

I. Introduction to the Gospel of John

We are going to study the book of John this morning. John is a very easy book to grasp, probably the most unique book in all of the Bible. We have come through the Gospels, as we have been coming through every book of the Bible, trying to portray how Christ is laid out.

In Matthew, we saw Him as the King of the Jews. In Mark, we saw Him as the Servant of the Lord. In Luke, which we just finished after about three or four weeks, we saw Him as the Son of Man. Now we come to the Gospel of John, and in the Gospel of John, we find Jesus is portrayed to us as the Son of God.

II. The Unique Apostle John

I think John is an incredible book. I think John is probably the most unique writer in all of the Bible that you are going to find. He writes five books in the Bible. A couple of Thursday nights ago, I walked you through and showed you how there are five wisdom books in the Old Testament, and then John writes five books in the New Testament. Those five wisdom books in the Old Testament pretty much match up to the five books that John wrote, making five books of wisdom in the Old Testament and five books of wisdom in the New Testament.

John is an incredible study in the Bible. Some of the greatest, richest things that you will ever get out of the Bible you will find in what we call character studies. In those men's lives that you study, you are going to find all kinds of incredible principles that will work for your own life. John is a perfect type, probably better than any other man in the Bible, of what your life and my life should be as far as our relationship with Christ. Because of that, he writes from a totally different perspective than any other writer.

I have told you many, many times, but we have new people here today, so let me get everybody's mind on the right context. I have told you many, many times how the twelve apostles picture and represent all of Christianity in a nutshell. You had twelve apostles, but one of them was a phony: Judas. In any church or any kind of Christian circle, you are certainly going to find somebody who is not saved. I hate to admit it this morning, I hate to even think the idea, but it would be pretty foolish for me to think this morning that everybody sitting here is saved. Maybe you are, but it does not happen very often today.

So, within Christianity, we find that not everybody that thinks they are saved is saved. People get weird ideas about salvation. They think joining a church gets you saved, or getting baptized saves you, and of course, we know that is not true. We know that the only thing that saves you is putting your faith and trust in Jesus Christ and His death on the cross. That is the only way you can get saved.

We find with the twelve apostles, one of them was a phony; that left eleven. Out of the eleven that were left, you are going to find, when you study it through the Gospels, only three of those

eleven really ever did anything of notable mention in the Bible. Every time Jesus does some great miracle, these three names always keep popping up.

Let me ask the kids here, raise your hand, kids, who knows what these three people are? Don't yell it, hold your hand up and let us see who knows who these three apostles were, who were part of the inner circle.

➤ Peter, James, and John.

When you come through the Bible, you find that Peter, James, and John experience greater things with Jesus than the other eleven do. At the great feedings of the 5,000 and all the great miracles that Jesus does, you find that it talks about Peter, James, and John. When He raises Jairus' daughter, who was dead, the Bible talks about Peter, James, and John. On the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17, when the Lord stepped on the cross, and the Bible says He was glorified, which is a picture of the second coming of Christ, guess who is there? Peter, James, and John.

So you see, when you look at these inner three, you see that just like in Christianity, we have a church here, but it does not matter what church it is, the principle is still true. There will be men and women in this church that will have a closer relationship with Jesus Christ than other Christians in this church. It is not because God discriminates between one or the other; you are going to see here in a moment that it is basically based on where you are at, what you want out of it. My old mama used to say, "You only get out of something what you put into it."

Peter, James, and John, they put something into it, but out of those three, and this is the point of the Gospel of John, out of those three, only one goes the distance. When Christ finally gets crucified there in the Gospels, you will find that Peter denies Him, James is nowhere to be found, and the only one who goes the distance, the only one who goes all the way to the cross, is John. When you look at John there, and you see John standing at the foot of Jesus at the cross, Jesus gave His own mother to John and said, "You take care of her from this point on."

You see, John and Jesus had a very special relationship, and you are going to find that he makes the model for the relationship that you and I should have. It would be great to have a church full of people who are like John in their life. I think probably of all the Christian names that are given out, and nobody really knows this for sure as far as why, but I know why. I think of all the Christian names that are passed out to people, John probably tops the list, and people do not even know that.

John is the most unique writer in the New Testament, and when he writes, he writes from a perspective that no other writer writes from. In John 13:23, the Bible says that Jesus loved John. John is the only disciple that Jesus says that He loved. I know that Jesus loved them all, for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. I know that, but what we have here is a great study. It was John, in John 13:25, just a couple of verses later, who actually laid his head on the very breast of Jesus and heard the very heartbeat of God.

At the Last Supper, when Jesus was telling them that somebody is going to betray Him, every disciple went around in order and thought it might be them. Each one of them said, "Lord, is it I?"

Lord, is it I?" John said, "Lord, who is it?" John did not know who it was, but John knew for sure who it was not going to be. It was not going to be him. That is a great study in the Bible, is it not?

It is a thing where I know that Jesus loved them all, but I want to tell you something: some of you will have a closer, more loving relationship with Jesus than maybe the person sitting next to you. Do you know what the basis of that is? Because I know that Jesus loves everybody. I know that Jesus desires to have a relationship with everybody to the best that you could ever have in His life. The problem is not Jesus. Jesus had a special love for John, ladies and gentlemen, because simply put, John had a special love for Jesus. You will find that your life and my life are to be a picture of that, that you and I should go the distance with the Lord Jesus Christ. You and I should be there and decide that, as Joshua said, "For me and my house, we shall serve the Lord."

So when John writes the Gospel of John, he gives us an incredible insight. It is based on his love relationship with Christ as the Son of God, and it sets for us a pattern. We talked about that last week, how Paul told Timothy in the charges that he gave him that he was to be a pattern of Christ in everything that he does. John has an advantage that no other writer has. When he writes, and he writes the last book of the Bible, and all of his books are written toward the end, 80-90 A.D., he has the advantage that when he writes, he has the complete New Testament sitting on his lap.

III. The Purpose of the Gospel of John

John is an incredible book. There is a key verse in John, and I want to give it to you in John 20:31. This verse tells you why John was written, and I think you need to know that today.

John 20:31

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

He just told you and me that the reason the book of John was written was for you and me to get saved. That is the whole purpose of that book. The book of John was written to declare unto you and me that Jesus is the Son of God, and by Him being the Son of God, if you believe on Him, you can have eternal life. That is a great concept. You need to put that in your Bible at the beginning of the book of John.

John is a great book on getting saved. There are two great books in your Bible that really form the basis of salvation: the book of John and the book of Romans. Where John lays out the preparation for salvation, Romans lays out the road to salvation.

I would suggest, kids, that when you start reading a book in the Bible, I would say to anybody, when somebody comes to me that has just gotten saved, and I know that they are not going to figure out all of the Bible just by reading it on their own, but you need to begin to read your Bible. I would tell you young kids this when you begin to read, just as I would tell you adults, when you get saved, the first book you ought to read, or when you become a young child to the place where you can actually read and comprehend what you are reading, the first book of the Bible you ought to read is the Gospel of John. It will sow the seeds.

Some of you parents like to read a book to your children, and some of you read maybe a chapter a night or a chapter a week, and you talk about that chapter all week. I would suggest that you start with John. John will prep your child. John will prepare your child for salvation, and then when they get to that point in their life, Romans will be the road that leads them to that salvation. It is a great book.

IV. Structural Breakdown of John

Now, let us get a little technical here. Kids, this might be a little over your head, but that is all right. Both of the things that are said in the world are over my head, so we will just be in the same boat on this one. The breakdown of John and breakdowns of the books of the Bible are very important, but the breakdown of John is really easy.

The whole book, first of all, you want to remember this, and you want to get these notes at some place in the front of your Bible so you have them at a glance. The book of John focuses on the last three years of Christ's life. There is not a lot talked about in His birth. In fact, there is not anything talked about in His birth from a physical standpoint. It basically picks up when Jesus is 30 years old, and then it walks you through the last three years of His life. In particular, the book starts with the first Passover where Jesus starts His public ministry when He is 30 years of age. Then it basically brings you through the next three Passovers. So this book is built around four Passovers. The first Passover being when He started His public ministry, then going to the first year, the second year, and then the third year, and then Him becoming crucified at the fourth Passover, or at the end of the third year of His ministry.

I am going to give you these breakdowns. You need to put these into the front of your Bible, and you also need to go through your Bible and put them in there where it actually breaks.

1. John 1 to John 2:13: The opening intro about His deity. In John 2:13, at the Passover, where the Bible says He is 30 years of age, this is where He starts His public ministry.
2. John 2:14 to John 5:1: This represents the first year of His public ministry, bringing us up through His first year of ministry and then to the next Passover.
3. John 5:2 to John 6:4: This brings us up through the second year of His ministry and up to John 6:4, which begins in verse 5 the next Passover.
4. John 6:5 to John 12:1: This brings us up to the final end of the final year of His public ministry, up to the third Passover.
5. John 13 to John 18: All takes place in the last night before He is crucified.
6. John 19: His trial and crucifixion. He is crucified at the beginning of the fourth Passover of His life.
7. John 20: The resurrection.
8. John 21: The conclusion of the book.

The book brings us up through the first year of His life, second year of His life, third year of His life, and at the end of the third year, which starts the fourth Passover coming through here, which will be in John 19, because in John 19, we have His trial and His crucifixion, and He is crucified

at the beginning of the fourth Passover of His life. So this whole book is built around those four Passovers.

Why is the book of John built around the four Passovers? Because in this book, He is declared as the Son of God. Back in Exodus 12, we have a great model back there of the nation of Israel being delivered from Egypt. The nation of Israel, whether you know it or not, up to that point, always started the first of their year, like our New Year's, at the Feast of Tabernacles, which is in September or October. But in Exodus 12, when God brings them out of Egypt, He establishes a new date for the beginning of their year, and He establishes a feast that they are going to carry through the rest of their life, even till today, and that is called the Passover. The Passover simply means that on that night, they were to put the blood of a spotless lamb on the doorpost and on the top of the door, and then when the death angel came over that night and he saw the blood on the door, he would pass over them. So it is called the Passover.

Just as God brought them out as a nation through a time in Jewish history called a Passover, the Bible says that Jesus Christ, His death on the cross, is our Passover. He is the Lamb. When John the Baptist saw Him coming, he saw Him and he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John the Baptist knew that this man named Jesus was the sacrificial Lamb that had been talked about all the way through the Bible. Remember back in Genesis 22, when Abraham was going to sacrifice his son, and God stopped him, and then God said to him, "God will provide Himself a lamb." All through the Old Testament, the nation of Israel had sacrifices, and they had five basic sacrifices that were for them, and then of course, the sixth sacrifice was the Day of Atonement, but four of those five sacrifices had to do with God and had to do with a lamb and had to do with something dying.

1 Corinthians 5:7

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

He is our sacrifice, He is our Passover. So that is why, when He wants to portray Christ as the Son of God, He does it around three Passovers, or four Passovers, and the fourth one being His crucifixion.

V. Key Principles from John Chapter 1: The Word Made Flesh

What I am about to say is very important, and you want to get this in the back of your mind about the book of John. When we came through Luke, I showed you that we saw the issue of the Son of Man, did we not? I showed you, and I spent an enormous amount of time coming through Luke, because I wanted you to learn the basic Bible principles of how to deal with other people. In Luke, we see Him as the Son of Man; He is dealing with man's issues. We see all of the great principles that we need to have in our lives to help other people, which is what our job is. So we took the time, and I told you that the mindset of getting the Bible principles to help you in your

own life first, and then help somebody else out with theirs, will simply be understanding all those great stories in the Gospel of Luke.

But in this book, you see, this is the great story on salvation and getting saved, and in this book, you want to learn the principles, and you will learn the principles of winning people to Christ.

Proverbs 11:30

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

I cannot emphasize enough how at some point in your Christian life, you need to move to the point where you actually start bearing fruit and winning people to Christ. Soul winning is absolutely the number one most important thing in your life when you get to that stage. My wife is going to take the ladies—several have asked her to do this—and on March the 19th, at 9:30, she is going to have a class for the ladies to show them how to win somebody to Christ. I think, as you grow, it is absolutely essential. I cannot fathom a child of God going through life, and I know we all have our downtime, and I know that we all have to work through things, but my goodness, how long does it take for us to get to the point where we actually are comfortable enough with the Bible that we can sit down with somebody?

I talked a couple of weeks ago how God in this world basically does two things: He prepares sinners who need the Gospel, and then He prepares servants, saved people who have the Gospel, and He likes to get the two of them together. The problem is, in my mind, God has more prepared sinners than He has prepared servants, and you need to learn in time how to win somebody to Christ. I think after she teaches that class, then I will take a Thursday night, and I will show you the fundamentals behind winning somebody to Christ. The mindset I am going to show you, I will take you through and I will add to what she says, and I will show you how in the Bible the principles behind how you view soul winning in general by the biblical principles, and I think maybe that will help you accomplish that.

Let us move through here, and I want to hit the high points, so to speak, of this book and the principles that we need to learn. John 1 is a great chapter. I am going to read it for you here; you can follow along if you like, and kids, if you have your Bibles, you can follow along.

John 1:1-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

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

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

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

What a great chapter that is, what an incredible chapter that is! You begin to see that where in Matthew we had a genealogy, and that genealogy ran back through the kingly line. In Mark, we had no genealogy because Mark is a picture of a servant, and a servant has no genealogy. But in Luke, we saw His genealogy as a Son of Man go back through Mary, back through Adam. But notice here, the genealogy here goes back to God.

John 1:1-5

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

He comes down through that, and he basically lays out for you the eternality and the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the beginning was the Word, and of course, it shows you that the Word is God. If there is anything that comes out of this book and John 1 in the whole book, it shows you that you cannot separate God from the Bible. It is an incredible concept that we will develop as we go on down through here.

The Bible says in John 1:5, "And the light shineth in darkness." You notice how the first verses down through here all match Genesis 1:1-5. You realize Genesis 1 says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Here it says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The same thing, it follows it right down. In Genesis 1:5, He divides the light from the darkness. Here in John 1:5, He says, "And the light shineth in darkness." You find the first great principle about God, and that is the fact that God is a divider.

Then you find in John 1:9, it says, "And that was the true Light." There is a true light and there is a false light. I do not have time to tell you this morning or spend the time, but it will be a great Thursday night Bible question. I can show you how the Bible says that we know the devil is an

imitator. It talks about the fact that God is light, but then it talks about the fact that the devil is a light, but the devil is a light that is a black light. Have you ever seen a black light? A black light really masks what you really look like, but it is still a light, where a white light shows you everything as it is. When you go into those haunted houses, they always use black lights. You know why? Because black lights allow you to see some things, but it is deception enough that you can hide things. So God is portrayed as a white light, the devil is portrayed as a black light, but he is a light. So there is a true light and there is a false light.

Then John 1:14 says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." That is the greatest single verse in the Bible that tells you that Jesus Christ and the Word are one and the same, that He is the incarnate Word.

1 Corinthians 2:16

For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Philippians 2:5

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

I told you last week how the scribes and Pharisees, the educated crowd, missed the first coming of Christ. I told you this last week, they missed the first coming of Christ because they rejected who Christ was. Then I told you that at the second coming of Christ, the time that you and I live, the smart-aleck people who think they are smarter than God today, all the scribes and the Pharisees, they are going to miss the second coming of Christ because they have rejected the Book. Well, now you know that the Book and Jesus are one and the same.

There is a word that we like to use today, and it is the word "translate" or "translation." Whether you know it or not, that word is a Bible word, but it never means what we take it to mean today. The word "translate" is only found in the Bible a couple of times. In 2 Samuel 3:10, we are told that somebody was translated from the kingdom. In Colossians 1:13, it says we were translated from darkness to the kingdom of God. In Hebrews 11:5, it says Enoch was translated from earth to heaven. So the Bible translates the word, or gives us the definition of the word "translate," differently than we use it. When we use the word "translate," we always think of going from one language to another. But in the Bible, that is not the case. In the Bible, translation or translate is always from one place to another place, never one language to another, not one time.

That sets up a great concept because at the first coming, the Word leaves heaven and is translated into the person of Christ, John 1:14. For 33 years, He was here, and He was translated from the Word of God; the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and He was translated from the Word, which is settled in heaven, to the person of Jesus Christ. But then He goes back to heaven after the resurrection in Acts 1, and then God translated Him back to heaven and then translated the person of Christ to us in a Book. That is never a language in the Bible; it is always a place, because now we know that Jesus and the Word are one and the same. So the concept of translate or translation is not about one language to another; as far as God is concerned, it is about one place to another.

You have in your hand this morning, if you have the pure Word of God, you have the Word manifested in the flesh in your hands in a volume of a Book. You have everything that God wants you to have, and that is the basis. In Revelation 19:13, when He comes back, the Bible says His sharp sword goes out of His mouth, and His name is called the Word of God. It is very important. Just like, for the very elementary, just like we do not have more than one Jesus, and the Bible says that if somebody else preaches another Jesus, it is here to get away from him, we only have one Bible, and that is just simply how it lays itself out.

VI. Key Principles from John Chapter 2: The Wedding at Cana

In John 2, we have the first miracle that brings us up to the first Passover in His public ministry, and of course, we know this as the wedding at Cana. This will be the story that God's people like to use to make their marriage ceremony a drunken booze fest: the fact that Jesus turned water to wine. Without getting into a long story today on it, and basically this is all something that we can deal with and talk about as we come down through it, the bottom line is you know that we have been through it many, many times.

Deuteronomy 32 is the great definitive verse that talks about the fact that there are two kinds of wine: there is an old wine and a new wine. The old wine is the devil's wine; it bites like an adder, it is like a serpent. God's wine, the new wine, is called in Matthew 26 the fruit of the vine. Isaiah 65 talks about new wine in the cluster. So we know that Jesus did not turn that water into the fermented wine. If He had done that, then He would have violated Habakkuk 2:15, which says, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also." So we know now that this story here in the first miracle is a picture of something else. What it is a picture of is that great event called the marriage supper of the Lamb, which we talked about on Thursday night. It is a great picture of that.

VII. Key Principles from John Chapter 3: The New Birth

Then we get into John 3. Now we have kind of got through the introduction of things, and John 3 is where the real meat of the message begins to unfold: the story of Nicodemus. This is a great principle within this study of an unsaved man and how an unsaved man gets saved, and I think it is very instructive in your process of learning about winning people to Christ.

John 3:1-10

1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

This is a great story. Now let me talk to you about what you have here. I do not know how you got saved, but here is how I hope you did not get saved, because if you got saved the way I am about to lay it out from Nicodemus, you really did not get saved, and maybe this will help you figure it out this morning.

The first thing I want you to see in John 3:1-2 is that it says, "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

We see in that first two verses, first of all, he is a very religious man. We also see in this passage that he is a good man, morally good. We also see that he recognizes that Jesus is the Son of God; that is pretty powerful. He also recognizes the fact and believes who He is. He says, "You are God's man. No man could do these miracles except God be with him." He has all of the criteria: he is a good man, he obviously goes to church, he is religious, he believes in God, he believes that Jesus is the Son of God. He believes all of those things, and he still comes up short.

Jesus never stopped and recognized the fact that he recognized who He was, He recognized that he went to church, that he was a leader of Israel, that he was religious or a good moral man. Jesus simply says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see eternal life." He cannot get it. In other words, joining a church, being religious, believing in God, those are all good things, but they do not get you to heaven. It is only a new birth that gets you to heaven.

Now we see a great study here unfolding with great principles, and this is a great study on how man cannot grasp the principles of God. Jesus says in John 3:3, "Except a man be born again." Nicodemus comes back and says, "Well, how can a man go back in his mother's womb?" He never got the principle. So what goes on here is a little dissertation. Nicodemus is unable to understand the simple language of Jesus and the Bible. Jesus said in John 3:3, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus says, "I can't." He cannot get the fact that he is the man. He wants to put himself in the abstract. He cannot see himself as that man. He is like so many of us, "Oh yeah, somebody else needs this, but I do not need it. I go to church, I

am a great person." Jesus is not talking about that; He is talking to Nicodemus, and He says, "Except a man," the man is the man standing in front of Him, Nicodemus. But he cannot get the personal aspect of it.

Finally, down in John 3:7, Jesus says to him, He brings it right down, "Marvel not that I say unto you, Ye, Nicodemus, must be born again." He still cannot get it. In John 3:9, he says, "How can these things be?" And then Jesus makes one of the greatest statements in the Bible. He simply says to Nicodemus, "You are a master of Israel, and you do not know these things?" You teach the Bible every day of your life, you go to church seven days a week, you are there, your whole religion is part of your life, you are a good person, you are a moral person, you believe in God, you believe I am the Son of God, yet you as a leader in Israel do not know these things.

You see, human beings and human nature are always the same. We think that if we just live a good moral life, and we just go to church, and we do the religious things we are supposed to do, that that is what cuts it with God. That is not what cuts it with God. The Bible says, "Ye must be born again." He talks about the two births. He says, "Unless a man is born of the water and of the Spirit." You see, the water birth is not baptism. The water birth there is your physical birth. When your mom decided it was time to have you, or maybe you decided it was time for her to have you, I do not know how it worked, the water broke, it was a water birth. That is why back in Genesis, the first time life shows up, it shows up in the water. "Great whales He created and fish." Water in the Bible will always represent your physical birth. He says, "That which is of the flesh is flesh; that which is of the Spirit is spirit." It is not your first birth that gets you to heaven, not when you were born by water. It is your second birth, the spiritual birth, that puts you into God's family.

Nicodemus is a great case study in that. Sitting here this morning, I hope you are all saved, but I will say this: you are only truly saved if you have put everything else aside, put everything else out of the way, and when you got saved, you just simply saw yourself as a guilty sinner without any help whatsoever other than the fact that Jesus died for you on the cross. He shed His blood, and when you accepted Him and that sacrifice as your Passover Lamb, He came inside of you, and you were born again. Where your first birth of water puts you in hell, your second birth from heaven, "Ye must be born again," puts you into heaven. Just that simple, not complicated.

VIII. Key Principles from John Chapter 4: The Woman at the Well

Then we come to John 4. This is another great story on salvation. This is based on a woman at the well. There is so much in here; this is just incredible stuff. Let us read it, then we will just hit the high points.

John 4:5-29

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

Let us talk about this great story. I told you, when you get into John, where Luke showed you the human problems that we all have and the principles behind it, when you get into John, you are dealing with soul winning, winning people to Christ, because the book of John was written to show you Jesus that you might believe.

The first thing we see here in John 4:6 is that this all takes place around Jacob's well. You are told in John 4:22 that salvation is of the Jews. That is the whole concept. Jacob's well is a picture. If I have time this morning, I would take you back to the Old Testament passage that talks about Jacob's well in the Old Testament, and they are fighting back there over two kinds of sheep that want to get the water, and behold, there is a great stone, a great rock back in the Old Testament on that well, the same well, and when that rock is removed, all the sheep, both the Gentile sheep and the Jewish sheep, get to feed and get the water. That well back there is the exact same well you have here, and back there, there was a literal rock standing, sitting on that well. Here, the Rock of God is sitting on the same well. What a great study in parallel it is!

Jacob's well represents salvation for you and for me, which comes from the Jew. Jacob is the type of Christ; from him come the twelve tribes. Christ is in his line. This woman is from Samaria; she is a half Jew and a half Gentile. That is a great picture that shows you and me what the Bible talks about, that she is half Jew and she is half Gentile, that is both Jew and Gentile being in one body. See how that works? She is the type of a Gentile sinner. She is trying to satisfy her thirst of life from water from this old well, which is part of this old world, and she cannot get any satisfaction because the water she is drinking will not satisfy her for any long length of time.

This is why some of you are so miserable in life. This is why you go to the world; you think the world can satisfy you. You drink everything the world has, you drink everything and take everything that the world has, and yet your life is absolutely miserable. You do not have any peace with God, you do not have any passion for God. It is all about the world for you, all about the things that you could have. This woman is a picture of that. She had been coming to this well all her life, and Jesus said to her, "The problem here, sweetie, is the fact that you are drinking from the wrong well. You are drinking the physical water that is always going to leave you thirsty, because the physical things in this life are never going to satisfy you. You need the water that I have, which is eternal life, and you will never be thirsty again."

Now, what follows here is the process she goes through in getting it, and I think it is great. Jesus says in John 4:10-14, she needs the water of life. In John 4:15-18, she says she wants it. But first of all, this is a great study: she wants the water of life, but just like you and me, before you get saved, you cannot just have it. You have to deal with your sin question first. I mean, you can have it, but you have to go through a process. So now we see Jesus enacting that process. She says she wants it, but she must deal with her sin issue first.

Jesus goes right to the heart of the matter. I love it when He does this. "Where is your husband?" John 4:16. "Well, I have no." You know that is a half-truth, and you are going to find it many times when you start dealing with people about their salvation, you do not always get the truth. Sometimes the truth can be pretty ugly, and it would have looked a lot better for her to say, "I have no husband," than to say, "Well, I have had five." That does not look good. I would not put that on your resume. But Jesus, knowing everything, He knows right where He is at. He goes right to the heart of the matter because the Bible is like a searchlight; it searches every crack and every crevice, and you can hide everything from your spouse, you can hide everything from your pastor, you can hide everything from your kids, you cannot hide it from God. He always goes right for the proverbial jugular vein, or however you want to say it, and He says, "Where is your husband?" "I have no husband." John 4:18, Jesus says, "Well, you had five, and the one that you have right now really is not your husband, is he?" And then of course, she says in John 4:19, "Well, I perceive you are a prophet." I guess so.

Then John 4:20, again she tries to avoid the real issue of her sin. Now she breaks into, "Isn't this a great old well? My granddaddy here, all our family here, isn't it a wonderful well? This is a nice well." She said, "Our fathers worshipped here all down through history. This is a great little well. This was a nice place. Boy, there is so much history here." And Jesus said, "I do not need a history lesson. I have all the history I need. You had five husbands, and the one you have is not yours. That is all the history lesson I need. Now, do you want this water or not?"

Then He deals with her on the aspect of true worship, John 4:23-27, keeping her right on track with the issue. Then in John 4:28, she gets saved. I think one of the greatest pictures in here, you say, "How do you know she got saved? Did it say she gets saved?" "Yeah, it does." "Well, no, it does not say she goes." "Yeah, it does." Well, how do you know she got saved? Because she left her waterpot. She is not coming back to this well anymore. She had no need for her bucket. She left the pot at the well and went to tell the people in her life what Jesus had done for her. She left her pot, and let me tell you something, if you truly get saved in your life, and you truly trust Christ in your life, let me tell you something, the first thing you will do when you get that real eternal life is you will leave that filthy old pot you have been drinking out of at this old well all of your life that never satisfied you.

What did she do? She goes in John 4:29 and tells everybody, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" She goes and tells everybody what God has done for her. Her past life now has become the focus of her witness. She is just like what I have told you about; she is not going around now telling everybody what God will do for you. No, no, no, she is telling everybody what God just did for her. Oh, what a great witness that is! Most of God's people, that just goes right over the top of their head. You have all kinds of things you can

tell somebody else for what you know of what God can do for them. You are just short on telling them what God is doing for you right now because He is not doing anything. You are still at the old well, you are hanging out down there, and you may have eternal life, but you did not leave the pot.

She is now a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things are passed away; she does not need this well anymore. That is the picture, that is the picture that the physical things in life will never satisfy you. The physical things in life will never meet your needs. The physical things in life will have a tether to them that will always pull you back because you will never be completely free from them. It is just the normal things in life. You have to have something that severs that umbilical cord to the world. You have to have something that, and I think this is a great tragedy in Christianity today, I think most preachers do a fairly decent job of getting up and ranting on their people about getting saved and leaving the world, and let us face it, when you get saved, there are a lot of things you are probably going to have to give up, and you are not willing to give them up. It is not a good sign. But I think the downside of that is that most churches and most pastors, they will stand up there and scream and yell about you getting saved and giving up the world, but the problem is those same pastors are not willing to take the time to give you something to replace the world with. If I just stood up here and told you you need to get rid of the world and did not spend Thursday night, Sunday morning, and all the different things that we do, and one-on-one, giving you something to replace it with, you would not make it either. I would not have made it. But she is done with the water of this world, and that is what should happen when you get saved. That is why the Bible says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." That is where she is at today. Then her personal witness is based on the fact that what Christ has done for her, and that is a great story in your Bible.

IX. Key Principles from John Chapter 5: The Impotent Man

Now let us look at John 5. This will be the second Passover, starting down around John 5:3, I believe it is. Again, this is an incredible story of an unsaved man, though many of these applications you can make a dual application to, depending on what crowd I am preaching to. I can make this a saved man because the truth of the matter is, the only difference between a saved man and a worldly Christian is the fact that the worldly Christian is going to heaven and the unsaved man is going to hell. They can both get into the same problems and do the same things.

Again, this is an incredible story here. Let us read it.

John 5:1-9

1 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

I gave you some real insight into this on Thursday night in Bible study. Somebody asked this question, and I held off giving the practical side, but I walked you through the doctrinal side, and if you were there that night, you now know what this man represents in the Bible from a doctrinal standpoint, and it is an incredible study. It makes perfect sense why he is 38 years old. It makes perfect sense to you who were there that night that you understand the word "whole." It makes perfect sense there in John 5:9 why He made the mention of telling you that it was on the Sabbath day. Now it all fits for you in a doctrinal standpoint; you see who this man is doctrinally.

But I want to talk to you about it from a practical application, because when we get into the book of John, we want to learn principles about winning people to Christ, and this man represents an unsaved man. He can also represent a worldly Christian because he has four things mentioned here that are wrong with him.

9. He is impotent, that is, powerless.

10. He is blind. That would represent the fact that he cannot see anything in the Bible.

11. He is halt. That would be on your legs; that would mean that he has a very limited or no walk with God whatsoever.

12. He is withered. That would be his hands or his body itself, but it certainly means that he has no work for God.

That is a picture of an unsaved person. If you are an unsaved person here this morning, or you deal with unsaved people, these are the four things that are main characteristics of an unsaved person. Unfortunately, the same four characteristics of saved people who are out of fellowship with God.

One is their powerlessness. If you are unsaved this morning, this is why you cannot get over whatever your problems are. You cannot get over your problem because you have no power, because the only thing that is going to deliver you from the real problem that you have, which is your sin, like the last lady we saw, is to get the power to do it, and you do not have that power on your own, nor do I. Even after you get saved, you do not have the power to do it, but then at that point, God gives you His power that you can do it.

I am thankful for all the things out there that help people when they get through their issues and through their problems, but the truth of the matter is, you will never get past your problem, no matter what it may be, until you simply come to the Lord and you simply get the power that God has for you, and you recognize that power, put it in the context of your life, and then move forward from there.

The second thing is that he is blind. That is an unsaved person. The Bible says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Spiritual discernment comes by you reading the Word of God and seeing in it what God has for you. We are going to see that principle come up in just a little bit too. But this man is blind; he cannot see. He has no ability to see anything spiritually.

Then the Bible says that he is halt. He has no walk with God. He is not walking with God. If he is an unsaved man, he cannot walk with God because he is not God's child.

John 8:44

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

If he is a saved man, then he cannot walk with God because he is out of fellowship with God, because the Bible says over there in 1 John that if we say we have fellowship and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

And then he is withered, no work for God. I do not understand, maybe it is the time that we live in, I do not know. I have a tough time grasping it myself. I come out of a different era than most of you younger kids and people. I really did, most of the older folks in this church did. My value system, just my core value system, is different than probably the core value system you came up with. So I have a hard time sometimes wrapping my head around it. I accept it, I know it is something I have got to deal with, but I just do not understand how some of you can get saved and then just take your life back and do whatever you want to do with it once you have really truly understood what God has done for you. I do not understand that, I really do not. I cannot get around that. I cannot understand how you can be truly saved and on your way to heaven and just be so satisfied that you have no work for God, nothing to look back on, nothing that God is doing through your life, that there is nothing, there is no power of God in your life, there are no miracles of God in your life. You cannot, if you went to the Bible today, you just get a lot of little surface stuff. Well, even a blind squirrel finds nuts every once in a while. I mean, what is that proof? But the bottom line is, there is no spirit of discernment in your life, there is no walk with God, you walk with the world and the people in the world, and there is no work for God. You are withered.

It can be a picture of an unsaved person; it can also be a picture of a saved person. But look what follows here. He says in John 5:2, "Now there was at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool,

which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches." Now the word Bethesda means "mercy." You will notice it says also in John 5:2 that this is down by a sheep market. We studied our study on Nehemiah a while back, and we talked about the nine gates. One of those gates was the sheep gate, and the sheep gate, I told you back then, is your understanding of Christ dying for you as the Lamb of God. So we find here a place with a man who is a picture of an unsaved man or a really out of fellowship Christian, and right off the bat, we see how this begins to formulate into what this New Testament principle should be for you and me.

Bethesda, that is God's mercy. At the sheep gate, that is where the sheep came in that were sacrificed, a picture of God's sacrifice for you. Notice it has five porches. Five porches just happens to be the number of wounds in Christ's body. Of course, what you have here is a picture that as you, as an unsaved person or a person out of fellowship with Christ, what you need is an encounter with the sheep market at Bethesda, at this pool, and what everybody is waiting for is the moving of the waters. Water in the Bible is a picture of the Bible and the Holy Spirit of God. That is what you need.

The Bible says he had this infirmity for 38 years. That is quite a long time. Some of you have had the problems you have struggled with all of your life, and you know what you are doing? You are just sitting by the pool in your infirmity, waiting for the right time, the right place, and all of those things that happen in your life for God to come down and just stir the waters. You see, it did not happen for this guy, and it will not happen for you. I do not have time to get into all the ramifications of this story this morning, but the way that God did this with the angel and the moving of the water is really a picture of how inadequate the Old Testament law was when solving your sin problem. Jesus had to solve his sin problem, and Jesus is going to have to solve your sin problem, but you are going to have to get to Bethesda and get God's mercy. You are going to have to get to the sheep market, and you are going to have to see that Christ was your Lamb that was sacrificed for you, and you are going to have to take a long look at these five porches and realize the agony on the cross that He spent for you and I.

I say it again, I just do not have any understanding how God's people today can be so indifferent to God who did so much for them, and yet, as the old song says, and somebody sang a couple of weeks ago, "What a friend we have in Jesus." But that is not the question. The question is, "What kind of friend is Jesus having in you?" This man is a picture of that. He has been this way for a long time, 38 years, and he says, "Sir, I have no man to put me in the water." No man can put you into that water. Nobody can put you into that water. You see, that is the picture of the law. We read it at the beginning, did we not? Remember when I first read that thing over here? Let me read it again.

John 1:9-13

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

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

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

You see, man cannot put you into this water. Only Jesus can put you into it. Not of man, not of the will of flesh, not of blood, not the will of flesh, not of blood, not the will of man, but of God. That is the only way you can get in. So this man here is a picture where we were at before we were saved. It might be a picture where you are at today, I do not know. But it certainly tells the story that you are not going to get out of your infirmity by yourself. Your friends, your family, your money, your influence, or whatever you have, is not going to get you out of it. It is not going to do a thing for you until you get God's mercy down by the sheep gate, and you get the wounds that Christ put on His body transferred to your sin, and then God will put you in that water, and He will move that water.

I am just throwing in as a postscript, it is no wonder that this is a great passage, so it is no wonder that in all your new Bibles today, they tell you that this passage does not belong. If you have an NIV this morning, it will either have a footnote down there that tells you this is a spurious passage. The word spurious means it should not be there, it is suspect. Of course, the great Bible scholars today, the scribes and the Pharisees of Jesus' day, who want to get rid of the Book just like they want to get rid of Him, they tell you that this story is not in the Bible, and they are right. They are right, they are right, they are right, it is not in Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts. It is not in there at all. There is only one reading in any other manuscripts out there; it is in the Textus Receptus, where your King James Bible comes from. So when they tell you in your NIV it should not be in there, you are right, it should not be in your Bible, but it should be in mine. We will talk about that just a little bit too.

X. Key Principles from John Chapter 6: Christ, The Bread of Life

Let us move right on. Look at John 6. John 6 breaks down by chapters, and each chapter has a tremendous theme in it. In this particular story here, in this particular John 6, there are probably five or six great sermons in here. Do not worry, I am not preaching them all this morning, but they are in here. John 6 is the great chapter on Christ as the Bread of Life. This is an incredible chapter, and it shows you the effect of the Word of God, the Bread of Life, and how it, through a process, changes who we are.

You could look back in your own life, probably most of you, and you can see a process in your life, a process by which you got saved, and then God began to build things into your life. I am witness to it. Many of the things in your life, because we are in my ministry and we work together, and I have talked to you many, many times through areas in your life, and we have laid those things out, I have seen the changes in your life. I think one of the greatest witnesses of that is yesterday with the ladies, how many young ladies stood up. One young lady took a prayer group that has only been saved a year. I would not let that happen; I would not allow that in any other case, but every once in a while, there is an exception to the rule, and let me tell you

something, some of you, we are going to see it in a moment, you can get it as fast as you want it. Some just want it faster than others, that is all.

It is a situation where when I see those things change in your life, and I see your attitudes change, and I see you give up the things that once meant everything to you for a Book that should now mean everything to you, there is a process. I said there is a process that takes place, there is a process that begins to enact in your life, and that is what this great story shows.

In this chapter, it opens with a great principle in a story, a story about the feeding of 5,000. I want to read it because this is a great principle.

John 6:1-6

1 After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

5 When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

I am going to stop right there because I do not want you to miss this first principle. This is a great thing, and this is something for all of us here. This is something for all of us, and this is one of these things about the Bible you want to learn, you want to get down, you never want to forget. In this chapter, it says that He comes to this little place, and there is a great multitude that follows Him, and they do not have any food. So we have kind of got a situation here: we have a lot of people that want to hear the Word of God, but they do not have any way to feed them. He says to Philip, "Philip, look at all these people out here. How in the world are we going to feed them?" Yet He tells you then, it says that when Jesus lifted up His eyes and saw the great company, He said unto Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" And then it says in John 6:6, "And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do."

Do you know what that principle is all about? Sometimes God will put you and me in situations that He has complete control over, and He knows exactly what He is going to do. He wants to see how we react to it. If that does not just clear up about half the issues in your life this morning, I cannot help you. There will be times when God will allow circumstances to come into your life. There will be times when God puts you into circumstances with other situations, with other people, and it looks like it is, I do not know, what more impossible it could be with a little loaves and fishes. They have to feed 5,000 people. That is a pretty impossible circumstance. But the Bible says, as always in any circumstance, Jesus already knows what He is going to do. He wants to see if you and Him are on the same page.

The first thing I do when I look at, when I get into an impossible situation, is ask myself, "All right, God, I know You have this thing figured out, so let me go back to the principles and the Word of God that You taught me and see if I can figure it out." The Bible says He did it to prove him. In other words, another great principle: God follows the same principles. I preached to you, the Bible says, "Prove all things." God follows His own principles, so He will put circumstances in your life to prove you out, if you are really who you say you are and what you claim to be. You see, because a real Christian is not someone who just says he is; a real Christian is someone who follows the principles of what he is. So God will put you and me in circumstances, and here is one where He put Philip right in the middle of it, and He says, I mean, I hate when He does this, He walks over to Philip and He says, "What do you think about all this? How are we going to feed them?" And yet all the time, He knew exactly what He was going to do.

Do not you wish, do not you bet Philip wished he had the Book that he could have read that before he had to answer that question? You see, we have a distinct advantage, do we not? We can read it. So when He asks you that question, we have to give the right answer, but we do not. Look what Philip said. I love this. Philip's answer is, "Well, 200 pennyworth of bread is not going to do much." See, why do we always see things as Christians from the natural, worldly way? I just told you this is the start of the third Passover. Philip has been walking with Him for three years. He has seen Him raise dead people, He has seen Him give eyesight back to the blind, unstopped deaf ears, jump tall buildings in a single bound, go faster than a speeding bullet. He has seen Him do the incredible great miracles that were absolutely unexplainable. But yet here it is, when they do not have enough bread with 5,000 people, and he cannot figure it out that God could do this just by slapping His fingers. It is a picture of you and me. It is a picture of you and me in our human form that no matter how much God does for us, we just cannot get it through our sick, our sick, thick skulls that God can take care of any circumstance you are in.

Why is it we all run back to the human side of things? Why is it that God could give us a million dollars today, and you know what, we stay up all night worrying about the fact that we might lose it or somebody might steal it? Why is it we always go back to the physical side, the worldly side, and miss in the midst of walking with Him? If you are walking with Him and there are miracles in your life, and you have got 10, 5, 3, 6 months, I do not care, of miracles in your life, do you actually think He brought you this far to drop you tomorrow? But that is Philip; he is just like us when it comes to those things.

Then I look at the miracle itself. I like John 6:2 because now this is a picture. Once we got past the first principle, here is another set of principles. Now this will explain some things to you. These 5,000 people, it says here, "And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased." You know what our problem is? We are diseased. We are diseased. We have a terminal case of humanity. We have a terminal case, so no matter what God does for us, it is not enough. No matter what great miracles God does or how good the message is or how God touches you, you get your nose bent out of joint about something. We are all just never happy because we are diseased. We are diseased because of the fact we have a terminal case of humanity that is pulling us back unless we break free of that thing.

When He comes down through here, these great principles, the miracle itself is quite incredible. I will not read the rest of the story today to come on down through here, but here is basically what happens. You know the story. John 6:9, it gets its 5,000 people, and the Bible says in John 6:9 that it is a large grassy area. When you read the same account over in Mark 6:31, it says it is a desert. Now Bible scholars have a problem with that because they are stupid. I had a guy say to me one time, "Well, there is a contradiction in your Bible." And I said, "Oh, how is that a contradiction?" He said, "Well, one place it says there was a big large grassy area, another place it was a desert," thinking that a desert is sand. And I said, "What does the word 'desert' come from?" He says, "Well, the word 'deserted'." Thank you very much. The fact that it was a desert has nothing to do with it. It was a large deserted area where nobody was. It was a desert because it was deserted, but it was a desert, there was a large grassy field. Hello!

My point is this: the Bible says He took this large crowd down into a desert, into a large grassy place to feed them the Word of God. You know what? Sometimes God has to get you isolated before He can really deal with your situations. Sometimes God has to put us in places where we are all by ourselves. Sometimes God has to put us into that same desert that says large grassy knoll, that field, whatever it was, and get us alone that God can fix the disease that we are diseased with, because sometimes there is just too much competition in your life. Sometimes there is too much stuff going on; it just counteracts everything God tries to do. God knows it is hard enough to get you to listen to Him anyhow, and then when you are distracted, it makes it really tough. So sometimes God has to get us isolated to give us what we need and what He has for us.

Then I want you to look at John 6:11. When God does feed them, and here it comes back to a principle I said earlier today, look at John 6:11. When God does finally feed them with the bread and the fish, I thought that is always interesting: bread and the fish. Bread is the type of the Word of God; fishing is a type of soul winning. You see, God feeds us with the bread that we might be fishermen of men. But look down there, it says, "as much as they would." You know what? You can have as much of the Word of God as you want. You know the difference between most of you, why some of you made it and some of you do not? Some of you wanted it more than others, that is all. Some of you wanted it more than others. Some of you just could not wait to get everything that you could get and take that and put it down and get it into your life and do something with it. Others just take it in stride, and you know what, it is no big deal to you. Well, if it is no big deal to you, it will be no big deal to God. But that verse tells you right there, you can have as much as they would. Get up all you want. There is no limit to how much God will give you. Your limit of getting from God is not from God; your limit of what you get from God is your problem.

Now I want you to see this; here is our ministry in our church today. Learn this: John 6:11 says God does the miracle. God always does the miracle because God is the only one who has got the power. So God does the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, but look at it, once He does all this miracle, bread and fish, what does He do with it? Does He pass it out Himself? No, because He stays consistent with His principles in ministry. Once He does the miracle, He gives it to the disciples, and the disciples distribute it out. See, God gave us the Book. He gave us everything

we have, but God is not going to come down and do it Himself. He gave it to us, His disciples. You notice it does not say apostles there. We talked about that last week, did we not? He gives it to the disciples, and then the disciples pass it out. God gave us the Word of God. It is the revelation of God. It is the perfect Word of God. It is the inspired, inerrant Word of God, and He made it. It is the miracle, the manna, the bread from heaven. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." But when God did it, He gave it to you and me, His disciples. You know what you are supposed to be doing with it? Distributing it. Are you?

I do not know. A preacher said one time, you know what he is talking about, Bibles laying on coffee tables, he said, "If all the dust was knocked off of the Bibles and all the coffee tables in Alabama, there would be a dust storm that would smother the crops." A lot of truth in that. You see, God inspired the Bible, but He gave it to the church, and He gave it to His disciples, and He gave it to man. That is why it says in John 1, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." God always uses a man, women. God always uses a human being. That is God's plan. That is God's plan. Somebody says, "You are following a man." Good job, that is what you are supposed to do, just make sure it is the right man. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." He was the right man.

Then the next thing you see down here in John 6:13 is after everybody gets filled, and they can have as much as they want, He gathers all the extra stuff up, and there are twelve baskets left. You know what that tells me? That tells me, ladies and gentlemen, that you will not understand everything about the Bible. You will always hear when you hear it, but you know what the Holy Spirit of God will do if you have the right attitude about learning? He will gather it up in a basket so nothing is lost, and what you do not eat today, you may eat six years from today, six months from today. I told you the greatest book I ever read outside the Bible was a book back there that really pulled the Bible together for me. It was the Kingdom of God versus the Kingdom of Heaven, called "The Sure Word of Prophecy." The book of Revelation back there, the book of Genesis back there, all of those books that I put back there in that book thing, are books that I have been through in my life that have absolutely given me the insight, and it broke down the barriers of things I could not understand in the Bible. When I look at those books, and I see those things, and I see how God lays those things out, let me tell you something, I will also confess this to you: when I first got saved, I started coming through Ruckman's book on Revelation, the first book I ever came through. I came through that book four hours a night. Next book I did was Genesis, same thing. Then somewhere along the line, I got "The Mark of the Beast." Boy, did that turn my lights on! Then I kept hearing everybody talk about Kingdom of God versus Kingdom of Heaven. That was called back then "The Sure Word of Prophecy." So I got me one, and I read that book, and I thought to myself, "This is the stupidest thing I ever read in my life. I cannot get this thing. I do not, what is he talking about?" I remember going through Genesis, and I am going through Revelation, and I thought I got a lot out of it. Six years after I went through it the first time, I threw it again. I thought, "Could somebody rewrite this book?" I went through "The Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Heaven" at least six times, and then one day, all the lights came on, and I never looked at my Bible the same way again. You know what God does? You know what my story is a picture of what we are reading right there? You see, God was

feeding me all I could handle, but there were a lot of things I could not handle yet, so He did not let those things go to waste. He put them in big old baskets. I just waited till I got to the place that I could understand it, and then I got to eat that stuff. I am telling you, folks, there is some great stuff in here, great stuff in here.

The last principle here, look at John 6:14.

John 6:14

Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

You know what He is telling you here? Once they ate the Word of God, once they got the bread and the fish, once they got in the isolated place and got the world out of their life and got where they needed to be, once they started feasting, coming down at the Master's table, "Come and dine," and you can feast at Jesus' table anytime. Once they got that bread of life, the bread of God, the supernatural bread that God gave them, once they digested that bread, they really then saw who Jesus really was. That is your problem. You will not know who God is till you eat the bread that God has given you, because when these men got fed the way God wanted them fed, then they all recognized who He was. Your problem is today, you do not recognize who He really is, and the reason why you do not is because you have been eating someplace else.

This is no secret, I have been diagnosed as pre-diabetic. It runs in my family, and I went to the doctor for a couple of years, and he tried to get my cholesterol, which is good, but my blood sugar was always high, borderline. So around the end of summer, middle of summer, I went back for my physical, and he kind of dropped the hammer on me, and my, I forget what the medical term is, but it was 6.3, which is just right there. And he said, "You know what?" He said, "If you do not do something about this," he says, "you are going to become a full-blown diabetic." Well, my mom, you know, my mom has got diabetes, my grandmother died of diabetes, and they cut her legs off two inches at a time because they would not heal till she finally died. And I said to myself, "Well, you know, we will do whatever we have got to do here."

The greatest thing I ever did in my life, the greatest thing I ever did in my life, was my doctor had me go to a nutritionist and a dietitian, two wonderful ladies. They explained to me the secrets of understanding how to eat right. I always, you know, I always thought I ate right. I basically love seafood. You seafood, you eat it. I mean, I that was where I was at. I was the one on this full steak diet, lost 68 pounds in two weeks. I mean, it was great. I am somebody who, you know, I run four days a week, I work out three days a week, you know, I try to keep my body in some kind of shape. I realize that I have got the only body I have to have, and when it is gone, I am done, so I try to do the best I can. But I never understood the value of eating nutritious food and balance and the concept that those laid out for me. To me, it, you know, I went back to the doctor, I would buy, and I did not, I did not want to take any more medicine. I am already on a couple of medicines. I am on, you know, psychological medicine and things like that. I did not want to take any more of that, but I came to the place where I do not want to take any more medicine. I have to sometimes, you just have to do. I am going to be on the two things I take the rest of my life. I

mean, that is just the way it is. I mean, I cannot control it, it is out of my control. But if I can control it, I want to control it.

So I went to the doctor, and I said, "Let me do this, try to do this by myself." I said, "I am born again." I said, "I know now these ladies have really helped me," and I said, "I got it." I said, "Let us give me a shot at it. If I do not do it, well then you can put me whatever you want and put me on Prozac, and I will be whatever you want me to be. I do not care." But I said, "Let me try to do this myself." So I went after it, and boy, I will tell you what, I went back about three months later, and it had dropped a tenth of a point. The blood sugar went back just a last couple weeks ago, went down another tenth of a point, and he said, "Wow, you are doing fine." He says, "You do not have to be on it."

But the bottom line, my point is this: we all eat terrible physically. You can get away with it now when you are 20 and you are 18 and 19. Where are you at 50? You can get away with it now. I mean, you can, I do not know where, I do not, I do not know what you, I do not know. I mean, Jamie is as tiny as a bird, and yet she eats more than anybody I have ever seen in my life. I do not know where it goes. I think her legs are hollow, and she just jams it down those legs. I do not know, but she eats. It is okay. I am glad. You know what? I sit back like Abraham and enjoy you eating when I cannot. I really do. Do not stop. I watch you guys, I watch you guys go out and eat, and I am a bad one to talk. I mean, I used to do the same thing. We would go out to eat, and I would eat my food, I would just walk around, and I have cheated poor little Kayla about a more french fry. Caleb, look over there. I mean, I did the same thing. But I watch you guys, you guys eat everything. I mean, when the Sanderboers go to my house, we do not eat for two weeks after they are gone. There is no food left. I mean, it is incredible. I am glad, I am glad.

The problem is, we eat spiritually the same way we eat. We eat spiritual junk food just like we eat real junk food, and the problem is, some of us that eat well physically, we still eat the spiritual junk food. It was an eye-opening thing to me to see and understand how that thing really worked, and it changed my life from a physical standpoint, and then I make all the spiritual applications going back down through it to see how it fits. And I thought to myself, "You know what? I not only have to eat spiritually right, I have to eat physically right." But in many people's life, they do not eat good either way, but you have got to have it. This is what He is saying here.

John 6 is a long chapter; it goes like 70 some verses here, and we are certainly not, but it is loaded. But I want to leave you with two key verses, and there are two here that I think are what this chapter really says, and I want you to get it. The first one is in John 6:48, where Jesus simply says, "I am the bread of life." Now you want to run that back to Exodus 16, and back there you will find the story of God supernaturally bringing the manna. In fact, they talk about the manna here in John 6:49-50. He makes a parallel to it here, so you want to put that reference in there and go back. In Exodus 16, we have laid it out many, many times, that is where they are in the wilderness, they have no food, nothing will sustain them, the water is bitter, there is no food. So God supernaturally brings water out of a rock, a picture of the Word of God, and then brings the manna down and feeds them with the bread, and that is the picture of the Word of God. We have been through it many, many times, a whole scenario of great principles back there.

But then the second key principle is found in John 6:49-50.

John 6:49-50

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

He says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Now there He is telling us again that the Book and His body, His flesh, are one and the same. It closes out here just like it started, and He is telling you that His flesh is the bread, and He gives it for the world.

My point is simply this: you have to take, and He is not saying eat My body like the Catholics teach. He is not. He is saying that the Word of God is His body. Catholics could never figure it out. He is not saying eat My literal body. He just told you all through the Book that He, the Word, was made flesh. When you are eating Him, you are eating the Book. You are digesting the Book. In other words, if you do not get the Bible as your nourishment on the inside, just like me with my blood sugar, if you do not get that Book and digest it, devour it, and get it on the inside, it will be just like you eating junk food all your life and winding up with all kinds of medical problems. You have to eat the spiritual bread of God.

XI. The Bible: God's Thought, Jesus' Purchase, Holy Spirit's Delivery, Devil's Fight, Our Possession

This book of John deals with the deity, and the greatest thing, and I leave you with this, the greatest thing that it does for me anyhow, I cannot speak for you, it shows you and I the concept that the Book and Jesus are one and the same. Just like you do not have a lot of Jesuses running around, you do not have a lot of Bibles running around. You have one Jesus, one Book, His mind. Now you understand the concept of translation and translate. It is not one language to another; it is one place to another.

An old throwback message that I have preached many times, I used to preach this message the last night when I would go in and do church history. I put together a program, and I did it all over the country for probably ten years, that I would, a pastor would want me to come in and teach church history to his people. Well, how do you do that? So we set up a thing where all the church understood that what we were going to do, this was going to be a bona fide study, and I would come in from Sunday morning, Sunday night, Monday night, Tuesday night, and Wednesday night. But the difference being that everything else was shut down, and the people came knowing that I was going to lay out and preach to them for two hours or so. They came knowing that because they wanted to get this down, and I would go through church history. I would start on Sunday morning, and I would give the introduction and tie it all together. Then I would start going through, I would try to go through two or three church periods a night, and through that thing, I would try to get them to understand that the greatest thing that they have is the infallible, absolute Word of God, which is Jesus Christ, that you cannot separate the mind of Christ from

Christ, that "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," was the Book that God gave us, that is His mind.

The last night, I would preach a message that was a simple five-point outline, and I would tie it back through the church history that I taught them, and it was all about the Bible. The last thought I wanted to leave them, and it was really built around everything we have got in John here, and I would simply tell them that tonight I am just going to be a very simple message. There are not going to be any dates, there are not going to be any names you have to remember. I want to leave you with five points about the Bible, God, and you.

13. God thought it. I tell them how the Bible says that this Book is the mind of God. Long before there was ever any written revelation of God, God in His mind had that Book. So the first thing I take a little time and develop is the fact that when it comes to the Word of God, the first thing you want to remember is God thought it.
14. Jesus bought it. I talk about the Bible talking about the New Testament of His blood, that the Bible could not come in a complete form till Jesus died on the cross, because without the death of the testator, there could be no New Testament. So I tie in the fact that not only did God think it, but Jesus on the cross bought it.
15. The Holy Spirit brought it. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The very Book that God thought and the very Book that God bought, then the Holy Spirit brought.
16. The devil fought it. I went back down through history and showed them how the devil, the "Yea, hath God said" society, has tried to destroy the Word of God and everything that man has done down through history. I left them with a warning that after I leave here, I mean, there is a lot of hurrah here tonight, and everybody is excited about it, but the real test of you getting what I laid out this week, to the tune of what, 15, 16 hours, is the fact that you really understand about the Book that you have got. I would drill it home again that God thought it, that Jesus bought it, that the Holy Spirit brought it, and the devil fought it.
17. But I got it. You should have it too. This Book is the bread that God gave down to man, the Bread of Life. This Book is the water of life that will turn into your salvation and everlasting life. This Book is God manifested. I know it is paper, I know you can tear the pages out of these and burn them, and you cannot burn God. I understand that. I understand you can rip the cover off this, you cannot rip the cover off of God. I understand all that. I know you can take ink and block it all out, you cannot do that to God. I understand that. My point is this: after you rip the pages, inked it out, tore the cover off, and been in hell for 160 million years, it will not change a thing about it. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away."