

2 Corinthians 1:14-24

Sunday 1/22/2012

For those of you that are maybe visiting today and haven't been here through the course of things, our church has grown to the point where God has just given us so many opportunities of ministry. Many of the people sitting around you today have been here now seven or eight years and have really applied the principles of the Word of God. We decided, because of all the opportunities of ministry that God has given us as a church, that the book we needed to go through and really understand was the book of 2 Corinthians.

For those of you who may not be familiar with this book, in the book of 1 Corinthians, the church at Corinth had a lot of issues. In fact, we studied that book before we studied this one to kind of lay down a context of where we were going and what we needed to see and understand. The church at Corinth was a very unspiritual church. It had a lot of spiritual babies in it. Spiritual babies that don't have a lot of fundamental doctrine in their life and operate on biblical principles always get into trouble. We saw how Paul in each chapter really deals with them issue by issue, sometimes multiple issues.

They were so carnal and unspiritual that they were even arguing about who won whom to Christ and who baptized whom, the fact that some person of notoriety won this person to Christ and just a common ordinary person that nobody really knows won this other person to Christ. They were actually tagging some kind of spiritual significance, I guess, that you are more saved or better saved because somebody of great notoriety won you to Christ than somebody that's a nobody. Paul had to deal with all of that. It was a very hard letter that he wrote them. Many of them accepted his rebuke. He had started that church and it was very dear to him. Because they wanted to do what was right, he wrote them the book of 2 Corinthians.

By doing that, the book of 2 Corinthians really sets the standard for us for the handbook of ministry. Where 1 Corinthians tells you what not to do, 2 Corinthians tells us chapter by chapter what we need to do. That book is broken down by chapters, and each chapter is a different aspect of the ministry defined. Many times, as you see today, we are only in chapter 1, and this should probably close out chapter 1 today, but we have looked at many, many different concepts. Our church is at a point right now where it needs to learn the aspect of ministry. We will talk about that today, and I think that we will see another great lesson on ministry and how to begin to apply it to what God has given us here.

I told you when we started this, the great object lessons that we have in front of us are our homeless ministry, our athletic ministry, and our discipleship ministry. For me, and I have always been this way, I am not a very complicated person. I do not like complicated things. I do not understand complicated things. The way I have to deal with things is to look at something that is complicated and then completely break it down so I can understand it. I have been that way all of my life. To me, I have to find the simplest format by which it exists. I had to do that with the Bible because the Bible really appears to be a very complicated book, but in reality, it is not. We make it much more complicated than it really is because we are always going about it the wrong way.

I. Defining Ministry and Spiritual Growth

I think that you are going to see today that the aspect of what we are doing here, the aspect of what God has called us to do, the aspect of what you are doing when you are discipling somebody or working one-on-one with somebody, the aspect of you going and being a captain in volleyball or working with people, inviting your friends that maybe do not have a church that are good people, they just need some direction in their life or in their marriage, whatever. The fact that we go down and we work with the less fortunate than ourselves, that we take of what we have and we give to others. Something as simple as bringing in the hamburgers and the hot dog buns, something that we do not even think about, we do not even miss, but yet it means so much to what we are trying to do.

We have defined ministry now as the aspect of going through things in life, the tough things in life, the things that we have to learn the lessons from. Many times we go through things in life because we have made bad choices and done dumb things. We are all guilty of that. Sometimes we have to learn through those mistakes, and when we learn through those mistakes from the Bible, then we become, you hear me say it all the time, we should become smarter than the problem, being able to see a situation not as it appears but as it really is based on the principles of the Word of God.

Many times we will go through bad times of suffering because of the godliness side of us, because we are actually doing what God wants us to do, and the Bible says that all you that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, like the book of Job. But we go through that suffering. We go through the things that we go through, and when we learn the cause and the effect through the Word of God and bring in the biblical principles to help our own problem, then we have the ability to step into somebody else's world and help them. It is all based on what God does with the Word of God in your life.

I am going to begin reading again today in 2 Corinthians chapter 1, verses 14 through 24, and we are going to talk about this next aspect that we quite did not get to last week.

2 Corinthians 1:14-24

As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit;

And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea.

When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay?

But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea.

For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;

Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

We have covered 2 Corinthians 1:14 already. We know now that he is talking about the judgment seat of Christ. The people that you minister to, the people whose lives God uses you to change, in the day of the Lord Jesus, at the judgment seat of Christ, they will be your rejoicing and vice versa. In this confidence of what he said in 2 Corinthians 1:14, "I was minded to come to you before that you might have a second benefit." That is going to be the focus of our sermon today.

Let us move on down through here. 2 Corinthians 1:17 is a great verse. It basically says that whenever you work with people, whenever you try to help people, it never can be in your own flesh. Bob Jones Sr. used to say, and it is one of the greatest sayings I have ever heard, and we do this all the time, but he said, "It is never right to do wrong to get the chance to do right." You never, never, never shortcut the biblical principles to try to get somebody saved or help somebody get through something in life. You will find that one of the greatest characteristics of the Lord Jesus was the fact that whatever the person chose to do, right or wrong, it was based on the fact that they chose based on the truth that He gave them. You will never see Him shortcutting the principles so somebody will get saved. It just never works. Of course, that is a great lesson that this church had to learn. It is a great lesson that all of us have to learn. That great saying, it ought to be in your Bible someplace, and certainly ought to be in your heart: "It is never right to do wrong to get the chance to do right." You just simply follow the principles of the Word of God, and everything else will take care of itself.

In 2 Corinthians 1:18, he says, "But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay." Basically, he is saying, "We did not come speaking out of both sides of our mouth. We did not come saying, 'Well, the Bible says this, but I am going to do this.'" Our yea was yea, and our nay was nay. It was yes or no, and it was very clear because they did it by the principles of the Word of God.

Now, I am going to draw your attention to 2 Corinthians 1:24 again. I did this last week because I think that this is a great verse, and I think this says a lot about why we do what we do the way we do it. As parents, you have to be hard with your kids sometimes. You may even have to discipline them to the point where you have to spank them. I know that is not popular today, but that is just the way it is. It does not mean that you do not love them. It does not mean you do not care for them. It means that you know that if you do not take the corrective measures to keep them on course, you are going to have some problems. If you do not deal with them by the time

they are five and six and seven, the police will by the time they are 15, 16 and 17. It is just that simple.

2 Corinthians 1:24 is a great verse because he is saying to them, "Look, guys, not for that we have dominion over your faith." He says, "I am not trying to tell you what to do. I am not trying to manipulate your life and to try to micromanage everything you do, where you go, who you hang out with." He says, "I am not trying to do that." He says, "But I am a helper of your joy." Paul knew the great principle that joy only comes through the fellowship we have with the Lord Jesus Christ. The fellowship we have with the Lord Jesus Christ is based on that great verse in 1 John chapter 1 where it simply says:

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

He says, "I write these things unto you in 1 John chapter 1 that your joy may be full."

1 John 1:4

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

Absolutely. So that is the thing you have to remember.

I want to talk to you today about what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1:15 about a second benefit. Last week I wanted to get to that, but we spent, I thought, some great time talking about those four principles that we want to remember all the way through here and never forget. We talked about examining ourselves and knowing ourselves and taking heed to ourselves and improving ourselves. That was an interesting thing as I finished last week and was getting ready to leave. Somebody came up to me and said, "You know, I really appreciate the message today. That last point you went through, examine yourself and know yourself and take heed to yourself, and then the last point you have been talking about was proving yourself." They said, "You know, I guess that that is true one way or the other, is not it?" I thought about it and I said, "Absolutely right." Because you either do these things and you prove yourself, or you do not do these things and you prove yourself. It is just that simple. I thought that was very profound.

I want to talk to you today about 2 Corinthians 1:15 and the second benefit. I think it is very important that we see and understand this, not only in our ministry to people, as I told you last week, but for our own sakes of where we are at and what God was doing with you and our church right now. I told you, I think I said this last week, and I have told you this a couple of times since the new year, that I see what God is doing with many of you and how this whole working body of this church is probably working together now better than at any time in its history. It is simply because of the level of spiritual maturity that you are seeing. You are going to see how that works today.

I think one of the great things that is going to come out of today is that you are going to go out of here, and if you are discipling somebody, you are going to have a better understanding of what you want to try to accomplish with them. If you are in ministry, you are going to have a better

understanding of why you are in it and why you are supposed to be doing what you are doing. Either way, you are going to get a better definition and a better understanding of exactly what God wants to do with you and how He wants to do it.

I have seen many times that, and I told you this last week, that we are like sponges. If you have ever used a sponge, you know that a sponge is a unique creature, and it comes from the bottom of the sea. A sponge is a unique thing because of the fact that when it gets processed, you can take that sponge, and if something is spilled or something is wet, you can take that sponge and run it across there three or four times, and it will absorb everything that you get into it. You and I are much like that. We are like sponges. When you come to church, you come to Thursday Night Bible study, what you do is you, whether you know it or not, you absorb. You absorb what I say. You go home and you have your own studies where you work things out, you absorb that.

Just like a sponge, a sponge can only absorb so much. You get a sponge that is at that saturation point, and a sponge you can just rub it all over water now, and it will just push the water. It will not absorb anymore. The reason why it will not is because it has absorbed to its capacity. Now what has to be done is a very simple thing. You just take that sponge and you go over to the sink and you wring it out. You wring it out, and as you wring it out, the water that was saturated is wrung out, and now you can reuse that sponge. That is the way you and I are as God's people. This is why ministry is absolutely so vital. You come on Sunday morning and Thursday night and you absorb. But what happens is if you are not careful, you get to a point where you reach your saturation point, and you may have a lot of Bible knowledge, but you are not good to anybody. What happens is that you have to take what you know and you have to be wrung out. The wringing out is ministry of giving what you have accumulated out to somebody else so there is room to take more. That is exactly the way the whole process works.

I have seen it so many times in this, all of my life in ministry, and I certainly have seen it here since we have started, and really in the last three or four years, how I told you how God will bring you to a point. He will bring you to this church. You will get disciplined. You will get involved. You will find out what is going on, and then you will jump into things, and you will start learning. You will start growing. Suddenly, at a point, God will give you an opportunity. That is really like a crossroads in your life because at that point you have to make a decision. You are either going to stay who you are and keep absorbing, become that overbalanced, bloated sponge that really cannot absorb anymore, or you are going to let God take you to somebody, take you to certain ministry circumstances, and then wring you out. That is how you grow. I have seen that in your life, many of you, in the last couple of years, and that is the way God always does it. He will bring you to a point. He will give you an opportunity within the church to be able to minister by the book, doing it the way it needs to be done. Our choice then will be to say, "Yeah, I am going to take it," or "No, I am not." That is just simply how it works.

II. The Holy Spirit's Movement and Christian Stagnation

One of the greatest studies in the Bible that I think is probably a really unknown study in the Bible is really to study the Holy Spirit of God. The definitive chapter on the Holy Spirit of God is in John chapter 16, if you did not know that already. In John chapter 16, he gives us the seven

functions that the Spirit of God does. That is where you really start. But if you want to start even before that, I think you have to go back to Genesis chapter 1, verse 2. I discovered this many, many years ago, and it has been something I never forgot, and I have used it in my own life many times, and I use it in dealing with you also. It is the fact that in Genesis chapter 1, verse 2, the Bible simply says that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Genesis 1:2

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

We want to forget all the doctrinal implications between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. We do not want to worry about that today. What we want to focus on is the fact that the Bible says the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. When the Spirit of God, the first time you find it in the Bible, and that is the first time in Genesis 1:2, you find that it is moving. You realize that the Spirit of God never stops from that point on. When we study church history or you study the great age of the Bible or how all things go about, you will find that in Genesis chapter 1, verse 2, basically the Holy Spirit of God filed His flight plan where He was going to go. When you trace it through the Bible and trace it through history, the Holy Spirit of God moves from east to west. That is the movement of the Holy Spirit of God through the Bible. You are going to find all through the Old Testament, every move from the Bible from east to west is a good move. All the moves backwards to the east are always a bad move. Horace Greeley just kind of hit on it back in the 1800s when he said, "Go west, young man." You are going to find that European history where the Bible goes east to west, you are going to find that revivals go east to west throughout the world. You are going to find that all the great inventions and all the great movement down through history will be an east to westwardly movement because that is the movement of the Holy Spirit of God. When you understand that, you see how it all kind of plays together.

We talked about Ecclesiastes the other night, Thursday night Bible study, and yet we talked about the 28 things there and how it lines up to the 28 revolutions of the moon and rotations and all of that stuff, moon type is a Christian. But you stop and think about it, the beauty of the architecture and the way God does things. Note now, the earth goes the opposite way. The earth goes from west to east, but the sun moves across the sky from east to west, the sun being a type of Christ. So what you have in the very creation of things is to show you that God and the Holy Spirit of God will always move in opposition to which way the world goes. That is an incredible principle in the Bible, and that is why again a Christian has to always go the right way.

The question today really is, are you going anywhere? Are you moving at all? Because the Spirit-filled child of God will always do the same thing. You always need to keep moving in our relationship with God. You see, my fundamental job as a preacher, and maybe you do not appreciate this as much as I do, I do not always like it, but my job as a pastor, any job of a pastor, is to make sure that when you come to church and you kind of decide to hang out here, my job is to make sure that every Sunday you do not get too comfortable where you are at. I want you to be comfortable. We have nice chairs for you. We have the fans going today. We try to cool it off in the summertime. It does not work too well, but we try to keep you warm in the wintertime, but

you all wear coats anyhow and cover up just like most of you are doing here. So you are very self-sufficient.

The bottom line is you do not ever want to go to church where when a guy gets up to preach, he is working at trying to make you comfortable because that will not work because human nature, we always like to get comfortable, and you do not need to be comfortable. You know why? Because as a child of God, because the Holy Spirit of God is always moving, you and I need to always be moving. There should never be a time in our life as a Christian where we are stagnant, where we are not going anywhere. That is a bad sign because the Holy Spirit of God never is stagnant. It is always moving. Once it started in Genesis chapter 1 and moved upon the face of the waters, it never stops till it comes into the millennium. It is moving today. That is why a Spirit-filled child of God will always do the same thing: keep moving in the relationship, but you have to move in the right direction. That is really what the job of the church is. It is to make sure that you and I do not get too comfortable in our Christian life, that we are always happy with where we are at if we are moving forward, but we are never satisfied to stay there. That is what preaching does. That is why preaching motivates us. It keeps us to the point that we look back and say, "Wow, I am not where I was. Thank the Lord for that. But, boy, I have a ways to go here," and it always keeps you going. The way that you do that is by keep taking the opportunities, now listen to me, that God gives you, not the ones you create yourself. God will never create a scenario in your life that is outside the principles of this book. He just simply will not do that. It will always be found within the pages of this book. When you put yourself into that system, that is when you begin to grow.

III. The Four Essential Steps to Spiritual Maturity

Now I want to look at this passage I just read here, and I want to build it around a great concept of a second benefit. But to do that, I want to kind of reverse it, and I want to do what the Bible says, "the first shall be last and the last shall be first." I want to take the last part of this passage and preach to it first, and then we will see how the thing works out.

You have heard me say many, many times the great verse in Philippians chapter 1, verse 6. I say this all the time so you do not get comfortable. That is where he says:

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

You have heard me say it many, many times. God saved you for a purpose. If you are here this morning and you are a child of God and you are not actively pursuing your spiritual growth, that is not what God wants you to do. You may be the finest person in the world, and you probably are. But as far as your relationship with God is concerned, that is not what God saved you for. God saved you for a purpose. Many times because we get lackadaisical and we do not cave with the Holy Spirit of God, we get the idea that God saved us for our purpose. He did not save us for our purpose. You are going to see that clearly today. If you are discipling people today, you are going to go away today with a better formula and a better plan of what you are trying to

accomplish. If you are working with people today and helping them, you are going to go out of here now with a better understanding. Because here it is. Spiritual growth. Here it is. Completely explained and defined for you how that process of spiritual growth that leads to spiritual maturity takes place in our lives, or at least the way that it should.

Now I want you to focus on the last part of this passage. Look at 2 Corinthians 1:20, 21 and 22. He says this:

2 Corinthians 1:20-22

For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;

Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Now I want you to look at those two verses, three verses for a moment, and what I want to do is I want to extract four things out of there that when we put them in the order that they happen to us, it shows you the four essential things God puts in your life and my life that we have to have if we are going to fulfill God's plan for our life, that we get to the point where God can use us. I am telling you, if you disciple people or you work with people, this ought to be the behind-the-scenes goal that you are trying to accomplish. When we take these things out of the verses and put them in the order that it happened in our lives, wow, it becomes a great thing. Four incredible principles here to get us to the point of spiritual maturity.

Now the first thing he says in 2 Corinthians 1:22 is, "He sealed us."

1. He sealed us.

We know from Ephesians chapter 4, verse 30 that the Bible says the day you got saved, you and I were sealed unto the day of redemption.

Ephesians 4:30

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

So there is your salvation. You came to the place in your life that you trusted Christ as your own personal Savior. That is what the Holy Spirit of God did. He sealed you. If you go back to John chapter 16, you will find that one of the things that the Holy Spirit of God does, and those seven things that He does, one of the first things He does is convict us. He convicts us of sin. When He convicts us of sin and we respond to that, then it is the Holy Spirit of God who, when we get saved, seals us. That is what he is saying here. The first thing that took place in your life was the fact that God sealed you. That is the day of salvation, and this begins the process.

When you come into our church, and maybe you just get saved or you have been saved for a while but kind of just been wandering around and not had any direction in your life, we put you into a program of ministry here that extends from Sunday morning to Thursday night to everybody else involved that works with me in ministry. I said it last week. I have said it many, many times. That is the job of this church: reproducing men and women who will do ministry

God's way by the book. When you get that happening to the tune of 50, 60, 70 people doing it, then this is what makes a church successful. So 2 Corinthians 1:22 said, "He sealed us."

Now look at 2 Corinthians 1:20. He says, "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."

2. The promises of God.

The next thing that God gives us is the promises of God. How many times have you heard me talk about those little three by five cards that so many of you have? Everybody in this church got started on that at some place or the other. You all pass them out. I started that simply because when you first got sealed, saved, you did not really understand the Word of God, but there were key principles in your life that you had to get down. So we put them on three by five cards, and many of you have hundreds of them by now, and I see you have them in your purse. You pull them out, you will show them, you will give them to somebody else.

I learned that basic simple concept when I was in the fifth grade, and I never got past the seventh grade, but I sure learned a lot in the fifth and the sixth grade. Back then my teacher was teaching multiplication tables. You know, one times one, two times two, two plus three, three times four, right up the line. You can see I have forgotten them, but anyway. Okay, get it out of your system, and then we can get on. Honey, would you sit over here? I do not want you next to him or him. I will tell you what, you look like too good a girl to be. That is a road between two thorns right there. I want to tell you that right now. Anyway. She would stand up there with flashcards and she would do them, and the whole class like this would have to say them all, "three times six is eighteen," you know, down the line, and you go up through the whole section. I remember that just as clear. Two things I remember out of my grade school. One was always a half-finished picture of George Washington. I do not know why I never finished it. Really there are three things. The second one, did you know that in every grade school in elementary the alphabet was always around the top of the school? Do you ever wonder what that is? Well, there is a mindset to that. Every school you ever went to, half picture of George Washington never finished, and then the alphabet was all around the top, and somebody figured out that kids our age were just looking around at everything. So if we are going to look around, we might as well see the alphabet.

It was those flashcards. She would stand there and do those things. When I saw that for years and years and years, even to this day, I am a little nervous today, but even to this day, I remember those multiplication tables, and I can visualize in my mind that teacher doing those things, and I can see them there based on that principle. That is why we put principles, promises, on three by five cards. When you have a tough time in life, you know what you do? That is what you do. You go for those principles in time. You transfer them from those cards in here, but it takes a process, and you have those cards with you. Many of you will have them all of your life, but you take those cards and you use them because that is the basis for you getting the promises of God, and those promises of God, you build yourself into the Bible. You build yourself into the Bible.

Isaiah 28:10 says, "How do you teach somebody doctrine?"

Isaiah 28:10

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

You teach them line upon line, principle upon principle. You have got one principle on top of another principle. I have told you before, your body is like a temple. The temple was made out of stone overlaid with gold. You look at a building, and what holds it together is the bricks, but they noticed they do not just lay the bricks on top of each other. They tie those bricks in at a different angle on top of the brick course below it. That is where the strength comes. That is what you do, and the key to spiritual maturity is thinking that every one of those bricks is a biblical principle, and you tie them into your life, that in time you have those principles.

Now here is what happens. 2 Corinthians 1:22, you get sealed. 2 Corinthians 1:20, the promises of God.

3. He establishes us.

Look at 2 Corinthians 1:21. "Now he which stablisheth us." See, you get established. I am going to tell you, there is only one road to spiritual maturity, and it is not always an easy road, but it is the only road. That is one biblical principle at a time. Now I want you to see something here because this is amazing. He says down there, he says, look at 2 Corinthians 1:21. "Now he which stablisheth us." Notice it does not say, "Now he who establishes us," because if it was "who," then you could go back to the verse and say that it was God that established you. But he does not say "who" because it is not God that establishes you. The "which," my friend, goes back to the promises of God which establish you. Not a "who." In other words, God does not come down and just establish you. God takes the principles and the promises that you put in your heart, and that is what He takes to establish you. You can love God with all of your heart, mind, and soul, but if you do not get God's principles down, the "which," the promises, you are never going to get established. That is why the Bible talks about the Word of God by being a treasure. That is why the Bible talks about the Word of God being a treasure hidden in your heart. We talk about it all the time about having a principled life.

When you went to grade school, there was one guy who was at our high school. There was one guy who was at the top of the chain who made sure that you learned everything you did. It was his responsibility to make sure you got all truth that that church, that school had to give you. His name was the principal. The principal was the guy that made sure that you learned the principles of learning in life. Well, I am telling you what, that is the key to maturity is a principled life. Not doing things the way we want to do them and then trying to make it work like it is really of God. No, no, no, no. It is never right to do wrong to get the chance to do right. You stay by the principles of the Word of God, come hell or high water. That is what you stay with. It is the principles of God's Word. Those little three by five cards, those verses that God gives you one at a time when you go over things in life that help you get you through, that God puts into your life that in time establishes you. There is where the spiritual maturity is.

This is why many people when they go through a tough time in life, they can never handle it themselves. They can never handle themselves. I have told you the story many, many times about a guy that goes into the bank and he goes up to the bank teller and says, "I need to get," he tells this elaborate story, "how his engine blew up in his car and he needs to get \$2,500 because that is what it takes to get fixed." She smiled and said, "That will be fine. What is your account number?" He gives her the account number. She goes and looks it up on that little computer, and then comes back and says, "Well, I am sorry, Mr. Jones, you only have \$1.98 on the account." He said, "Well, that may be true, but you do not understand. My engine blew up. And I need \$2,500. You have all kinds of money." She says, "I am sorry, sir, you only have \$1.98 on your account." She says, "Do not tell me that. I watched so and so over here. He was at the window before me. You gave him \$1,500." "Well, if you knew what I knew about him, you would not give him any money." "Teller, I do not care anything about him. He put the money on the account. He has got it. You do not have anything on that account."

Now biblical principles are called a treasure. The Word of God is called a treasure hidden in your heart. So when tough times come, the reason why you fall apart, you cannot get through it, you have to have oodles of help to get you past it, is because you have wasted your time. Just like the guy standing at the teller in the bank saying, "I need this money." She says, "There is nothing on account." You stand there before God and say, "Well, I am your child. I am this, I am that. You are supposed to come down and help me." God says, "I would love to. You have got nothing on the account." Hide the Word of God in your heart. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Putting it onto account is what establishes you. So you get saved, you get sealed. You begin to get the promises. The promises lead to you being established.

4. He has anointed us.

Look at 2 Corinthians 1:21, "hath anointed us." Now see, these four things are incredible because in the anointing in the Bible, in the Old Testament, is a picture of the Holy Spirit of God. When they anointed a king in the Old Testament, the prophet came in, and he was God's man to lead the nation of Israel, God's people. When the prophet anointed him as king, he took a vial of oil and he poured it on his head. That oil ran down over his head through his face and his beard and all the way down his body. That was symbolic of the Holy Spirit of God anointing him to do the work that God has called him to do, to be the king of Israel. When you got sealed, friend, you got anointed. God saved you for a purpose. God saved you for a reason. The reason why we never figured it out is because you never take it past the being sealed part. You never get the promises. You never get established, so therefore you never get anointed.

Now do you know why some of you now are taking the opportunity that God has given you and you are doing something in ministry versus people who are not? This is not a criticism of anybody. It is just a plain Bible truth. Do you know why you are stepping out? Because you are now going to let God use you. You are going to take the opportunity God has put in front of you no matter what it may be, and you are going to actually go out there and do something. I will tell you why. It is because you got saved. You got the promises. You got established. And now you are at that point where God is going to anoint you to do the work that God has called you to do. He saved you for a purpose. He saved you for a purpose. He has a plan for your life.

Now after you get to that point in your life, you have to meet, and it is all going to be very clear today. Once you get to that point in your life, now you have been sealed. Now you have the promises. Now you have been established. Now you have been anointed. You and I are still the worst train wreck we ever saw on this planet. So now we have to maintenance what we have, do not we? You know how we maintenance it? Examine yourself, know yourself, take heed to yourself, prove yourself, and in some cases, shoot yourself. God saved us for a reason. He has a plan. He has a plan. Now these four areas show you what your growth process should be and how you build it one concept at a time. When you are discipling somebody, you are working with me in ministry with somebody. They have got problems you are trying to work them through. What you do is you take the Bible principles that you have established, here it comes, your own life with. You got sealed. You got the promises. Now you have been established with God. You understand you are living your life, a principled life to the best of your ability. And now God anoints you, and you take that same process and you put it in somebody else's life.

IV. The Earnest of the Spirit and the Broken Contract

Now here it comes. Do not you hate when you go to the doctor? I had a particular procedure done a little while back that I will not tell you what it was, but it was not a pleasant one. My doctor is one of the nicest doctors that you are ever going to find. A caring guy, I think he is probably saved. I really like him a lot. He likes me. He remembers me. He knows I am a pastor. He called me Reverend. I just said, "My name is Bob." But they are big on that. He is a doctor, I am a reverend, so we kind of get a, you know, do whatever. I am laying on the table, and he is doing his deal. I hate, I hate when he reaches up and taps me on the shoulder and says, "Now this is going to hurt a little bit." One, you know he is lying. It is not going to hurt a little bit. It is going to hurt a lot. But he is preparing you out of the kindness of his heart because he does not, I do not, this guy anyhow, I think all doctors are wonderful and they are all the same, but this guy, he is very compassionate. He does not want to hurt you. I mean, he is very careful in what he does. He was telling, and I love him for it and I appreciate it. He reached up very gently, tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Now, now, Reverend, this is going to hurt a little bit." You know, I just said, "Okay, you know what? Okay." And he was right. He was 100% right. He did not lie to me. It hurt a lot.

I say all that to tell you this. What I am about to tell you is going to hurt a little bit. I am afraid that I wish I could just preach this to you and I could escape it, but this one God is going to kill us all with, I do believe. Now after we look at these four areas, I want you to see, and remember now our concept today, and here really lies our message on the second benefit. Look at 2 Corinthians 1:22, "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Now there is a good unknown term, "the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Let us talk about that for a moment. Let us put that into a practical thing.

How many people ever bought a house? Well, good. Either the rest of you are lying or you do not know what I am talking about today. You are going to buy a house when you get ready to buy it and close the deal. I do not remember when. We bought a house 18 years ago, and I do not remember how old the process was, but it was either the realtor or the company or the bank.

When you get ready to close that deal, they are going to ask for what they call earnest money. That can be anywhere from \$500 to \$1,000. The earnest money is what you put down to show you are really committed to buy the house and go through with the transaction. Now you all understand that? Okay. This is going to hurt a little bit.

When God saved you and me, He gave you and me, the Bible says, the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. 1 Corinthians 6, verse 19 says that He bought you and me.

1 Corinthians 6:19

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

The contract for our salvation and us being sealed was made at Calvary's cross. Keep in mind now, nobody forced you to get saved. Nobody came over and put a double hammer lock on you and pinned you to the ground and forced you to get saved. You made that choice on your own free choosing. The day you accepted Him, He gave you the Spirit of God in earnest, the earnest of the Spirit as a down payment on the contract that you would give your life to Him because He gave His life for you. Their accepting of God's salvation and His down payment for us, it set the contract in motion and showed the sincerity of the buyer, God, toward me.

Now the Christian life and where you are at today is to become right now, maybe for the first time in your life, the most crystal clear thing that you have ever seen. You will never have to go out of here and scratch your head again and say, "I wonder what is wrong with me." You will never have to wonder about, are you doing what is right or are you not? The great thing about the Bible, and I told you when I started, I have to break things down that are so simplistic to me that even I can understand it. Never again now, based on what we are looking at today, maybe you will lie to yourself, maybe you will lie to the person sitting next to you, I do not know, but deep down in your heart, you will never be able to lie to God again and say, "I do not understand it," because the process of what is wrong with you and me today is real clear. It is real clear. It is real clear.

Simply what is wrong with you and me today is that we have taken God's earnest money, the Spirit of God, and then we reneged on a contract. He gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. He gave that based on the fact that He had confidence that we would fulfill the contract made at Calvary's Cross, that He gave up everything for us, that we would understand and give up everything for Him. We took the earnest of the Spirit and then reneged on the contract. That is where our problem is today. Just that simple, folks. The bottom line is we are crooks. We are Christian crooks, but we are crooks. We have defrauded God on the contract. The Bible says in Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, that serving God and being a living sacrifice, keep in mind, He became a sacrifice for you and me at the cross. He did not ask you and me to die for Him. He asked you and I to be a living sacrifice in living for Him.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

He put the earnest of the Spirit down to seal that contract because He thought you and I were trustworthy. We ripped Him off royal. We are crooks. We have defrauded God from what is our reasonable service. It does not get any plainer today if you are a Christian why and who we really are. Take off that mask.

V. The Two Benefits and Their Misinterpretations

Now in connection with all of this, Paul talks about a second benefit. I might add that there is more heresy taught about this than you could ever imagine. The Charismatic Church teaches that when you got saved, you did not get all of the Holy Spirit of God. So after a period of time, you get what they call a baptism of the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues. At that point in time, now you completely have all of this Spirit. They call it a second work of grace. Now you did not get all of the Holy Spirit of God the day you got saved, but at some point later on, you get the baptism of the Holy Ghost. At that point now, the evidence of that is speaking in tongues, and now you have all of God there is, and you have had that second work of grace.

The Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, and the Episcopal Church, they take the second benefit and they teach that as baptism for salvation or confirmation. That once you join the Catholic Church, Lutheran Church, or Episcopalian Church, and I am not fighting anybody, I am just telling you what they teach. They believe that at that point when you get baptized, that you baptize that baby or when you get a little bit older and you go through the confirmation that you are confirmed now, that whatever faith one of them it is, that at that point, then that is when you get the second benefit, the benefit of confirmation.

Now Goofy Baptist, and see I am much harder on Baptist because we are Baptist, so Goofy Baptist. It was just Catholic, Lutherans and Episcopalian and Charismatics. I did not even call them Charismaniacs. But Goofy Baptist, Goofy Baptist, see you pray for the power and get it after salvation at some time and they call this the second blessing.

Now I am a simple guy. When I read about the second benefit, maybe it is just me now, but I would think that that means that there is a first benefit. I might be wrong. But I know when there is most things, there is a second one, there is usually a first one. I would think the answer to figuring out what this is, but not to make up some goofy little thing because you did not know. We go back and find where the first one was. First of all, I would get the context to where the second benefit is, and I see the context is in the book that defines in a book on handbook on ministry. So I might think now, just me kibitzing here for a moment, but I might think that it might have something to do with ministry.

You see, there are two benefits for the child of God when you put it into a Bible context. Now the first benefit that we had would be the day we got saved, would not it? The day you got saved, I would say that was a benefit, would not you? Thank you. Thank you. I am not going charismatic on you, but amen. That is a benefit. I say that is a pretty good benefit. I mean, when you got saved, that would be your first benefit, the day you got saved. You look at that thing, and that

was a great benefit that God gave us. That is where He put the earnest of the Spirit down in our hearts.

Now the second benefit would obviously be the aspect when you get to the point of spiritual maturity, once you go through the process of spiritual growth where you got the sealed, you got the promises, you got the right up to the anointing. The second benefit would be the day that you start to fulfill your original contract that God put the earnest money down on the day you got saved. You say, "What is the second benefit of that?" It is called the judgment seat of Christ. But you see, Charismatics and Goofy Baptists, they do not even believe in the judgment seat of Christ anymore. At the judgment seat of Christ, you get your reward, but then you have something called the millennium, which would be another aspect of the second benefit of doing ministry where you get your inheritance.

You see, spiritual growth contains a process that is built around these two benefits. It is easy. It is real easy. Nothing hard today. We just do not want to do it. At the first benefit, here it comes, here it comes, here it comes. Tap you on the shoulder again. It is going to sting a little bit. At the first benefit, you get all of the Holy Spirit of God there is. See? That is it. At the second benefit, you go through a process. You get saved, first benefit, you go through the process. The process is getting sealed, getting the promises, getting established, getting the anointing for God to do something with you. God put the earnest of the Spirit down on you the day you got saved. He wrote a contract. You accepted it by the agreement. So the first benefit is the day God saved you. When you get all of God there is, at the second benefit, it comes at that point of spiritual maturity that God gets all of you there is for the purpose of ministry.

I will tell you something, every issue in life you and I have, I am telling you right now, every issue that you and I have in life comes right down to that thing right there if you are saved. If you have heartache, you have problems, you have issues in your life, I realize that God, you go through things because you live godly. I am not talking about that. I am telling you this. The reason why we are depressed, the reason why we are broken, the reason why we have issues, the reason why we cannot get ahead in life, the reason why we have problem after problem after problem after problem is that we stole God's earnest money and broke the contract. I am here just to be a helper to your joy. Remember last week in Job, or the week before last in Job 34:23, you better, if you did not write that verse down, you are in trouble. But that is a great verse.

Job 34:23

For he will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God.

It says that God will not, everything that we go through, God only puts it on us so we will do right. The problem is simple, folks. God died on the cross. The day you got saved, He gave you the earnest of the Spirit in your heart. He made a down payment on you that because He gave you everything, you were going to give Him everything. That is what He saved you for. You will benefit in your life, your family for doing so. Now after salvation, you enter into a process of growth. We have talked about it all morning. You get sealed. It leads to the promises. It leads to being established. It leads to being anointed. And then you begin to fulfill the original contract. In the first benefit, you got sealed. In the second benefit, you come to the place where you have

grown now and you see and understand the benefit of the first one, and then you begin to fulfill the second one. That benefit is the testimony in our own personal life, the testimony of a good conscience with God. We talked about it the first week, the blessings of God, the power of God.

It is simply put, ladies and gentlemen, and now that we know, I love this. Finally, we have got to a point where we are all on the same page. We are all on the same page. Simply put, the second benefit is the day in your life the game is over. The cloak is gone. The mask is taken off. Where He gave you at salvation all of Him, now you give Him all of you. The process to get there. That is why this year will be a banner year for many of you. It will be your year of second benefit. The process is evident in your life. This is taught all the way through the Bible, and I do not know if you have ever seen it or not, just to take it to the next step. You understand the concept of the second benefit now. You understand the concept of the earnest of the Spirit. You get that whole thing put down now.

VI. Biblical Examples of Name Change

Here is the example in the Bible. The example is built around seven people. You heard me talk about it many times. We just never connected all the dots. It is simply found in the Bible the day that God changes their name. Now what does that mean in the Bible? It means that they have come through the process. When they come through the process, they got to a point where now they had some issues they had to deal with, but they came to the point where they took the mask off. They came to the point where the game is over. They came to the point where they know now playing games with God and doing it your way and claiming God is part of it when it is all your own flesh is a dead end street. At that point, when you get to that point in your life, if you ever get to that point in your life, God changes your name.

Years ago, I took an intensive study of this because I will tell you what, these people, they are all incredible. I began to look at these seven people, and I began to apply them to myself, examine yourself.

- Abram / Abraham
- Sarai / Sarah
- Jacob / Israel
- Simon Barjona / Peter
- Saul / Paul
- Jehoash / Joash
- Jehoiachin / Coniah