

# 2 Corinthians 5

Sunday 7/29/2012

We are going to start Chapter 5 of the book of 2 Corinthians. You should know by now why we are coming through the book of 2 Corinthians and how it fits into our overall scheme of what we are doing with the Bible. You also should know that the outline of each chapter of this book really forms the book that teaches us about ministry. Each chapter deals with a particular aspect of the overall concept of ministry. It is a vital book, a very important book.

So far as we have come through, we have learned that Chapter 1, even though it has a lot of great things in it, basically teaches us and shows us that the ministry is nothing more than suffering. You and I go through what we go through in life, but we have the wherewithal to process it through the Bible and learn from our mistakes, and then help others through their suffering as God has helped us.

Chapter 2, we saw one of the greatest concepts, if not the single greatest concept of the aspect of ministry, and that is the forgiving spirit of the minister—being able to forgive somebody for what they have done, either to you or to whatever, the aspect of being able to have that forgiving spirit.

Chapter 3 talks about the proof of our ministry, and that is the people that we work with, the people that you have won to Christ, or the people that God has put in your life that you have invested your life with.

Then we just finished Chapter 4, which is a great chapter. In Chapter 4, we saw the biblical definition of what our ministry should be: commending ourselves to every man's conscience, not handling the Word of God deceitfully, and preaching the truth.

## I. Our Perspective of Ministry

Today in Chapter 5, the title of this chapter, if you are putting these in as you go through 2 Corinthians, then you certainly should. This goes along with what we talked about Thursday night, about how you break the Bible down by chapter. Here it is, I am going to give it to you. By the time we are done with this book, you will have them all.

In Chapter 5, we are dealing with our perspective of the ministry. What does that mean? It means how we should really view and look at our ministry in light of probably the greatest single doctrine in the Bible for you and for me, and that is the Judgment Seat of Christ.

I told you last week that there are different kinds of styles of preaching. Last week, I gave you an example of expository preaching, going through verse by verse. I think the week before that, I showed you just good, down-home, tear-up-the-place preaching. But there are also times when you do not do either of those. There are times that the circumstances or the situation dictates that you just talk. Preaching may try to weave its way in, but for the most part, it is not something where you start out at 60 miles an hour, but by the time you are halfway through, you are at 110, and by the time you are finished with it, you are going Mach 4 with your hair on fire. It is not quite like that.

I will tell you why I want to be careful with this chapter today, at least starting out with it, and probably through the whole thing, because I do not know of another subject in the Bible as a pastor that I have to preach on that frustrates me more than the Judgment Seat of Christ. What frustrates me about it, I think, is the fact that I am a people person. I love people. My whole life has been people. It is just the way God made me.

The thing that frustrates me so many times is to see people who are God's people, who have the ability to really be something for God, but just watch them throw it all away. If you look around you and your life and the people that are in your life, you see over and over again what I tell you all the time: that life is choices. It only takes maybe one bad choice to ruin your life.

I was talking to Missy, Bill's wife, this morning, and we were talking about a particular situation. I gave her one of my famous sayings. I said to her, "Now they are going to... I am going to tell you, you hear me saying that, they are going to put this on my tombstone." We talked for about 10 minutes, and I gave her about nine more. She said to me, "When you die, you are going to have to have a really big tombstone with all the different things that you say on it."

But one of the things I tell you all the time is, life is choices. I think the thing that is really hard for me as a preacher preaching on the Judgment Seat of Christ is because of how simple it is. Honestly, folks, there is not any reason on this planet why everybody in this room this morning should not walk away from the Judgment Seat of Christ with everything that God had for you. It is not like it is some great hard thing that you can never get to. It is probably the simplest thing in the Bible, but the frustrating part of it is that so many of God's people are just never going to do it. They are going to miss it completely.

Paul understands how important it is. He writes two books, and in those two books that he writes, 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, he deals with it and he defines the most important teaching. I am not kidding you, for you and for me as a child of God, I know there are lots of things that are important and I preach about a lot, but you put them all in one basket: the number one doctrine and teaching that is going to affect you more than anything else is going to be understanding the doctrine of the Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul takes two books to define it for us and how important it is: 1 Corinthians 3 and then where we are at today, 2 Corinthians 5.

For those of you that are paying attention, those are your two definitive passages in your Bible on the Judgment Seat of Christ. You will never find any... you will find other things that will add to it, but there will never be two greater chapters that define every aspect of that. I know of no other doctrine for the Christian or the Christian church in the Bible, as I said, that is more important than this subject. Fundamentally, it is the basis for everything that we do.

Every Christian should be... you hear me talk about this, also be on my tombstone, honey. You hear me talk about "look around, look behind, look ahead." Every Christian ought to look ahead to that aspect of the Judgment Seat of Christ, because it is vital. It is vital.

## II. The Pastor's Responsibility and Frustration

I know today that I understand my responsibility as a pastor. I really do. That is why I am trying to approach this from a maybe different aspect than I would, because sometimes a little change-up is good. You can preach hard at people so many times and people just kind of get numb to it. So it is always good to be able to change it up.

I know that as a pastor, what my responsibility is, and really the responsibility of all pastors to their churches and their people. I know that I will give an account someday for my stewardship, as pastors will over this country for their stewardship of being a pastor over the people of God. There is a lot of responsibility that comes with that. Nothing that I know of, nothing that I can find throughout the whole Bible, will a pastor be held accountable for more than his teaching and doctrine, or in this case, the lack of it, on the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Understanding this concept and staying focused on it honestly will put every single issue in your life and my life and our church into proper perspective. It is without a doubt the single most important teaching in all of the Bible for you and for me. Yet, I guarantee you, as I speak here this morning, I say it all the time. I have been around in the ministry for many, many years. I know how it goes. I know the system. I know pastors. I know preachers. I know most of the preachers in this town just by association of being here for almost 40 years. I can guarantee you today that I bet there are not two or three pastors in this city that ever keep this issue before their people.

It is a great injustice, ladies and gentlemen, that is done to God's people that pastors someday are going to give an account for. I know when I stand before God at the Judgment Seat of Christ, I have no illusions about me and what a mess I am. I have no illusions of grandeur that I am going to... there are so many things I will have to give an account for and many screw-ups in my life. I do not expect to necessarily get anything, but the bottom line is this: there is one problem that I will never have with the Judgment Seat of Christ. There is one thing that they will not be able to tag to me as a pastor that I did not do, and that is to keep the most important day for a child of God before you in your life, because I am telling you, it is a day that is coming.

I guarantee you, you could not find two or three pastors in this city that keep the issue before their people. I bet you could not find the last two years there will be pastors that preached on it, taught on it. Their people are oblivious to it. Every question you ask on Thursday night Bible study, I am looking to work that angle in about the Judgment Seat of Christ. Every sermon I preach, if there is an opportunity to walk down that road even for 30 seconds and drop it on you, I am going to. So I understand my responsibility as a pastor. I understand responsibilities of pastors in general.

Yet in spite of pastors' failures to teach it, I want to tell you something else. This is all an introduction. We will get to this. This is not going to be deep today. I am not planning on some deep thing. We will get into it in every aspect down the line in the weeks to come. But that is not my goal today. My goal today is to give you a basic fundamental outline of you understanding how this thing really works.

In spite of the failures of pastors to teach it, there is also a real failure on God's people's part concerning this number one doctrine. This is where my frustration in the ministry comes in. This

is where I get frustrated in the ministry with God's people simply because God's people do not listen today. God's people for the most part do not listen to anything.

I do not know how many times people... and I know we are all human. We make mistakes, and this is not a condemnation on anybody in particular. It is just the truth in Christianity in general. Nobody listens to anybody today. Nobody does. My frustration in my approach of getting this message to you is, what else can I do? How else can I try? I will preach on it every chance I can. I will tie it into every question, as I said, on Thursday night's Bible study. But God's people today for the most part just do not care about anything that has to do with God or the Bible. The most frustrating part of the ministry today is the fact that God's people just will not listen.

### III. The Famine of Hearing God's Word

I look at Christianity today, and I have told you this before, about the great parallels to Christianity today and the nation of Israel. Right before the nation of Israel went into captivity, the Bible says in Amos 8:11 that they had a great famine, and this famine was the famine that really caused them to go into the captivity.

You know the cloth of captivity. About 721 BC, Sennacherib comes down, the king of Assyria, and takes the Northern tribes into captivity. About 606 BC, Nebuchadnezzar comes down and takes the Southern tribes. The nation of Israel ceases to exist. They have now been taken captive by two world powers, and they will never meaningfully get this. That happened in 606 BC, 600 years before Jesus Christ showed up. That 600 years plus the next 2,000 years, that is 2,600 years. For 2,600 years, Israel has been worthless and powerless because of that captivity.

Yet back in Amos 8:11, it talks about a famine that was going on in Israel's time. You might think when you hear the word famine, you are thinking of food and you are thinking of water, but that is not the kind of famine they had. The Bible says the famine they had was a famine of hearing the word of God. I have heard pastors quote that verse before, "a famine of the word of God." They always like to say, that is not what the verse says. The verse says "hearing of the word of God." They had the word of God; they just were not listening to it.

That is the famine we face today. It is a famine in this church. It is. Do not pretend for any stretch of the imagination that everybody in this church really cares about doing anything for God. Let us just be honest about it. It would be nice if it would happen, but it is not going to happen. The frustrating part of that is some of you have so much to offer, but you know what has happened? There is a famine in your life. There is a famine in this church. This church is probably, I am just speaking now, if I am speaking out of line, correct me on it, but this church is probably the best Bible-teaching church in this city. Now, I may not... maybe somebody out there may be just saying, "Boy, he really thinks a lot of himself." No, I just think a lot of the Book, and nobody even believes the Book anymore. But in this church, with the Bible you get, there is a famine. There is a famine of hearing the word of God. I am just telling you, I am just talking with you today.

When the nation of Israel quit hearing and quit listening for God, that is when they went into the captivity. That is why some of you can never get ahead in life. That is why some of you have the

struggles that you have. You know why? You have been taken captive, just like the nation of Israel. The world has come and captivated you and hauled you off. The tragedy with you and the great parallels of just as Israel has been worthless for the last 2,600 years, may I say it? Can I say it? You are worthless. I do not know what to tell you. I am not mad at you. I am just telling you, God saved you for a purpose, folks. If you are not fulfilling that purpose, I do not know what to tell you.

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

That is Christianity right there today. Christianity does not hear what the Word of God says. God's people will not listen to what the Book says. They just will not. In Bible time, this is called the great captivity. God's people are in a great captivity today. There is an absolute unbelievable void. Maybe you do not see it from your little parishioner's seat. But looking at this church and looking at Christianity all over the thing, and this church, as good as it is, really is not any different than any other church other than the Bible that we have and what we preach.

It is proof that in the day and age that we live in, you can have the greatest Bible in the world. You can believe the Bible upside down and inside out. You can have the King James Bible, have the Holy Spirit of God, have thousands of people saved, have all kinds of ministries on fire for the Lord, and people plugged in. And there are always going to be a group of people that will not listen. When it comes to the Judgment Seat of Christ, it gets real frustrating for me. It gets real personal because I honestly... you may think I am being mean today. Give me a few more minutes. You will wonder when I am talking to you. If I would preach this, blood would shoot out my eyes because it frustrates me. It frustrates me that you have so much to offer to God and yet you want to keep it for yourself. But you are not going to listen to me.

There is a void of being able to process the truth into common sense in this fairy tale world that most of God's people live in. God's people today just will not hear anything. They will not listen to what anybody has got to say. I see it all the time.

#### IV. Consequences of Not Listening

Many of you parents will simply not listen about dealing with your children. You will not. I see it every day and in everything. Some parents simply will not listen to anything about their kids. Some of you, I love you to death, and your kids are sitting here this morning. Some of you are going to lose these little kids sitting next to you to the world. I am just telling you. You are going to lose these kids.

I hear parents say it all the time. They will come in to me and they will say their first words out of their mouth. I will say, "What is going on?" And I am kind. I do not always say back to you what I want to say back to you because I have sense. I think there are other ways to help you sometimes, and just when you are having a tough time, and I know you are having a tough time because you have done some things wrong. A lot of times it is easier for me not to say what needs to be said, but work it around and come in from another angle to say it without being so harsh about it because I am sensitive to you because I love you.

But parents will come in all the time and they will say, "Well, my kid..." I say, "What is going on?" "My kid will not listen to me." I feel like saying back to them, "Have you... do you not know why? Do you know why your kid will not listen to you?" The answer is because you will not listen to me. It is just that simple. You want your kids to do what is right, but you do not want to do what is right.

It is simple, Mom and Dad. You will not listen to me, or more important, what the Word of God says that I am preaching to you. You will not listen to what the final authority says on parenting. Some of you are making absolutely terrible, horrendous mistakes with your children. In time, it is going to be irreversible. Somebody said a couple of months ago, "I think it is time for you to teach child training again." My answer to them was, "Why? They will not listen."

I do not mean to blow my own horn here, and if I am out of line, I am out of line. But I would think that maybe I am dead wrong on this, but I would think you would have to look a long time ago, a long way, to find somebody who puts as much into their people as I put into you. Now, you do not have to amen it. It may not be true, but in my mind, I think it is true, but I like thinking myself doing good things. So I do not know.

The bottom line is this: do you know how boring and tiring it gets when you pour yourself in and pour yourself in and pour yourself in and give and give and give? Many times it is nothing more than repetitive mistakes that you never learned from the first time. People do not listen. Somebody says, "You had to teach child training." Why? You did not listen the first time. The book is back there. If I taught it a hundred times, some of you would never listen. There was a great famine. Some of you have lost your kids.

Now, in that particular case, that is a tragedy, but there is always something that you can do. There is a process that you can input to get them back or at least give them the best chance to come back after a while. It is their choice. I think the number one biggest mistake parents make when they lose their kid is they try to go back and do when they are 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 what they should have been doing when they were two, three, four, five, six, and seven. Then they scratch their head and say, "It does not work." No, it will not work. That time is gone. You cannot deal with them at that point. The time to get them to do what you wanted to do will not be at 16, 17, 18, and 19. It was back when. But if you did not do that, do not delude yourself into thinking that you can do it now and get some kind of results. You are going to burn yourself out. Now, there are some things that you have got to do and there are some things that you can do. You are not going to listen to me. You are not.

You know why some of you have the problems you have in your Christian life? I love you today, but you know why some of you have the issues you have in your life and you cannot get off square one in your life? I will tell you, it is because you will not listen to me about the friends you hang out with. People that will take from you everything that God has for you. The friends we keep in our lives will either encourage you for God or discourage you for God. We build our prayer groups on that very same concept of Proverbs 27:17 that says,

*Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*

The people you put in your life will either sharpen you to be better for God or they will take the edge off of you to be better for God. I do not know how much simpler it can get, but you do not listen to me. Many times it is Christian friends. May I say this? I am just talking. There are people in my own church who believe this Bible, who do great things. God has a great blessing on us. There are people in this church that I would steer a young Christian away from. You know why? I do not want them to turn out like you. That is why. I am just being honest with you. I am just telling you. Some of you are worldly. You are selfish. You are ministry-denying. You are self-serving, and yet you are a Christian. I do not want young Christians growing up with your role model.

I get somebody that comes in, they get plugged in, they get excited about ministry. Then, you know what? They start pouting around with you. They start hanging around with you. You know what you do? You are not helping me in ministry. We are buddies. We are friends. I love you. But at the end of the day, you are not helping me build people in ministry. You are taking away what I am trying to put in their life. I do not need that. I do not need that at all. I am ashamed to say that in this church. But you know what? This church is no different than any other church. You are not going to listen to me. You are not. You will hurt them. You will not help them. Everything you do, you have one foot in the world and one foot in the Bible. When somebody comes in that is not smart enough to smell you out yet, you look good on the outside. You are never around when anything really needs to be done, but you look good. I do not know what to tell you.

The reason why some of you will never do anything for God is real simple, folks. It is the people you continue to associate with. But you know what? I will preach on it until the cows come home. I am not sure what time the cows will be home, but I preach on it. Nothing ever changes in your life. You know why? Because you will not listen. These people will rob you of what God has for you. I stand up here and tell you how important it is to get in ministry and get involved in getting that Book. Their lifestyle by not doing it shows you how unimportant it is. Let me ask you a question. Which way do you think human nature is going to fall? You are not helping me. You may be helping yourself to a lot of things, but you are not helping me.

Many of you husbands, you will not listen about how to deal with your wives. You will not listen to me. How many times have I taught the marriage class? How many times have I spent time with this guy or this person or this couple? Many husbands, they will never listen to what they have got to do with their wife. Well, they know it all. They have got all the answers. That is why your marriage is a disaster. Your kids are going to be a disaster. It is just a mess.

Many Christians will not listen on how to build a meaningful Bible-based relationship with another person. How many times have I been through it? I have laid it out over and over and over again. You will not listen. You will lose everything God has for you. You will lose your millennial inheritance. You will lose your rewards, all because you hooked up with Bozo the Clown, who cared nothing about God, who cared nothing about the Word of God, or Bimbo Betty, who just will take everything from you. No reference to my sweet Betty I have back here. I am clarifying that. She is my buddy. Not that Betty. That is a good Betty. If I were to use Bimbo Charlotte, it would not have rhymed.

You will hook up with some clown or some gal who cares nothing about it. Let me tell you something, and I go back to saying this, but you do not listen. When you get saved, the devil knows what God wants you to do. He is going to put every clown, every person in your life who is going to take away from what God wants you to do. You ought to be... this will go on my tombstone too... you ought to be smarter than the problem. You are going to be a whale of a tombstone. You will not listen to me. You just will not. How many bad relationships has it been now? How many? How many marriages do you have to go through? How many bad relationships do you have to have that you start thinking, "Hmm, maybe there is something wrong in my thinking process here?" But nobody listens today.

The mark of this godless generation of, yes, Christians, is their death to the things of God. To you, it does not matter what God wants from you. For you, it only matters what you want from God.

I read in a book this week that I have had for years. I wish I could tell you the name of it, but the cover has been gone about 25 years ago. But it is a book about the process of the downfall of America. This guy was a great guy. He had a lot of insight. He wrote about the progress of America's demise. He basically breaks it down into three chapters. He talks about our founding fathers where the Bible was the foundation. In that founding father, that early time, he brings to light some of the great men who believed the Word of God, who loved God, and wanted this country based and to have some real standards in families. He cites Patrick Henry, who you all should know that in 1775, stood up there when he was faced with all of the things and was going to be hung. He basically, when he was given a chance to back out of the thing, he looked at them and said, "Give me liberty or give me death." He writes in that book that that was a great generation. It started in the middle of 1700s.

Then he talks about the second generation of America that starts around the Civil War and runs up to about 1950. He says, this is where after the Civil War started, it was about rights, people's rights. It processed in time into Christian rights, civil rights, human rights, gay rights, and everybody has got their rights. He says, this went from about 1850 to about 1950. He says, where Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty or give me death," this generation just simply said, "Give me liberty."

Then he brought America up to the day and age that we live in, 1960 to 2012. He says, where Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty, give me death," and the next generation said, "Give me liberty," the generation today just says, "Give me." That is Christianity today. Christianity in your life is not about what you give back to God. It is not. It is about what God is going to do for you.

Truman Dollar, who I worked with for many, many years, and I really liked Truman. I learned a lot from him, and he is dead now, but he will always be held in my heart as one of the men who really taught me a lot of things about ministry. I had a kind of a unique relationship with him, and we spent some time, a lot of time together, when I would drive him places and when he would speak around in Missouri. I would ask him questions about the ministry, and he would just kind of unload a little bit, not a whole lot, but enough that I picked up the nuggets. He said something one time, and I will never forget. We were talking on a particular subject, and he said

this: "Bob, let me tell you something about the ministry. People in the ministry, Christians, will never remember what you did for them yesterday. All they want to know is, what are you going to do for me today?" Boy, I thought to myself, that is some wisdom right there. That is it. "Give me, give me." People do not listen. They really do not.

Many of you refuse to listen to me when I tell you about what your responsibility is to this church as a member. Show me it. Just never get it. You will not listen. There is coming a time here in the future, not too far off probably, when we are going to be faced with a church with some real hard decisions. One of the church decisions we are going to be faced with is the aspect or the process of downsizing our church. Yes, you heard what I said. There is one event coming. There is one event coming, and nobody is seeing it. I am not thinking it is your responsibility to see it. It is my responsibility to see it. Look behind, look around, and look ahead. There is one thing coming, and it can happen any day, but it is coming. There is something coming that I am not going to get into today. It is something coming. But it is one major event, one issue coming our way that nobody sees it coming, but for sure, we are going to have to deal with as a church body, and we are going to have to make some hard decisions. We are going to have to consider the prospect of downsizing this church.

It is not something that I want to do. It is something that the situation when it comes is going to demand that it happens, if that is the way it goes. It is not going to be my decision. It will be your decision, but we will not have much of a decision to make, but it is incredible. When that day comes, oh, I think about it because I know it is coming. In my mind, I know people, how this thing is. When this day comes, oh man, I can hear it now. I can hear now how much you love this church. I can hear now how much this church really means to you. I can hear now you saying, "Well, where will I go? What will I do?" Show me up. We will take the other side, and you will be so angry. "How could you do this? Why would Bob even consider such a thing? Well, I am going to leave the church over this." Yes, you are. Hey, pal, when the day comes, if it goes that way, I did not do anything. It was your lack of doing anything that brought it about. I told you many, many times, you do not listen to me.

Right now we are going on fine. But I have told you and told you and told you that I am not going to stand up here and beg for you to give money to this church. It is an insult to God. It is an absolute insult. I have told you time and time again, and we are not broke by any stretch of imagination, but there is something coming our way. There is going to be a game changer in this church. I refuse at that point, right now it is fine, but I refuse at that point to go any farther with where we are at right now. I am just telling you, but nobody listens to me.

How many times have I stood up here and told you, I am not the kind of guy like most pastors that spend 45 minutes talking about "give money," and then the next service, the sermon is "give money," and right down the line. Here is the bottom line: it is your church. If it is not worth supporting financially, then just shut the sucker down. That is where I am at with it. That is exactly where I am at with it. It does not matter to me. I do not have any emotions in it. Honestly, believe it or not, for the most part, I really do practice the principles that I tell you. One of them I always tell you is, never take things personal.

To me, and maybe I think many of you know me, who I really am. Some of you probably do not really understand who I am, where I am at with all this, but let me just put my cards on the table to somebody. I am nice. I put up with a lot of stuff. We deal with a lot of things. I love everybody. I give everybody umpteen chances. I do not care where you have been and what you have done. I will put up with somebody until... I mean, forever. I will help you no matter if it takes a thousand times and you still do not get it. You know where I am at with that good conscience toward God thing. I just stick with you forever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever.

But at the end of the day, let me tell you something. When you scrape off all this outside covering of Bob Alexander, you have one thing inside: it is a man with a mission. I eat, sleep, drink, think, and am consumed about one thing, and that is doing this church the way God wants it done and fulfilling this mission. That is all I am about. I will put up with a lot of things. Bob says, "Well, you know, Bob is pretty dumb. He just keeps... I just keep hosing him over." Hey, you know what? I am probably dumb, but you know what? I do not care. All that will work itself out in the wash.

Bottom line is, deep down inside, I am about one thing. God saved me for ministry. God built this church, gave it to me for ministry, and that is all I care about. Bottom line, if I have a church of 250 or 300 and I have 150 that are only doing the job, to me, it is a no-brainer. That is me. Dump the freeloaders, man. Nothing personal. I have a job to do.

Oh, but I can hear it now. I can just hear it. When that day comes, it is coming. I am not sure how it is all going to go, but I am just telling you. I have never said anything about it. I have not talked to one person in this church about it, but I am just talking about the greatest event in your life, the Judgment Seat of Christ, and how God's people do not listen. I tell you all the time what this church is, what we have got to do, what our responsibility is. You do not listen. I can hear it now. I can hear it whining now. "What will I do? What will I do? What will I do?" Well, I have some... I do not know, Phil Hopper is building an \$80 million auditorium. I am sure he has got room for you. I hear Pete Nugent has got a lot of room. I hear Grace Way wants to give you grace. I know Ray Stewart is always looking for a few good men.

Can we talk? What do you do at home when your bushes and your trees get so big, they are not functional anymore? Or in gardening, to make your tomato plants get more tomatoes? I will tell you what you do. You cut them back. You prune the limbs. You trim down the bushes. You crop the trees. That is what you do. Your own doctor tells you and me what we need to do. I hate going to the doctor. I hate him telling me this. I know you do. Every time we go there, he says, "You need to lose that ugly, unhealthy, excess weight that you are carrying around that absolutely puts a strain on your heart and does nothing for you." Well, even he has got to figure it out. You know what dead weight in churches does? They put a strain on God's heart, but they will always be there.

My favorite story, and I wish I had thought about this. I love this story. I have said it before, but I am going to say it again because a lot of new people have heard it. My favorite story I heard from a preacher years ago. I never forgot it. I will put it in my own world like it was my story.

Let us say that you and your wife come to our church, and you come here for about six months or so. My wife and I come up to you and say, "Hey, we would really like to take you out to dinner." You are thinking, "Wow, that was great. We are out dinner with the pastor." You are thinking, "Oh, there is a bunch of people." And your wife says, "No, his wife said it was just us, just the four of us." And you say, "Oh boy, pastor. Went out deep with the pastor."

So we go to a really nice restaurant. I mean, we go to the Hereford House or one of those places, a really nice place. We are sitting down there and we are talking, and you are telling me how much you love the church and how much you like the Bible. We are talking about getting to know each other and all those things. We spent about an hour and a half there, and I asked if you liked the dessert, and you would like to get dessert, coffee, anything you want. Well, she brings the check here, and we look at each other, and I look at you and I say, "It has been a really fun time tonight. Now here is what I need for you to do. My wife is going to go to the ladies' room. I want your wife to go with her. I am going to go to the men's room, and I want you to just slip out in the parking lot. You know where the car is at? Go to the car. The two women will go into the restroom, powder their nose for about five minutes, and then they will slip out and head out. I will be the last one out, make sure everything is kosher, and I will be out there, and we will get out of there, and we are on our way."

You are so shocked you do it. Then on the way home, let me ask the question. When you are driving home, are you still going to talk about what a great preacher I am? Are you going to probably come to church the next morning? You are going to look at me, and something that you are going to lose all respect for me. You are going to think, look at me and say, "My, my, what a mess. I cannot believe that he actually went in there, ordered that meal, brought us into this, and then he walked out without paying the tab." I will tell you what, I just cannot believe that a man of God would do that. I will tell you what, we are not going back to that church. That would be your take.

But you know what? Some of you come here every Sunday morning, every Thursday night, we cut off sirloin steak about that thick. You have got all the prime rib you want. You have got anything you want to eat, and you walk out of here on a Sunday morning and never even think about picking up the tab. People do not listen. Listen to me. Never mind. I did not mean to say that. You do not want to show me you cannot get a good job. You do not want to show me you cannot ever get ahead in your finances. Have you figured it out? You know why you cannot keep a job? Ever succeeded in what you do? Have you figured it out yet? I mean, the bottom line is in the Bible, the job God gives you, you are a missionary. It is to support your family, your mission to work, and the church God sends you to. He provides those things for you.

It is the only thing I know that Obama was right on when he has ever said. He has taken a lot of flack right now for what he said a couple of weeks ago when he was talking to the builders, the guys who were building, the guys who were the small business guys. He says, "You have got a business. You did not build that yourself. You did not do that yourself. Somebody helped you." Everybody is mad about it. But you know what? He is right in the sense of Christianity because whatever you have got, your home, your car, whatever you have got financially or physically, you did not do it yourself. God gave it to you. God gave it to you. He gave it to you.

Now let me ask you a question. You are not going to listen to me. Let me ask you a question. As a parent, when you do something really nice for your child and you give them something that may be valuable or cost a lot of money, and you give that to them and you say, "Here, take this because you are my child and I love you. Here it is. I know you want a dish. You need a dish. Here it is." And then that child abuses it. That child does not do what is right with it. That child maybe hurts somebody else with it, or that child just generally abuses it. Now, this is an open question. As a parent, what do you do? Please, louder. Take it away.

*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

He deals with you the same way, and you cannot figure it out. You know why you cannot figure it out? You will not listen. They are going to listen to me. You are not. Some of you will never learn. You know why? You will not listen. It is fun, fun, fun, fun. Daddy takes the T-bird away, but it is going to happen, and you cannot figure it out.

One of the greatest principles that you need to learn. I keep saying it. One of the greatest principles that you ever get your hands on. I know you will not learn it. It is the principle that God will not give you anymore until you do what is right with what He has already given you, because it is a waste of time. But in ministry, same way in ministry, you will not listen.

Last week you saw the importance of getting involved when the Bible talks about Philippians 4:13,

*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

You know what that was like? I saw it in your faces. It was like BBs off a stone wall. You will have all the issues you have in your life simply because you will not listen when it comes to fulfilling your obligation to God that He saved you for. Romans 12:1-2 talks about you presenting your body as a living sacrifice, and it says it is reasonable service for God. What God calls reasonable, you and your arrogance just simply say, "That is unreasonable, God." I do not know what to tell you. You are not going to listen to me.

Given all of that, it is no wonder why God's people will never listen to the number one issue about the Judgment Seat of Christ. Nothing makes me more frustrated in the ministry than preaching about this because it is so simple, and yet 99% of God's people will lose everything that they have. It is just the way it is. When you go through your Bible, it is talked about all the time. It is called the Day of Jesus Christ. It is called the Day of Christ. It is called the Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul saw and understood its relevance to us, so he details it out two times to the church at Corinth: 1 Corinthians 3 and 2 Corinthians 5, who needs to learn these things.

## V. The Bema Seat and the Christian Race

In the old days, the old Christians used to call it the Bema Seat. That name was based on the Roman Olympics that took place in Corinth in Paul's day. There was a platform or a high level where you stood above the people and received the crown for winning in the Olympic games. In

the Greek language, Bema means "level" or "seat." So the old boys used to call it the Bema Seat based on the Olympic games in Corinth.

When you look at that, it becomes obvious to me that what Paul is talking about and what he is doing when he writes about our Christian life, he puts it in the context of a first-century Roman lifestyle. When he talks about being a soldier for Christ, it is Ephesians 6, and the guy you have there is a first-century Roman soldier. When he talks about the Christian life and doing it, it is always likened to the Olympic games and running the race.

*24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.*

*25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.*

He is standing there looking at those Roman soldiers, who were the greatest military power in the earth at that particular point in time, still may be. But he looks at them and he is saying, "You know what, if I can get God's people to do for God what these Roman guys do for their god, the Emperor, we will turn the world around." Then he is watching the Olympics, much like you are today, only 2012 in England. He is watching that, and he is thinking, he is watching these guys run. He is watching these guys do all these things. He said, "You know what, that is what Christianity is." He says, "If I could get God's people to work as hard, train as hard, get ready for the race of life, to run for God as these pagans run for their god to get some corruptible crown when God has got an incorruptible one waiting for them."

He says, "Yet they do it for a corruptible crown. We do it for an incorruptible one."

*And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.*

He told Timothy, "He says, any man that strives for the mastery, yet he is not crowned." You are all striving for the masteries. Masteries means to be a master of something. He is telling Timothy, "You want to be in a ministry, you want to be a pastor? Then there is... you have got to strive for that." But he says, "A man is not crowned," at the Judgment Seat of Christ, "because he did not run lawfully." You have got to do it by the Book.

That is the problem. A lot of little churches out there get started, but because they did not do it by the Book, everybody wonders why they have the problems they have. They wonder why it goes belly up, wonder why it cannot get anything going, wonder why it struggles with everything. I will tell you why. You did not run lawfully, pal. It is real simple.

*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

You see what Paul said? Get rid of the dead weight, "lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset you." They keep finding it, man. Keep finding it.

## VI. Doctrinal vs. Practical Side of the Judgment Seat

With that intro, and as I said, we are not going to get deep today. I want to read the first four verses here. My goal is that, saying all the things I said about what God's people do not listen to, maybe just one of you there will wake up this morning and listen to this. But I doubt it.

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

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

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

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

The overall concept of the Judgment Seat of Christ, and this is all I want you to grasp today. We are going to get into this in the weeks to come, but this is an intro. The two things that I want you to understand about the Judgment Seat of Christ today are that there are two sides to it: there is a doctrinal side and there is a practical side. That is true of just about everything in life. That is true about everything in life in the Bible that you are going to find: there is a doctrinal side to it. That will be the theological side of it. But then there is a practical side to it. It is the difference between law and grace. It is the difference between the law and the spirit of the law, the letter of law and the spirit of law. It is just that simple.

Here is what he says in verse 1. He says, "Now this earthly house, this tabernacle." That is your body. The verse you want to go along with that is 2 Peter 1:13. He says, "Now this earthly house, for we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens." Here is what he is saying. This earthly house, this tabernacle, it is your body. It is made of clay, mud. Back in Genesis, when God made Adam, He made him out of the dust of the ground. Adam means "red-brown." He made him out of the mud. So we go around saying, "My name is mud." That is where it goes back to.

It says that one day this house, the physical body, is going to be dissolved. In other words, you are going to die. Then Paul says in verse 1, "We also know that when that happens, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens." That is your soul. At that time of death or the rapture of the church, we simply move out of this old house and move into this new house.

I know I was not going to start preaching, and I am not going to preach, but I am going to say this to you. If some of God's people would get as excited about moving into this new house as they do the house they have down here they move into, we would see a revival. You realize there is something that you take care of your lawn better than you take care of the things of God. You realize that some of you spend more money on dog food a month than you do giving to the work of God. You realize that some of you take better care of your house.

I mean, did you ever see somebody that buys a new house? Oh man, I am not fighting it. I am not fighting it, but I watch it all the time. You walk through that house and you make sure that it has got enough closet space. You like the curtain. "I do not like the curtain. First thing we are going to do is change..." How many times, "First thing we are going to do, change the curtains." You want to see the kitchen space. Women like the cabinets. Men want to check out the rec room. They look at it and you say, "Oh, I like the house, but the color coordination is terrible." You want to see the bedroom because it is called a master bedroom and you are the master. It has got a two-car, three-car garage. Does it have a garage? Does it have a basement? Does it have a swimming pool? You divide all this stuff up in your mind. You say, "I want lots of trees. I want lots of room. It is my dream house."

Now I am not fighting any of that, but I am telling you this. The example in the Bible over there back there in 1 Kings, you know, where Solomon, who was the wisest man that ever lived. You know what started his downfall? Everybody thinks it was the women he hung out with. Well, they certainly contributed to it, but what started his downfall is found in 1 Kings 7. You know what it was? It is when he spent more time building his house than he did building the house of the Lord. It tells you in 1 Kings 7:1, he spent seven years building God's house, but he spent 13 years building his.

Now I love planet Earth and I love living down here, but I have got to be honest with you. My dream house is not at 8308 Woodson Drive, but it is coming. It is coming. That was the problem with Haggai. Remember we studied the book of Haggai. We talked about the fact that they had not built to finish God's house. The reason why they had not finished it the second time around is because everybody is taking the things that were designed to go into God's house and they are putting it in their own. Common problem today. I am not fighting it, but you cannot read that, man. I am just looking at that thing and it says, "We also know that," he said down there, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, not made with hands in heaven. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." You are going to get a new house. I never understood why you could get so excited about a physical thing. I am not saying you should not get excited, but not more than the house that is coming. You spend half as much time dealing with the body in the house that God has given you that you are living in, fixing it up, doing what is right with it, as the house that you live in. You would be another D.L. Moody.

Back to verse 2.

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

You ever watch what people groan about? The verse says we had... there is nothing wrong with being a groaner. People groan about things all the time. People say you should not groan. No, you should groan. As a child of God, you ought to groan about the things that you do not get done for God that you want to get done, like the first six things I talked about, the things that take away from what God has for us. That is what you ought to groan about, but oh no, no, no, no, no, not us. No, no, we groan about what we do not have. You will groan this afternoon on the way home. Oh yes, you will. Do not you lie to me. You will groan about the message today. "Well, I

do not think I like that." You will groan about other people. Some of you will groan about the preacher. You will groan about your job. Some of you kids will groan about your parents. Some of you will groan about the injustices that have been done to you. Some of you will groan about the fact that I do not have... Facebook and MySpace and outer space and your brainless place is a great thing to see people groan.

I am not kidding. I do not get on it. I do not have a MySpace. I do not have any of that stuff. I do not want anything to do with it. I think it is all demonic. If you have got it, that is all you are okay with yours. I just do not care about it. I do not have the time for it. If some of you took the time you spent on MySpace and Facebook and putting that Book, you would be a theologian. But people send me stuff. Somebody sent me something here a while back about somebody was whining and groaning because they did not have any friends. I am thinking to myself, first of all, who would want to be your friend? You are the most negative person I ever met. You are always whining about what you do not have. You do absolutely nothing for God. The Bible says, "He that hath friends must show himself friendly." We think you are sitting in a lot of people do that. I have had people that, in my past, I have had it in this church, but I have had people in my past that went into the hospital and did not tell me they were going into the hospital just so they could groan about the fact that Bob never came to see me. Like I am supposed to be there, and it is nine o'clock at night, and I am saying, "Show was in the hospital. Yes, I got it. Lord. He is in the hospital room 244. Give me a break."

People will set you up. People... I have had people not come to church just so they will see if I will call, find out where they are at. The problem is I know why you are not at church, and I do not bother calling you. Somebody said one time years ago, I had the same problem back then as I have now. I would not do this today. I am much more cultured than I was back then. Somebody came up and said, "I have not been to church for three weeks, and you have not even asked where I have been." I said, "That is because you do not do anything." "What?" I said, "I do not need you here. We already filled your seat three weeks ago." He did not like it. Of course, the fact that he did not do anything was irrelevant. That is the way people are, but they do not listen. They do not listen.

You take all this veneer and this nice smile and all this Brad Pitt's looks and take it all away. I want to tell you something. You have got a man with a mission. You have got a man who has got one thing he thinks about morning, noon, and night, and every time in between that is getting the job done for the Lord before He gets back. That is all I care about. You do not care about that. I love you, but... let us just move on here. Listen. I said it again. You are not going to listen. Of course you will not, but you better listen to what God says and then apply it to your life. When you listen to it, it will solve every problem you have got. It is okay to groan and moan. Just do it when you do not do what is right with God, not when you do not get what you want.

I look at verse 3.

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

From what this chapter and other passages indicate, it is this: that when we stand before the Lord at that Bema Seat or Judgment Seat, some of God's people are going to stand there naked. This is

the fear. If you read down the chapter, this is what Paul is afraid of. He is concerned over this. He has been talking about groaning and having a desire to be clothed and not found naked. Now we will get into all of this when it comes in the coming weeks, and I want to break that all down. But today I want you to... I want to look into Chapter 5 in the intro. I want to explain to you the difference. I want you to have this in your mind, the difference between the doctrinal side of the Judgment Seat and the practical side.

Let us talk about the doctrinal side first. I know that at my point of salvation and your point of salvation too, when I got saved and you got saved, the Bible says over and over again that God clothed us in His righteousness. In Isaiah 61:10, it is called the garments of salvation. This is a picture of what happened to Adam and Eve back in the garden. It is a picture of it. Before they fell and sinned, they were naked and in innocence. But once they fell, then they knew they were naked. The first thing they did was to go out and try to cover that nakedness, making themselves aprons of fig leaves. Now that is a picture of your nakedness of your sin and then man by his own good works, trying to cover his own nakedness by something that he does. God said, "That is not going to work." So God said, "Dump those suckers," and made them coats of skin. In Isaiah 61, it calls them garments of salvation, and He clothed their nakedness by the innocence of an animal, probably a lamb, dying and covering their nakedness. That is what happened when you got saved, doctrinally.

You see my own righteousness, my clothing, the Bible says in Isaiah 64:6, was like filthy rags. But that day I got a new garment to wear, and praise God, we got a robe of righteousness. Now I am God's child, and from a Bible theological doctrinal standpoint, I am now already seated in heavenly places, and I am covered by God's righteousness eternally. In your Bible, if you want to get down a little deeper, and we have talked about this before, this is called your standing in Christ, Romans 5:1-2 and Galatians 5:1. You see that is your new nature. Right now if you are saved, your soul is clothed in God's righteousness, doctrinally, eternally.

But then we have got a practical side. Everything in the Bible is going to have a doctrinal and a practical side. Kevin, you texted me the other night about a question about a husband and a wife. I did not answer you back because I do not do Bible questions on text, otherwise my phone would have just self-destructed. I cannot... I missed that one back. I just found out last week how to go back. I thought you had to start the whole text over when you made a mistake. But the answer to your question is, this is a practical side of that, and there is a doctrinal side of that. I will help you with it after a while. There is a practical side and there is a doctrinal side. Almost everything in the Bible is that way.

But after salvation, the Bible says, now here comes the practical, Ephesians 2:10,

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

You see that? You are created by God for good works. There is your practical side. Oh yeah, you were clothed in heavenly places with a robe of righteousness doctrinally when you got saved. Absolutely. That is salvation. But the practical side is God saved you to be His workman, and He

saved you that you are under good works. Then you see what He says down there in that verse, not only are you saved for good work, but you are to walk in them. That is the ministry.

Then Titus 3:8 says, after salvation,

*This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*

You see it again? He says, "Now after you get saved, here is the practical side, have you believed?" Let me ask you a question. You can say amen. How many of you believed in God this morning? Amen? All right. Well, the Bible says, if you believe, then He says there, "Be careful to maintain good works." Do you? Certainly you do not. Most of God's people do not. You know why? Because you do not listen. You do not listen. You are going to wind up with a Judgment Seat of Christ, and you are going to lose everything you have. In the weeks to come, I am going to show you how fundamentally, absolutely, basically simple it is to show up at the Judgment Seat of Christ and have everything God could want. But you know what? You will not listen. You will not listen. So therefore you will lose everything.

Paul talked about it in 1 Corinthians 3. He says, the day you get saved, you lay a foundation, and you build upon that foundation. He said, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth." He said, "You are to be a wise master builder." In other words, you are to build on the foundation the day you got saved. Most of God's people never build a thing on the foundation after they get saved.

What I am about to tell you here, this is going to take up all the room in my tombstone, but this is worth a lot of money. In being a Christian, I almost said, "and listened to me," but in being a Christian, in your life, you just do not build something, but you build toward something. What you are building toward is the day you stand before God and you give back to Him what He had given for you. But you are not going to get it.

So as a Christian concerning your body at the Judgment Seat of Christ, you have a doctrinal side that is your standing, clothed in God's righteousness eternally. Then you have a practical side. In Philippians 4:11, we have talked about this before. This is your state. This is your walk with God. This is what God saved you for. You are to walk in good works. You are to be in the ministry to do what God wants you to do. When you get to the Judgment Seat of Christ, things you did for God will make the clothes you have and wear.

You ever read Proverbs 31? That virtuous woman was a picture of the church. You know what she is doing with her hands? She is making clothes. Paul says in verse 4, he is groaning again.

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

You know, this is a great message for questions. What burdens you today? I already asked you what you groan about. But what burdens you today? I know the standard answer, "Well, I am burdened for souls." Really? When is the last time you won one to Christ? That is a cheap answer. Answers are cheap. It is like when you tell your wife, you love her. You know what she

says? "That is just talk." Love is not a word. Love is an action. Ministry is not a word. It is an action. When you are burdened about it, you come to the place where it consumes you. I am not saying you get a robe, shave your head, and get little things on your fingers and go out to the airport where the other hairy Christian is. I am saying there is always a balance in your life, but your life is about the mission God has saved you for. That is what you do. Nothing else gets in the way. Nobody else gets in the way either. But you are not going to listen to me.

Paul groans for that new body that Christ might come, but he is groaning that he might be clothed. He is afraid he will not be. Now I have got to tell you something. This really bothers me. If a guy like Paul was afraid he would not be clothed, where are you and I at in this? But you know what? It does not bother you at all. If somebody offered you Royals tickets on a Sunday morning, you would snap those things so fast and be gone. You would not even think twice about it. You would not even care if we had some special Sunday or had this or had that. It would be, "Look what I got." I am not saying you should not go to the Royals game. I am saying you should not go on Sunday morning. I am just saying. I am not sure what I am saying, but I am saying it.

Paul groans that his new body might be clothed. But God's people, as I said, over the next few weeks will again and again take apart this great subject. We will look at these things.

## VII. The Tragedy of a Life Without God's Guidance

My final thoughts, and I am going to be done today. I am going to be done even earlier today. Maybe not. I like to read. I was reading this week, and as I read it, I really got troubled over it. It really bothered me. It almost like it descended on me. It just... I started out with one attitude reading this, and then suddenly I guess the reality of what I was reading sunk in, and I made the application to it. Then it really, really, really bothered me.

I was reading a story about Bertrand Russell. He was a British philosopher. He died in 1970. He was born 1877, a little long time, but he was a writer. He was a mathematician. He was somewhat of a historian, but he was what you would classify all around as a social critic. He looked at society and critiqued it in his own viewpoint. He was a pacifist, so he was against war. He would be classified today as what we know as a liberal today. He was totally against God, Bible, and Christianity. In his writings, he championed humanistic ideas, much like the liberals do today. He actually won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950. He was awarded that prize for his great writings on the freedom of man's thinking, freedom of thought.

As I read this thing, I read in his book that he wrote, \*Man's Free World\*. I did not read the book. It was... I was reading some things about him, and this was in here. In that, he stated his view of life, and it was incredible. Here is a man who lived most of his life, 93 years of age, without God, thinking that he was his own God, that man made the place a better place to live. He philosophized about everything, no God. He could not see God in history. He could not see God in math. He could not see God in society. He could not see God in war and understand war. He could not see anything about God in the Bible. After 93 years, this is what he summed up life on planet Earth to be. He said this, and I thought this was amazing:

The life of man is a long march through the dark of night, tortured by weariness and pain toward a goal that very few will ever attain or hope to reach, but a march through the darkness in which none can tarry or stop.

When I read that, I thought to myself, that is one of the greatest remarkable descriptions of the life of a man without God. At that point, it is when it hit me, and it really bummed me out. Yet I thought to myself, you know what, that is the same description of 99% of most of God's people. Life for you is just a long march through total darkness. Is it not? There is never any light at the end of the tunnel. You just go from the proverbial frying pan to the fire. You just go from one problem to another. Life for you is endless. It is a torture of what? Disappointment, discontentment, broken relationships, broken marriages, lost kids. It turns into depression. It turns into anxiety, which turns you to drugs, which turns you to alcohol. It is an endless cycle of problems and issues. The goals of your life become dashed to pieces on the rocks of this old world. Yet day after day after day, the drudgery of that life goes on.

All because you will not listen. All because God has an alternative program for you, but you just will not listen. He has got a solution for every issue you face. He has got an answer for every problem you are up against, but you just will not listen. Then after a life of misery and failure and heartache, then you meet God face to face. There you face the shame and embarrassment of losing everything you could have had simply because, yes, you would not listen and you had to do it your way.

## VIII. Final Plea: Listen and Live for God

The mark of a successful Christian, and I have said it many, many times, is simply a man or a woman who gets saved and then does the rest of their life what God has called them to do. That would be ministry in a New Testament local church. It is giving back to Him for all He has given to us. 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 says,

*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

You see, He gave it all up for us. He did. This is what you will not listen to. He gave it all up for you and me. He gave it all up for you. You know what your problem is today? I love you. All these things we talked about today are absolutely the truth. This is why I did not want to preach it. I get so frustrated about the Judgment Seat of Christ because I look at you here, I see the potential you have, I see what you could do, and I know you are going to throw it all away. It simply comes down to the fact that you will not listen. He gave everything up for you, and you will give nothing up for Him. There lies your problem.

The Judgment Seat of Christ in its basic, most simple form from the practical side is you and me standing there, recognizing what He did for me, and then becoming a man with a mission. Becoming a man or a woman that none of your godless friends, Christian or non-Christian, are going to keep you from fulfilling it. Your own worst enemy you are going to put at bay. Your very worst enemy you are going to keep at bay. You know who that person is? It is you. You are going to strap it down under the principles of the Word of God. You are going to get in that

Book. You are going to learn. You are going to realize that there are people in Christianity and there are people in this church that simply you say, "You know what, I like you and you are a nice person. But you and I are not on the same wavelength. If I hang out with you, I am going to become like you, and I do not want to be like you." But you will not listen.

Forty-some years in the ministry, if somebody would ask me what is the number one thing God's people will not do, that answer was so fast and so quick: it is that they will not listen. You will not. We are just like Israel. You are caught up in all you have got and all you want. When your problems come into your life, when somebody dies or somebody gets sick, oh, it is then, "Pull on the heartstrings of God. Help me, help me." Then you go right back to your old self-serving ways, and God is relegated to the closet. That is God's people today. If I did not see my own self in that and have to deal with that every day of my life, I would have no place for you. But I understand we are all human. We all make mistakes. Because you do not do what is right with the Word of God does not give me the right not to.

So next week we will preach on the Judgment Seat of Christ. We will take every aspect of it apart. Somebody will say after the message today, "Well, you already said they will not listen." I am not doing it for the people that do not listen. I will do it for the one or two that will listen, because there is coming a day when God is probably going to have to do something in His church. It is going to make everybody fish and cut bait. For me, do not take it personal. I have a job to do. If you are on board with that job, I love you to death. If you are a young Christian here, I am not even talking to you. If you are a visitor today, I am not talking to you. I will work, spend whatever time it takes to get you where you need to be.

But let us be honest today in lieu of the Judgment Seat of Christ. Can we be honest? Can we talk today? There are some of you God's people in here been here four, five, six, seven years, you do not give a flying flip about the ministry. I love you. I love you. I love you to death. But I do not want you in my foxhole. I just should take a big old German shepherd down there and hold off the line. But that is the way it is. It would not change. Whatever church it would be, it would not change. You know why? Because that is where God's people are today. I have told you this the way I told you today, try to make it easy. Try to just talk to you, try to pour my heart out to you over something that frustrates the fire out of me, when I see some of you sit here today that I know the potential you have, and you are just going to keep it for yourself. Done.

Let us pray. Father, Thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We do love You. Thank You for that Book. Lord, let everything that I said today be taken in the spirit by which I said it. I love these people.