whole thing, but enough to show you where you go. Acts 18:2 tells us that they are Jews that originally come from Italy. Now, watch this. That means that back in 606 B.C., their great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandfather, whoever left Jerusalem, wound up in Italy. They stayed true to the Old Testament. They are Jews living in the dispersion of 606, and now here we are 400 years later, they wind up in Italy.

But watch this. It also tells you in that passage that Claudius, he is the Roman guy, he is the bad guy, he is the villain. Claudius passes a decree to deport all the Jews. They all have to leave Italy, and so they leave. When they leave, lo and behold, they run into Paul. Let me just stop there a moment and show you how another Bible principle fits in, because most of you can probably relate to this. If it had been you and me in Italy, and we suddenly got the bad word from bad Obama Claudius that we all had to leave Missouri, in their case, Italy, that he was getting rid of all the Christians or all the Republicans or all the blondes in Missouri, and we would all think it was a terrible thing. We would think, "Well, we are going to lose our house, we are going to lose our friends, we are going to lose all of this, we are going to lose all of that." Boy, this is terrible. A lot like Christians whine and complain today about our present government.

I want you to see this. It was Claudius who was an unsaved man, but it was Claudius whom God used to get them out of Italy, that through him forcing them out, they met Paul. In other words, if it was not for Claudius kicking them out of Italy, they never would have lined up with Paul. Romans 8:28 says all things work together for good. We look at some tragedy in our life where we are going to do this, or I lost my job, or I did this. Hey, look, I am not saying God did not take your job or did not put you through some hard time because you are an idiot, you have got to learn some things. But we also know that there are times when God will make moves in our lives to get us where He wants us to be, to be with who He wants us to be, that we would never get there if He did not do that. You have got to see that. You have got to remember that next time

something changes in your life. It is just that simple. That is how God does. Claudius really here is painted as a villain. He is the hero that God used. They go down and they leave Rome, and lo and behold, they run into Paul. My, my, my, what a coincidence.

That is not all. The next verse, Acts 18:3, says that both of them enjoy the same occupation. They are both tent makers, tent menders, Paul and Aquila. So here is Paul down here, and we know this from Paul, that that is how he supported himself. He went from town to town. He repaired tents or he made tents, and that is how he supported himself, and then he started churches. So here, after God gets them out of Rome and gets them down where they meet into Paul, they both have the same occupation. They are both tent makers, so they form a little bond there, and I wonder what happens from that point on. See how God does those things?

Maybe you are not paying attention in your life. Maybe you are not paying attention around here, but I see that working all the way around here. Jim and Marcy Clark. I love Jim and Marcy Clark, and Jim and Marcy Clark are two of the finest people in our church, and I love them. Always willing to help. Do you ever hear the story how Jim and Marcy Clark came to this church? It is a lot like right here. Some of you were there that night. I do not remember who you were, but I remember the film we went to see. We went to see the Christian film, *Flags of Our Fathers*. Who went that night? Are you here this morning? You went that night? Good. Some of you went that night. We went to see *Flags of Our Fathers*, which is a great story, what everybody ought to see, about Ira Hayes. Ira Hayes was one of the Marines who lifted the flag on Iwo Jima that is on the sculpture that you will always see so familiar, and he died a drunken, he was an Indian, and he died a drunk. Terrible tragic story, but a great story. It was an incredible story.

We are coming out of the movie that, by the way, the night before Thanksgiving we always said, I am telling you, in another one out, we all got to go see. If you want to get it, it is *J. Edgar*. I am telling you right now, I read his biography a number of years ago, one of the most unique scenarios that explains why things are the way they are today. J. Edgar, meaning J. Edgar Hoover. Most of you do not even know who he is. You think he made the dam out there in Colorado? No, that was another Hoover. He did not make vacuum cleaners either. But it is an incredible thing. I am going to go see it. It is a thing where, because he, I was alive when he was alive. When he died, he was buried in an 800-pound lead coffin. In fact, the guys, the military guys that were carrying him up the rotunda, he is the only guy outside of a president that, at that point, anyhow, had laid in state. He had been through five presidents as the head of the FBI. His casket was so heavy, because it was laden with lead, that two of the soldiers suffered hernias just carrying it up there. The reason why it was laden in lead is because he was afraid that the communists, who he hated with a passion, would, when they bombed America with the atomic bombs, and I do not really understand his reasoning here, that the radiation would not penetrate his coffin. Like, hello, you are dead anyhow. What the radiation will not do, the maggots will. But anyway, he was an eccentric guy.

Anyway, that is off the subject here. We were out there, and we went to see *Flags of Our Fathers*. This is when Jim and Marcy's dad, Marcy's dad was still alive. He was in the Marine during World War II, an incredible guy. I have got to talk with him many, many times. Marcy,

some of you saw it a couple of weeks ago. Marcy found the Japanese, they called it a band of a thousand stitches, that he had taken off a Japanese soldier that he killed on Guadalcanal. The band of a thousand stitches was that back home, while the war was going on, the Japanese women made these belts. It was made with people sewing, and they had actually, I think she said this one has 1,100 stitches. It had to have a thousand stitches. That was to protect you in battle, and they wore them around as a belly band under the uniforms. They are very, very rare, a real one. He shot a guy, it did not work for this guy, shot the guy on Guadalcanal, I think she said, and brought home his belly band, it got blood on it and everything. He was a Marine, and so very patriotic, as they are. She worked for the Veterans Administration, and Jim was in the Marine Corps. So they were there that night, seeing him for the second time. We went to see it because we wanted to go see it.

I just happened to have that night, I wore, no planning, just wore a hoodie with "Army" across the front. So we are walking out of the theater, and we are sitting there, like we always do, deciding where we are going to eat and talking about it. Her dad came over to me, shook my hand, and said, "What movie did you see?" I said, and he had a Marine Corps hat on, and I said, "We went to see *Flags of Our Fathers*." I said, "Well, you know, we started a conversation." Well, then Jim and Marcy came over, talked to all of us, found out that I was a pastor, found out that we were all from the same church, found out that we go to films, found out that we are very patriotic, very militaristic in our mindset and everything. You know what? That was on a Saturday night, I think it was. They were at church, came to visit our church the next Sunday morning, and have been here ever since. You see? God uses the circumstances of life to put people in your life to connect you because you have got what they are looking for, and He just has to orchestrate the events, just like He did with Aquila and Priscilla and Paul. He had to get them out of there, so He got Claudius to deport them all. They go down and they run into Paul. They are both tent makers. They are both there. The only reason it went that way and did not go our way is because they did not have movie theaters back there.

I have seen that all my life. I remember Sony and Sheila. Somebody invited you to come to play softball. You came to softball that Saturday night. You came to church the next Sunday morning, and you have been here ever since. I do not know what to tell you. That is how we got Rafael and Georgie. They came, somebody invited you to come, came one time, played ball or whatever you did. Maybe it was the crap game after. I am not sure what got you here, but you came and have been here ever since. That is my point. My point is God wants to do that with your life. You see, these are the things you learn. You read Apollos and Aquila, and Apollos and Aquila and Priscilla. You are through it in 30 seconds. If that, and you think there is nothing there, you are out of your mind. You have got to learn how to glean from those things. Once you see what Paul is doing and how he is doing it, then stop and ask yourself, "Well, maybe there is more to this. Let me see who is really important in his world and why." Then you learn things like that. I am telling you, I have seen it all my life. That is how God does it, if you let Him.

That is not all. In Acts chapter 18, verse 26, these people really know their Bible. I love their boldness. I read every word in the Bible. I think every word is important. I think the way God says things in the Bible is really important. I love what he says here because it says something

about them as a couple. They were bold enough to deal with him. But look what else it says. Let me go back and read it. I have the note here, but I want to read it exactly here. It says this:

Acts 18:26

And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue, whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

Now, you know what that means to me? That means they did not chew him out and send him on his way. It means they took him in. It means they saw the potential in him. They realized because they were what, guys? We did not learn nothing yesterday, did we? They were what, guys? That is very good, but that is not what I want. They were what, guys? Let me ask the ladies. They were what, ladies? They were smarter than the problem. They were smarter than the problem. They did not beat him up. The Bible says they saw who he was. They saw how much of the Bible he knew, and they saw the fervent by which he spoke and the love that he had for God. So the Bible says they took him unto them. They spent some time with him. You certainly do not think they just took him out of there in a hallway and explained the whole revelation of Christ's coming and then sent him on his way and he got it straight, do you? No. They took him unto them. They adopted him. They took charge of him. They helped him. Because of that, he got his doctrine straightened out all because they had their doctrine straightened out. They not only had the Bible down and had it straight, but they had the grace and the discernment and discretion on how to use it. I like this couple.

Romans 16:3 says that Paul says that they are his helper in Christ. Then he goes on to make an incredible statement in Romans 16:3. He says, "Aquila and Priscilla, who have for my life laid down their own necks." They had a relationship with Paul. Paul trusted them. They had Paul's heart, Paul's vision. They understood exactly what he is trying to do, and they are in up to their eyeballs. In 2 Timothy 4:19, Paul makes mention of them again in connection with Timothy. Here we see that in some way, shape, or form, they are hooked up with him. Finally, in 1 Corinthians 16:19, and this is our text today, we find out that Aquila and Priscilla, they have a church in their home. Just like some of you do throughout the week, teaching people the Bible, having them over, couples, individuals, through discipleship, through whatever. You are an extension of this church, and you are holding it in your home, just like they did. You see what I am saying? You see any similarities at all here between our church, Paul, you, me, how this thing works?

You learn from this passage when Paul is coming down through here, and I think it is quite incredible that he is laying this out right before he gets into the great book that is the handbook of ministry. He shows you and me that the three institutions that are going to make any church work are the young men and young ladies that have it straight and are working through their issues and understand their limitations; the older men and women in the churches who have the experience of life, and if they can couple that with the Bible, then that makes them absolutely vital; and then the couples, no matter what age you are, the couples. It is what makes this church fire on all eight cylinders.

Yet, I am telling you right now, and you get this a lot of times, there is no church that is perfect. Churches are always going to have issues. Because churches are made up with people, Christians, Christians are not perfect. You hear all the time, "Well, nobody is perfect." You are looking for a perfect person or a perfect church or a perfect pastor, then you are never going to find it. A lot of times, you already know that, but you know deep down inside, you do not really want to do what is right, so it is easier to blame it on somebody else than it is to deal with your own issues. I am telling you right now, get a heads up on this. There are no perfect Christians, there are no perfect churches, and there are no perfect pastors. That is just the way it works. You just have to get that. The question should not be, "Are they perfect?" The question should be, "Is it real?" That ought to be the question. "Are they real?" Letting God use them and being used by God to do what God wants them to do. You look at Paul and follow his life, he was not perfect, nobody is. But that becomes a cop-out.

You see that Paul built churches. He is an evangelist, that is what an evangelist did back then. He built seven that we actually know of. I am sure he built thousands, and you can trace it back to every Bible-believing church today on the planet. It started with Paul, but he wrote about seven of them, and through those seven we get great insight. We now know that he built his churches around three people groups. Each one of them has a different equal value that when you put it all together, it makes the church work, the blend within ministry that makes it all work together. That is how he did it, and that is the great model that we have.

III. The Key to Ministry: Addiction

Now, who brought their fork today? Anybody bring their fork? You got your fork? Okay. Remember what I told you a couple weeks ago? Save your fork, because the best part is coming. Now, got your fork? Here it comes. Do you know what the single thing in this passage is that was the key to Paul's success and the church's success? The single key by which pulled all three of these people together. It is the greatest thing you will never not see. But it is absolutely incredible. It is found in verse 15 where he talks about the household of Stephanas.

1 Corinthians 16:15

I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints;)

That is one of my favorite passages in the Bible on ministry. "They have addicted themselves to the ministry." I love that verse. In one single verse, it completely knocks the holy glock of Moly out of everybody out there that tries to tell you that "don't be a fanatic about Christianity." How many times do you hear it? You hear it all the time from Christians who do not want to get in over their eyeballs. They want to stay and just stay in a kind of a nicey-nicey world. They do not want to make anybody mad. So they are always telling other people, "Now don't become a fanatic now. Don't get in it too deep. Don't go off the deep end. You do not want to do that." No, no, no. I would tell you, I would be the first one to agree. You never want to become a fanatic for Jesus Christ. You want to become an addict.

You know all the new Bibles do with that word addiction? They change it to devotion. Does not that sound nice? I am sure that every child of God that you ever found in your life, as worldly as they are, will tell you, "I am devoted to Christ." That is not the question. Are you addicted to Christ? Next time the cop pulls you over and you have got a marijuana cigarette and he smells it in the back and he says, "Are you addicted to drugs?" You say, "No, I am just devoted to them." See how it works for you. I will tell you what. You see, the word addiction is too extreme. Does not it sound nice that we are all devoted to Christ? You just kind of got a tacky taste in your mouth that you are addicted to Christ. That is way too extreme.

Yet the truth of the matter is we all have an addiction of some sort, do not we? Some people have drug addictions. Some people have addiction to alcohol. Some people have addiction to cigarettes, pornography. Some people have addiction to sports, golf, hunting, fishing, gambling, food. Then some people just have an addiction to themselves. We call them drama queens, do not we? Well, they are drama kings too. Do not kid yourself. Wherever you go in life, the spotlight always comes down and focuses on your problems and where you are at. If you have done any work with drug or alcohol abusers, you see the real meaning of the word addiction. You do not have to go to a Bible dictionary to look it up. The real meaning of addiction is it totally controls you. You cannot go one hour without a cigarette. You cannot go an hour without a fix. You cannot go an hour without a beer. I have known people all my life, I have seen them, I have known them for years. Every time you see them, they have got a drink in their hand. I have seen people go to the pack that they have to, they got really bad. They cannot go an hour without a cigarette.

You know what alcoholic means? When you break the word down, it is really the key word to all of this. Alcohol, alcoholic, alcoholic, holi, holy, alcoholic. To reverse the words like you do when you put words together, alcoholic is somebody that is holy, given to alcohol. That is addiction. That is exactly what it is. Let me say on the text we are reading here, God does not need any more devoted people. He has got enough of those. He wants addicted people. He wants you addicted to the ministry.

Our society, both religious and secular, recognize the terrible tragedy of some of these addictions. They have got centers where you can go if you are, that you can go to. If you are a drug addiction, you can get out of it. Alcohol, they even have halfway houses. The Restart program we are at, it has a facility for that, as does the City Union Mission that we are at. I am sure every mission does. If that is not your bag, then you go to Alcoholics Anonymous, and they will dry you out. You go to Narcotics Anonymous. You go to Gamblers Anonymous. It only shows me the stupidity, that the addiction to drugs and alcohol and gambling and everything else, but those three are what really destroys people's lives. Then this stupid government of ours wants to think around and talk about, "Well, maybe we ought to legalize marijuana." Like, we do not know that marijuana is the gateway to every other drug there is. Like, "Well, we will solve the problem with drug abuse by legalizing marijuana." Yeah, and you will solve the problem of everything else just by giving them more of what they need that they are going to do with it. That is exactly the way it is. It is just solely screwed up in everything that we do.

But I have got to tell you something. I appreciate Alcoholics Anonymous. I have used them many, many times with people I am working with. I went through the course myself. Not that I have never had a drink in my life, but I felt like I needed to know it. Narcotics Anonymous, too. Went through that, the 12-step program. It was a thing where I think that I have used them all when I am working with people. I do not think they have the complete answer, but they can share help in the process. But I have also come aware that just like society wants to break addictions and have halfway houses, I have got news for you. If you have not figured this out yet, the devil has got a halfway house, too. His halfway house is to get God's people to break the addiction of ministry. Most of God's people are in that halfway house. I promise you.

Now you look at Timothy, Apollos, and Aquila and Priscilla. They are what makes a ministry work. This is why Paul talks about them. They are addicted. They are addicted to the ministry. You know the philosophy of 99.999% of the churches, why they fail today. Just because somebody has 20,000 people coming to their services does not mean it is a success. O'Mell told me years and years ago, one of the wisest things he ever said when somebody was talking about somebody had 10,000 in church, he said, "Just because you have 10,000 people show up does not mean it is a church." This is so true.

But the reason why churches fail today is because they divide themselves against themselves. They never tap into the greatest resource they have. I learned this probably 35 years ago, one of the single greatest things I ever learned. I followed it consistently all of my life. You have young singles. You have young married. You have older couples. You have jolly 60s. You have all these groups. When you go to most churches, they are all divided out. They have what they call a Sunday school class. They have Sunday school classes for the groups. Sunday school classes are not in the Bible. I am not in argument with them. Some Baptist preachers, they have looked at our church and they have said, "When do you have Sunday school?" They turn up their nose like we are denied the virgin birth or something. They do not even know that Sunday schools were not even started until the 1800s. They do not even know who started it. Robert Raikes started it in England for the purpose that he started it. I am not against it.

But I will tell you what Sunday school classes do. They divide up your church into social groups. I think what happens when your church gets divided up into social groups, and I understand the reasoning behind it. An 18-year-old does not really have anything common with a 60-year-old. Socially. Jim and Marcy Clark are not going to slide into home plate and save the ball game for us when we play softball. They are just not. Harry's mom and Aunt Pam and Penny, who are not here today, they are sick. They are not going to be the anchors on your volleyball team. They are just not going to. So I understand what they are saying. But you see the problem is in the social circles, when your primary goal is to get them all socially diced up, you lose one of the greatest aspects that he is talking about here.

Maybe an 18-year-old and a 60-year-old have nothing together for flag football with Kyle on Saturday afternoon. But an 18-year-old and a 60-year-old have very much in common when it comes down to ministering to people. Because ministry knows no social barrier. Ministry does not know Penny back here and Pam. They cannot go down to Restart. They cannot do what everybody else does. But I guarantee you they found a place in ministry of just finding people

that are missing or finding people that are sick and passing out and going to get the cards at their own expense and sending them out and telling them they are praying for them. You see what I am saying? In other words, when all you focus on is the social, that is all you get done.

I have learned that when you do not focus and make the number one focus of your church social things, you make it ministry. The ministry gets done because everybody, no matter what your age is, can work together in ministry and the social things take care of themselves. That is just the way it works. Most churches are so busy dividing up their social groups, they just divide themselves completely out of the equation. You are going to find that Timothy is a young man, Apollos is an older man, and Aquila and Priscilla, they are a married couple. How many times have we said, "Well, we cannot let the married couples hang out with the singles because it just does not work." It does not work if you are going to have fun, but it works if you are going to minister.

You see, when your idea in your mind about your church is social events and what you are going to do, then you are never going to get the ministry. When your goal is not those things and ministry, and everybody understands that God saved you for a reason, He saved you for a purpose, and we can all minister together, whether it be at a Restart, whether it be at the mission, you can pass out hot dogs and pass out tracts if you are 60, 70, 80, 90, or 20. Some of the older folks, some of the older couples, some of the older people have much more experience that when you hang out with the younger ones, you can blend along. But when you chop it all up, it is crazy. But that is the layer to see in church, see?

I watched down there at the first time at the Restart when they went in. I actually, when we were going down there, I think it is the greatest thing in one form or the other, everybody in this church. I actually saw the other day where people, when I was down there, did not go over to them, did not say anything to them because I knew what was going on. They are over in the corner weeping because they are moved by what God has done for them and where they are at and what they have, and the contrast of what these people do not have is overwhelming to you because it puts it all in perspective. We whine and complain about what we do not have and what we do not like, but when you go down there, you see something. I watched a woman put on a used coat that she wanted a coat, and she put on a coat and the coat would not even fit. It would not even get close. She could not even button it, and she was the happiest person in the world because she got a new coat. Give me a break. That made her day when for you and for me, everything has to be exactly the way it has to be. I saw some of you guys down there, the first time we went, a guy did not have a jacket, you took the jacket off, you were wearing it and gave it to him. Never said a word, but I understand those things. There is something about getting into the real world where we are oblivious to that you see what people do not have that makes you appreciate and makes you feel so foolish for what you do have and how we look at it. By the way, one of the big needs that we need this time coming up is socks and underwear, but just do not be doing the same thing with the underwear we were doing with the jackets. Okay, guys, let us buy him something else. Got to tell you people everything because you will be doing it. I know you guys. If you do, please wear two pair.

You see, God did not save us. God did not make this church or any other church to be a social station. He just did not because God knows human nature. When you focus everything you do around the social events, you never get the ministry. You just never get there because you divide your resources off. You say, "Well, the young singles, they have got to stay over here, and the young married, they have got to stay here, and they are over here, and everybody over here, and they just do not have anything in common." No, they do not as far as playing softball, but you sure do when it comes to winning people to Christ and getting into the ministry. When you get into the ministry and you focus on that, the social things take care of themselves. It is just that simple, but most guys are not that smart. They never get to that point, and that is the key to any success. That is the key to any success we would have. When your emphasis is on the social, you never accomplish the ministry because you are dividing yourself right out of the ministry. When your goal is ministry, everybody works together and gets addicted to the ministry. No matter what you are or how old you are, what your status is or your social areas or your social class, you just take care of the people who need the help, and it is a natural process, and everything else works it out.

That is why so many of God's people are so worried about the friends they have or they do not have or the social things they get invited to, they do not get invited to, and they never stop one time thinking about the people out there who do not have anybody or anything. Some of the closest friends I have got in my life are people, when I met, God allowed me to minister to them, and you want to make some friends, start taking somebody that has no friends and giving out to them, either the strong, about the barely infirmities of the weak and ministering to them. You will get some friends, you will get some good friends. I got some. The common bond that pulls us together and keeps us together is people working in ministry with other people.

I have told you many, many times. Sabaka told me 35, 40 years ago, only two things are worth investing your life in because it is the only two things going to last for eternity. One of them is the Word of God, the other one is the souls of men, everything else is just a waste of time. You have got to put it in perspective. You see, I believe today God's people today, they suffer from a tragic case of mistaken identity. I really do. Who they really are. Not who they are in Christ, but that too, but who they are in this world. Jesus said, and I am paraphrasing now, we have to lose ourselves to find ourselves. What we really have to do is drop this false self-created image that we all have. That we have that we can do nothing for God, care nothing about the things of God, do nothing for God, and still in our mind think we are okay with God. That image of ourselves that is built around us, ourselves, not others, is based on our own ego, our own mindset that it is so easy to adapt to our lazy culture of Christianity. It is a pretense. It is a bogus identity. It is a self-styled, self-righteous identity that has no room for real ministry and people.

Most of God's people on the outside look like a brand new, spanking, shiny Chevy Corvette. But when you look around, it is great. It is absolutely beautiful inside. When you open the hood, somebody stole the motor. Somebody stole your motor. You look great and shiny and sparkly on the outside, but you are not going anywhere and you are not doing anything because somebody stole your motor. Somebody told you not to become a fanatic. Somebody put you in the wrong halfway house. It will be true in any ministry anywhere that those three people groups who

through a common bond of understanding what Christ did for them on the cross and then together collectively addicting themselves and becoming addicts to the ministry of Jesus Christ, it blows my mind how some of God's people can go a day without reading their Bible, weeks or months maybe, how some of God's people can go a day without talking to the Heavenly Father, how some of God's people can live their whole lives, feel nothing, no conviction about their fake walk with God and the fact that God saved them to serve and there is nothing, no souls, no ministry, no nothing, no depth. Is not it a shame that we can go a whole day without talking to Him or reading our Bible and some of us cannot go an hour without a cigarette? I am telling you where the addiction is and where the addiction is not.

IV. Worldly Addictions vs. Godly Addiction

Rachel back there in the Old Testament, who was barren, and she is a great picture of the nation of Israel, one of the greatest verses in the Bible. She comes back there and she cries out, she says, "Give me children, lest I die." That ought to be your prayer. "Give me souls, lest I die." Not, "Give me a beer." Yet those same people will tell you, "Don't become a fanatic now." Well, now you know too clearly that that is a lie. It is clear now that just as the drugs and the alcohol and the gambler who has lost everything, God wants you addicted to Him so you can lose everything. I mean that is the way it works. There is not a lot of difference when you lay it out between the world's addictions and God's addictions.

Somebody says, "Well, drugs alter your mind when you get addicted to them." They do. But when you get addicted to the Word of God, it will alter your mind too. Somebody says, "Well, he is addicted to alcohol." Yeah, and the old world used to call those spirits. In fact, you still see it when you drive down past the liquor store, "spirits."

Ephesians 5:18

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

In other words, he is saying, "Don't get drunk on the world's stuff. Get drunk on God's stuff." You see, a saved man does not really quit drinking. You have got to know that. A saved man does not really quit drinking. A saved man just changes bottles. A saved man does not stop being an addict or having an addiction. He just changes addictions. You and I should look and act just like a drunk. You and I should look and act as God's people. Do you ever see the similarities between the two? They are incredible. Do you ever study the five characteristics that drunks and people with addictions have in connection with you and me? One is an addiction to the world, the other one is an addiction to the ministry.

The first thing somebody, when you drink and you are addicted to alcohol and you are drunk all the time, you see them all the time when they get drunk. You know the first thing you see about them? How bold they are. I have seen a hundred-pound guy try to take on a 250-pound biker because the alcohol made him bold. Where he would put his tail between his legs before in meekness when the guy said something, he shoots his mouth right off back now and just tells him where it is at. Gets killed in the process, but there is a boldness. You say things you would not normally say. When you get piled into the Word of God and you become addicted to the

ministry, you have a boldness about you that you will say things that right now you are not willing to say. You will say something to somebody. You will say something to somebody about the Lord. Right now you are afraid. But when you get the alcohol in you, it kind of loses your whole perspective of things and you get this false boldness that now you are really a big guy. You are only 5 foot 3 and 110 pounds, but in your mind you are now 6 foot 10 and you are Hulk Hogan. Well, when you get God's addiction in your life, you still may be 5 foot 10 and 110 nothing, but you have got the Lord Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages, inside you, and you can stand up to everything.

I will tell you something else. Have you ever seen a drunk? Somebody addicted to alcohol? I have seen them all my life. I will tell you something else that they cannot do. Cannot keep their mouth shut. They are always singing. Always singing. We are talking about drowning out your sorrows. Always happy-go-lucky. Nothing bothers them. "99 bottles of beer on the wall, 99 bottles of beer on the wall." They are always happy. You are always happy-go-lucky. Have you ever been to Germany? A couple of times I went to Germany, I went down just to see it for an example. Have you ever been to an *off free house*? That is a beer hall. You walk into that place and it is probably five times bigger than this whole downstairs. There have got to be four or five thousand people down there. There are women running up and down. Their beer over there is what, 18 percent alcohol. It is killer. These little mugs you have down here, them suckers are that big. Most of the guys bring their own. They do not bring their bottle. They bring their own mug. I walked in that place one night and I was telling you what you talk about a rocking place. There were four thousand people swaying back and forth singing in German and holding their beer up and everybody hands on everybody, beer slopping everywhere. They were the happiest crowd in the whole wide world. I thought to myself, you know what? That is exactly what every church ought to be when they get drunk on the Spirit of God instead of the spirits of this world.

I will tell you something else. You take a guy when he gets drunk, you take a guy when he gets addicted to alcohol. I will tell you what else it will do. Not only does he have a boldness and not only can he not keep his mouth shut and he is always singing, but it affects his walk. You see a drunk guy who gets drunk in the world cannot walk straight. A guy gets drunk on the Word of God cannot walk crooked.

I will tell you something else they are always doing too. Every drunk I ever saw in my life, every alcoholic I ever saw that was addicted to that stuff. They always want to share their bottle. I am telling you. They are just, I have been in places where they do not even know people. Somebody comes up and says, "Hey, how you doing? I am fish biting, not fish not bite very good. Here, have one of these." I have seen them pass out beer like it was, like it was tracts. That is the word I am looking for. Well, I would be five drunks and one bottle of whiskey and they will pass that thing around and somebody will drain the last drop out of it. You know why? Because when you are addicted to alcohol, you share what you have got. When you are addicted to Christianity in the ministry, you share what you have got. They pass out beer, "Have one of these. What a cold one." We go down there say, "Hey, take what is this and keep you from getting a hot one." Think about it.

So, it is a different, you are either going to be addicted to the things of the world or you are going to be addicted to the things of God. When I look at a drunk, somebody is addicted to the spirits of this world. I see a lot of similarities of what you and I ought to be when we get addicted to the Spirit of God. You have to have that boldness. You have to never keep your mouth shut. You have to have the joy, joy, joy, joy down in your heart. It ought to affect your walk. You ought to want to share what you have got to drink.

I will tell you the fifth one. People in alcohol and people that are drunk and people that are addicted, they always need a designated driver. You see, you just run yourself into the ditch. You need somebody driving you home to heaven. It is the Lord. Because when you are an addict, when you are addicted to alcohol, boy, you will drive yourself right into a disaster. I saw a bumper sticker one time on a car that said, based on the famous Flying Tiger guy. I forget his name at this particular point in time in China with the Flying Tigers, and it says he wrote a book and also made a movie. But on a bumper sticker it says, "God is my co-pilot." Now that looks neat, does not it? But I have some news for you. God does not want to be the co-pilot. That just means you are still driving the plane, and we know where that is going to lead. No, no, when you get saved, you are like every drunk when he has too much to drink and you get excess of the Spirit of God. The first thing you do is turn over your life to the Lord Jesus Christ, let Him drive the bus. Let Him get you home. Similarities are the same.

The gambler. He will put his faith in a game of chance and lose everything. The addicted child of God puts his faith in the eternal absolute Word of God and winds up losing everything anyhow because he gives it up. So we sing, "I surrender all." The Bible says if you want to keep it, you have got to give it away. The Bible says, "He that loses life shall find it."

Philippians 3:7-8

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

Now brother, there is a fanatic right there. There is an addicted man right there. Gamblers go out the boats, they lose everything they have. They put away their house payment, their car payment, the kids' college fund, they lose every dime they got. Go out and borrow more money and then lose more money. They wind up losing everything that they have, and a child of God, once you get addicted to the ministry, you realize you have got to give up everything you have got. I guess it is just whatever addiction you are going to put yourself to.

V. Conclusion: The Blended Ministry

So we see these three people groups here, and wow, who would have thought we would ever get that out of a farewell chapter of 1 Corinthians chapter 16. You do when you look at what he is saying. So we see the three people groups that make Paul's ministry work of God, and we see the exact same three people groups that will make any work, whether it be this church or any other

church, when the main emphasis is not friends, fellowship, fun, get together, weenie roasts, hot dogs, and all the things that go along, but those are fine, but the main emphasis has to be ministry. The thing that pulls the Timothys, the Apolloses, and the Aquila and Priscillas together is all roads of fellowship lead to ministry, and ministry leads to being addicted to it, you not being able to go a day without being involved in ministry to some degree.

We all get used to things in our life, and those things become part of our life. So a lot like running, runners who run a lot will tell you that running becomes such a part of their life that when you get sick and you have to take two or three days off from running, it just messes up your whole world. We all have things like that, and yet the thing that we ought to not be able to live without is the aspect of ministry, and the key to getting that way is now that you know for sure what Paul says is to become addicted to the ministry. Now you know everybody has a model. You young guys and gals, you have a model now, you know what it is. You middle people who are in your Apollos age groups, you know exactly where it is at. You couples, you now know how valuable all three of you are to the work of God. But now you also know the thing that pulls it all together: that is addiction. If you are not addicted to the ministry, you will be addicted to something else. It might be yourself, but you will be addicted to something else. It is just that simple.

So I leave it with that, looking at what God has given us. Next week we will talk about the five charges that he gives this church that will set us up for going into the greatest book on ministry where we are at right now, and that is the book of 2 Corinthians. So let us pray.