

2 Corinthians 5:12-16

Sunday 8/26/2012

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want to invite you to turn back to the book of 2 Corinthians chapter 5. For those of you who are visiting with us today, we are coming through the book of 2 Corinthians. We know that the book of 2 Corinthians in the Bible is really the handbook for ministry, and we are really trying to focus on learning the ministry. We are about to embark into a major campaign after the first of the year, taking some people who want to really get heavily indoctrinated with the principles of working one-on-one with people. Some people would call it biblical counseling, but basically it is just getting in and knowing the principles of how to deal with the issues of life that people find themselves in. We are doing it in conjunction with what we are doing in the book of 2 Corinthians. Chapter by chapter, you learn and build upon everything that you need to know.

Last week, we finished our study on the judgment seat of Christ. We are dealing in chapter 5, and chapter 5 is all about our perspective of ministry. Certainly, the perspective we should have in everything that we do for the Lord should be in the light of that day when we stand before the Lord Jesus Christ. I have to tell you, I think probably that was the most practical, comprehensive study of it I ever did in dealing with this subject. Over the years, I have preached on it many, many times in depth. I taught it when people asked questions on it, a Bible study on Thursday night over the years. I know myself at least eight or nine times I have taught the seven judgments and taught it there. But this was probably as complete as it could ever be that I could do it anyhow, laying out both chapters of 1 Corinthians 3 and 2 Corinthians 5, which really form the definitive chapters on the subject. We laid them out parallel, side by side, week after week, two weeks in a row. Then we added all the other material and basically saw how the chapters really complete themselves in this great study. So you should have it now and should have it in your Bible, and it should be broken down the way I broke it down for you in a very easy format.

Today, I want to move into the next section in this great chapter, and I want to deal with our perspective on ministry as a child of God from another aspect. I told you that chapter 5 of the book of 2 Corinthians deals with our perspective of ministry. In this chapter, you deal with three key perspectives that we should have. When you start to come through chapter 5, which deals with our perspective of ministry, you find that this chapter details out the three perspectives we should have. We already talked about the first one, and the first one was we ought to have a perspective of the judgment seat of Christ.

Today, we are going to talk about the second perspective, and that is the ministry itself. There are some things if you are going to do the ministry, you need to know about the ministry. I am not just interested in teaching you how to minister; you have to know and understand what the ministry is all about. There are some things that you need to understand about it, some things that will happen in your life that you need to be prepared for. Then the third perspective that we will get into next week, which will close out this chapter, is the perspective of ourselves, how we need to view ourselves in light of everything that God says about us and certainly what He has done for us.

Today, we are going to move into 2 Corinthians 5:12-16. Again, there is some great practical material here in dealing with people as you learn the ministry. My goal as we are doing this is to get you as much experience as I can, helping you get hands-on with people. I told somebody this week that people, when they come in, are not always going to make it. Many people have problems that they are just not going to do what they need to do. I never look at people with problems, and no matter how drastic they may be, I never not try to help them.

I told somebody this week that there are many times that someone comes to me and they say, "I have this problem, this problem, and this problem." When you put it all together, the problems are staggering. I know in my mind, just from experience, that there is a good chance this person is not going to make it. Not because God cannot do it, but because their life is so complicated, and they are so undisciplined and so unstructured, there just is not any way they are going to overcome that. But in spite of that, I still give them one, two, or three people to work with to help them.

I told this person this week that there are many times that when I put somebody with somebody to work, or a couple of you to work with somebody, in the back of my mind—and I would never say this to you or that person—but in the back of my mind, I say, "This is going to be really, this is going to be akin to the Red Sea Crossing if this person makes this." But it does not matter because what I want to do is get you as much experience as I can. You will learn as much from people that do not make it as you do from people that do make it. In ministry, not everybody is going to make it. You cannot walk around only looking at the aspect of all the good things that happen when they make it. There are good things that come out of it when they do not make it for you, not for them. They will continue on in their path of making more bad choices and having more problems in their life. Hopefully, someday they will turn the corner on it.

It does not matter from the aspect that you get the experience. You get the ability to have your feelings pulled and stretched, your emotions stretched, use the biblical principles, and you get to the point where you get the experience of learning how to develop yourself. That is really what I want. Developing you is the number one thing that I have to do. The rest will take care of itself. I cannot make people do what is right. So when people come in, I look at it, "Well, I hope you make it. We will do everything we can to give you the best chance we can." But you know as well as I do, when it is all said and done, it is what you decide you are going to change about your life that is going to make the difference. But whether you change the right thing or choose to do the right thing or the wrong thing, the people working with you are going to get valuable education from it in dealing and developing in themselves. That is my goal. My goal is to develop you. My goal is not to fix everybody's problem because I have learned that if I focus on developing you, the problems of people's lives who want to get fixed will certainly get fixed. It is just that simple. Many times people focus on the wrong things.

I. The Apostle Paul's Example in Ministry

Getting the experience and learning how to develop yourself is really key. I want to begin to read 2 Corinthians 5:12-16, and then I want to talk about some great practical things here that Paul was going through. I love the Apostle Paul. My father in the Lord, Mel Sabaka, who went home

to be with the Lord right around Christmas this year, that was his favorite character in the Bible. He loved the Apostle Paul. Though I have several favorite characters in the Bible, the Apostle Paul and his life and what he went through dealing with people has probably taught me more about the ministry than any other aspect. I have many heroes in the Bible, and each of them teaches me a different aspect of the ministry, but Paul will teach you some incredible things.

For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

Let us pray. Father, help us today to glean out of here what You have for us. Thank You for those that have come today. Lord, I pray that as the weeks go by and we get closer to the first of the year, that You have touched the heart of these people. I have not asked who it is. I have not asked who wants to. Lord, I want that to be the surprise that You give me. Maybe it will be 40, maybe it will be 50, maybe it will be 5. It does not matter. Whatever You give me out of this group that really wants to fine-tune themselves and be part of the working ministry of this church, that is really what I will be satisfied with, because I know in this particular case it will certainly be of You. Thank You now for today. We pray You bless us as we come on down through here. Lord, I pray that You will help these kids get experience, help develop them, and help them to learn by the things that You teach us all. In Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it, Amen.

We are reminded of a great aspect of the ministry here that Paul is up against in this passage. It is going to be the aspect again of people's adverseness to truth. You would expect unsaved people to be against the truth because they live in darkness and not in light. But the Bible says that once we get saved, we leave darkness and we enter into light. Light is always connected with the Word of God. You would think that God's people would never have an issue of being adverse toward truth, but it is, and they do many, many times.

He says in 2 Corinthians 5:12, "For we commend not ourselves again unto you." The church at Corinth in every way is a picture of churches today. It is what you have in just about any church today, I do not care where it is. I teach you many, many times how the church at Antioch in Acts 12 and 13 is really the model church. You can take that church and study it, look at it, and you can just about find exactly what we should be as a church. But the model church for not being what we should be is the church at Corinth. You have to have them both. You have to know what is the right thing to do, and then you have to know what the wrong thing is so you can keep it out and see it.

Thus it will be in any church, no matter how biblical it is. Over my years in the ministry, I have seen many, many good churches, but I have never seen a church, no matter how biblical it was, that did not have this element in it. It just comes with the territory. It really does not matter what Bible you use. It does not matter how many ministers you have or how many people's lives get changed. It does not matter how many people get saved. You will have people, God's people, who just like with Paul, who we are going to talk about today, will resist the preaching of truth. The same crowd that we are beginning to talk about here in 2 Corinthians 5, the same crowd who dogged Paul all through the book of 1 Corinthians and was demanding his credentials and who he was. It was demanding, in 2 Corinthians 3, that he would prove who he really was. The same crowd is at it again, and it just dogged him all the way through.

II. Challenges of Ministry and Leadership

Some of you guys at some point down the line, if the Lord tarries His coming, you will probably go out of here and maybe be a pastor yourself. Many of you will stay here and work this ministry for the rest of your life, and that is good, but it is only a matter of time before God legitimately calls and puts in somebody's heart to go out and do a work. Even if you never do, you need to learn these things that I have learned over the years, many of them by hard mistakes, but many of them just by watching and seeing what happens. I want to give you a great piece of advice when it comes to ministry in churches. 1 and 2 Corinthians are just filled with these great principles.

If you ever start a church, there is a great advantage of starting your own church from scratch, from nothing, over taking a church that somebody else has already started. Young guys do not look at the depth of things. They do not have a real base for understanding a lot of things. So, it is a lot of work starting a church from nothing. But I am telling you, you get the idea that you see a church with 100 people in it already to go, or 200 people in it. The pastor passes off the scene for whatever reason, and there is an opportunity for you to take that. It looks like many times, "Wow, that is a lot better deal. Here is a building already. Here are people already. Here is everything ready to go." You would think, you would look at that and think that that is the best deal. But I am here to tell you today that that is not always the best deal.

Building on what somebody else started is always a hard thing to do. It is never easy because you inherit some things. Many times, you inherit tremendous debt. Many times, the church is upside down in what it owes because the people before, the pastor, has made some really bad decisions. Now he is not leaving because, oh, he may say he is leaving because God has called him to. He is scooting out of town because he left the church upside down. Many times, there are church problems that you inherit. There are families that had issues or have issues, and they do not like what goes on. You have no knowledge of that. You are deluded. You think, "Wow, because I get an opportunity to take this church, I am walking in. Everybody is going to love the Bible." You are soon going to find that fallacy is not true.

You inherit the deacons and the leaders. Many times, those deacons and leaders, they have power bases that they formed that have been around much longer than you have when you come in. Sometimes you have past relationships with the old pastor, good and bad. I come out of the Canton Baptist Temple in Canton, Ohio. That was Dr. Harold Henniger's church. Dr. Harold

Henniger started that church right around 1946. My mom and dad were charter members in that church. He stayed with that church right up till he retired, probably somewhere in the 80s, I guess it was. He was the only pastor they ever knew. When he retired, he obviously tried to give it to his oldest son. That did not work. They had a lot of problems over that. A lot of people did not appreciate the idea that he was just handing something to his son that he had worked on, and they wanted something other than that. That was a disaster.

Then they brought in another pastor. But here is what happened. This church was running probably at that time, 2,000 people. They brought in another man that was the pastor, but Dr. Henniger never left the church. He stayed in the church no longer as the pastor, but he stayed in the church. You know how that is going to work. Every time the pastor up there makes a decision, everybody looks at him to see if he approves of it. Now, I do not know the guy's heart. I probably should not say this, but I cannot tell you when you say it about him. But some guys like that. Some guys like sticking around just so that you can basically say it without saying, making a statement without making a statement. But by staying, you are making a statement that, "I am not the pastor anymore, but I really know more about it than he does, but I am going to let him do it. But if you have any real problems, you can come to me." That never works.

After a while, this guy left, and they went for three and a half years that they could not find a pastor. Three and a half years simply because nobody wanted to do with it because it was just a very bad scenario. I have a young man right now. That is one of my boys that I trained over the years to preach. He called me a couple of weeks ago. In fact, they visited a church here just a couple of weeks ago, and he is down in the South. He took a church that was somebody else's church. He has been in that church for nine years. He is calling me on the phone saying, "Look, I want to get this church on some areas in that they need to believe that are not right. That has been lingering in this church, but I have got some real opposition to it." Now he has been in a church nine years, nine years he has been in this church. Just now getting to the place where he can indoctrinate them to what the truth is because of all the goofy stuff they believed. Many, many times you have to go nine to ten years before you just get even. So at the end of the day, I am not sure it is any easier doing it that way.

I think in many cases, it is harder when you take over. When you start your own work, it is your church. It is your work. You build it your way by God's guidance. You make and correct your own mistakes. Every pastor is going to make mistakes when he gets into the ministry, but I will give you some good advice. It is a lot easier to correct your own mistakes than to correct the mistakes that somebody else has made. In fact, it is impossible. You teach and preach and raise up fresh leadership instead of trying to change stale old leadership. That is hard to do. In many cases today, it is probably impossible.

If I were to take another church tomorrow, if somebody, I thought it was of the Lord, and that is what God wanted me to do, and that church said, "We would like to have you come," and I felt like God said, "This is what you do," the first stipulation I would give them: every deacon, every leader, and every elder, everybody steps down out of position, and we start clean. If they would not do it, I would not take it because I know the problems that you get into. Every president, when he comes into term, he takes over from the last president. The first thing he does, he fires

everybody and puts in his own people. Now I am not saying you go in and fire everybody, but you have to have the ability that it has got to be a match.

I say that because that is what Paul did all of his life. Paul tells us in Romans 15:22, and it is a good piece of advice. Paul himself would never build on another man's foundation. He tells you that in Romans 15:22 because he knew that it did not work in most cases. Paul is an evangelist. He is not a pastor. Back in those days, it was a biblical evangelist. Not somebody that went in and just hosed the crowd and preached for a week, but he went in and actually started churches from scratch, like I am talking about. He started churches from scratch. He stayed there for a couple of years, trained up some leadership, put a pastor in, and then moved on and started up another one. But he was smart enough to know that you cannot build on another man's foundation. It does not work very, very often. Even in doing it his way, where he trained his own people, brought up his own leadership, took it from nowhere and brought it to somewhere, there is still going to be opposition, just not as much. You can certainly control it and deal with it in a much better way. It is just better when you and your family start the church instead of you starting it and people joining you, instead of you going and joining them.

III. The Moral Root of Opposition to Truth

We see here that people are going to have an adversity toward truth. It just comes and happens. Anytime somebody has an aversion toward truth, no matter what the reason, no matter what the truth is, anytime that somebody is going to have opposition toward truth that is being preached, the problem is going always be a moral issue. There always will be a moral issue, something wrong spiritually in that person's life. Because we, as God's people, are to embrace truth. The Bible says that men love darkness rather than light. Why? Because their deeds were evil. They have a moral issue. We ought to walk in the light as He is in the light, having fellowship one with another. Why? Because we ought to embrace truth, which is light.

You are going to find that there are some real common things that you see that people get their nose bent out of joint about in churches, that adversity to truth. Some people think they do not get as much recognition as they think they should have, so it causes them a problem. Some people want more power or more position, so it is a problem. People think that there are many people that I have heard this all my life. People come to church and they say, "Well, I did not care for it because he preaches too hard." Somebody says, "Well, Bob, they did not like it because you preach too hard." Yeah. Over on the other side, there is somebody else sitting over there saying, "He does not preach hard enough."

If there is one thing you learn about ministry that you have to get down, it is you cannot please everybody when it comes to ministry. You just cannot. Some people will like what you do. Other people will not like what you do. Some people will question your motive. Some people will question your integrity. Some people will question your honesty. Some people will read your attitude of heart and tell you what you are doing when that is not even why you are doing what you are doing. It is just the way it goes.

There is an old story I heard years ago that I think probably is the greatest story that sums up the ministry. These are things you have to learn. A man and his boy were going to town and taking their mule to town to get some groceries. They had about five or six miles to walk to town, had a good strong, sturdy mule. So the man puts the boy up on the mule, and then he gets on the mule himself, and both of them are riding into town. When they go about a half a mile, they come up on a guy out there working in his yard, and he looks over and he says, "Well, that is the stupidest thing I ever saw. Two grown guys riding upon that poor old mule." Well, they looked at each other and thought, "Well, we do not want to cause any problem with the neighbor." So they both got off, and the dad, he took the boy and put the boy on the mule. They walked down another quarter of a mile, and somebody else was out working in the yard, and they said, "Now look at that. Look at that worthless kid riding on that mule while his poor old daddy has to walk." So they got that, "Well, we do not want to have any more problem than we have to have." So they switched. The boy walked, and the man got on the mule. So they went about another quarter of a mile, and somebody else was out there, and the guy said, "Now look at that. Look at that dad making his boy walk while he is riding that mule." So when they finally got to town, the man and the guy were carrying the mule.

You cannot please everybody. You just cannot. In ministry, you just simply cannot please anybody. Lack of leadership is trying to please everybody. Lack of leadership is the fact that you try to please everybody. Leaders just lead. I will give you a great example, and I hear it all the time, and it is just the way it is. We have softball and we have volleyball. We are always trying to decide where we are going to go to eat. We have about two choices that really accomplish what we want to accomplish because to me it is not about eating. It is about having a place where you can go, where everybody can be, that new people can fellowship with new people. I do not care what they have. There have been many times that I just went to be there with the people. But somebody will say, "Well, we are going to Pappy's this year." "Oh, I hate Pappy's." I am not crazy about Pappy's either. Somebody says, "We are going to Jason's Deli." "Oh, we are going there again." We used to go to Funhouse Pizza out there in Lee's Summit, and we outgrew that place. Wherever you decide to go, you just always are going to have somebody that says, "I do not like that place." Somebody else says, "Oh, that is my favorite place." "I hate that place. A lot of pizza is no good." You just cannot deal with that. You just say, "Here is where we are going. I see you, I see you. Get it together. It is not about what you eat or where you eat. It is about the people you are going there to minister to." Thank you. Now I do not want to hear any more complaining about where we go to eat.

In ministry, you simply cannot please everybody. So you know what? You do not try. You just preach the truth and let it fall. You are going to have people, as we are seeing here with Paul. This is something you need to learn. If you are going to work with people, truth will always produce adversity. Paul is experiencing all of this. You will too when you get into the aspect of ministry. This is why this second section is dealing with our perspective on ministry. Our ministry, you are going to have the opposition. Sure, the sun is coming up tomorrow. You remember in 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians 3, the old crowd of Christians are at it again. They are bringing back into question here Paul's authority to do and to say what he is doing. That is really the subject of 2 Corinthians 5:12. At this point, Paul is not going there anymore. He is not

dealing with it again. What he had to answer in chapter 3, he is not again going to go through all the accusations and all the cheap shots that were taken at him. He simply at this point stays focused on the job that God has called him to do, and that is building people and building a church.

Years ago, so much of my life in ministry was forged by my father in the Lord, Mel Sabaka. He was really in my early years, laid the foundation, taught me great concepts of ministry. I would watch him go through many of the things that I experience today and have for 35 years in ministry. Watch what some of you go through. I watch you struggle when you work with people just as I struggled when I worked with people. I never, I watched him because you hear me talk about him, and if you could have been at his funeral, you would have found out 800 people there that, I mean, they were there. He was the Apostle Paul of their life, and he put so many young men in the ministry. But I have to tell you, not everybody liked Mel Sabaka. You only hear the good things I talk about him. There were plenty of people that did not like him because he preached the truth, and he preached the truth, and he did not really care what anybody thought about it.

I asked him one time, I said, and we were coming, I remember today, we were driving at night, we were driving back from Bridgeport, Ohio, and I was driving him down. I read music, I played the trumpet, he preached, and we were that little team we did together. We were driving back, and we would always talk, and it was my time to ask him questions about why things were the way they were. I will never forget this night. He was famous for taking great pieces of knowledge and condensing them down into one-liners. He was absolutely great at that. You could sum up his whole life in ministry in about 30 different one-liners that he said.

I asked him coming back, I said, "Mel," I said, "You know, I am inside. I watch what goes on. I watch the people that you train, the young men and the young ladies that are part of your ministry. But," I said, "but I also see, you know, 40, 50 people out here that they come, but they do not ever, they do not ever do anything. They do not ever get involved in anything." I said, "You never change your message. You try to help everybody. You are there for them as much as you are for the others. What is your philosophy about that? How do you look at that?" I have a tendency to think that, "Well, if they are not over here for us, then they are against us." I said, "And he said, and I said, I am not sure that is right." He says, "Well, it is not." I said, "Well, how do you look at it?" He gave me one of the greatest one-liners that I have never forgotten in my life. It really forged my whole concept of working with people. He looked over at me and he says, "Bob, you always build the best, and then you forget the rest." He says, "You never lose sight of what God has given you in men and women who want to learn everything they can." He says, "Bob, you cannot make somebody want truth. You cannot make somebody love truth." The real definition of loving truth, he said, was when that truth is pointing three fingers back at you that you are not doing what is right. "Do you still love it then?" I never forgot that.

He loved everybody, and he would do anything for anybody, but he realized what Paul is talking about here, that there comes a point where you cannot stay focused on the ones who do not want to do what is right because you will lose sight. I learned early in my ministry, and I carry it with me every day today. I want to help everybody, and I will do for anybody who wants to do what is

right, whatever needs to be done, but I am not going to spend all of my time and take it from the people who want to do what is right, chasing people who simply do not want to get caught. A lot of God's people all through Christianity, they wear a sign on their back. They had to have it tattooed on their forehead. It simply says, "Catch me if you can." He refused to do that, and I refused to do that. Paul refused to do that.

Paul says, "We are made manifest unto God, and I trust also we are made manifest in your conscience." That is a great truth. He says, "Do not get sidetracked with any of it. People get truth. It is not the fact that they do not get the truth. It is the fact that they are adverse to the truth they are getting." The Holy Spirit of God takes what you are doing and preaching and nails them. When I am manifested unto God in my preaching or any pastor, then that preaching is manifest unto you. By that, when you get convicted by it, you get convicted by it.

My mama used to say, she had a lot of one-liners too, and some of them I cannot tell you in public, but they were pretty good. But she told me one time, she said, "You know what, Bobby?" She says, "But I could not figure something out." She said, "You know what, if you are going down, we had an alley, you do not even have alleys today, a few of you do, but alleys are a bygone thing. We had an alley. It was really dark down there. We had a bunch of dogs in the neighborhood. Every time we took the trash out, the dogs would bark. They would be running up and down the alley." She said, "You remember that time we took the trash out down the alley and all those dogs would bark and they would not shut up?" I said, "Yeah." "And I threw a rock out there in the dark." She says, "I told you that that shut them up. And you asked me why, how I know it shut it up. And I told you because did not you hear the dog yelp?" You see, when you throw a rock in a dark alley, when all the dogs are barking, you know how you hit home? One of the dogs yelps. It is the dog that got hit. In the Bible says in preaching, that is all you are doing. You are all a dark alley out there. I am just throwing rocks this morning. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 3 that rock was Christ. When you are adverse to truth and the rock kicks you, what do you think you do? Just guess. You yelp. Now that is not psychology 101 taught at KU, but that will work. That will work.

You remember back in 2 Corinthians 4:2, in dealing with ministry all the way back in that last chapter, I told you in defining the ministry, two things the ministry was. One was not handling the word of God deceitfully. The second one was, here it comes, "commanding yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." That is simply preaching what is true. Somebody said one time, "The truth shall make you free." Yes, it will. But it will also drive you crazy when you do not like it and you cannot face it. That is exactly what is happening with Paul. That is why this chapter in this section is such a good definition of ministry because he is doing what God called him to do in preaching the truth and holding people accountable. That truth through him is manifesting itself in their conscience. Then it comes out on the other side as conviction. That is how it works.

Some of the people in the church at Corinth do not like it. When they do not like it, you have two options. One is you yield to the Holy Spirit of God and get right with God, or you sear your conscience, 1 Timothy 4:2, and you complain about it. That is what some of them are doing. Of

course, the problem could not be theirs. It has to be Paul. That is what he is dealing with. He says, "I am not going there again."

IV. Appearance Versus Heart

I want you to look at the last part of 2 Corinthians 5:12. Here is what he is really dealing with. Again, this is some great stuff. He says, "but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart." Paul was very careful that he never took credit for anything. He had one of the greatest experiences that a man could ever have. He was actually taken to heaven. We are going to study that in a couple of months when we get on down in 2 Corinthians. He was actually taken up to heaven. Could you imagine if you painted that on the side of a bus and put it on flyers, you could get it in every church you wanted to. When Paul wrote his account of what that took place, he will not even put himself in the first person when he does it. He says, "I knew a man." He will not get up there and say, "Well, let me tell you what happened to me, brother. You want to see some real power of God in a man's life? Let me tell you what God did with me." He will not do that. He says, "I knew a man." He is talking about himself. He is very careful never to glory in anything.

But here, let me tell you what he is saying here. He says, "but give you occasion to glory on behalf that you may have somewhat to answer them, which glory in appearance and not in heart." He is saying this about himself and his ministry, and anything Paul was saying here about himself or his ministry was said that the real leaders of the church could shut the mouths of the hypocrites that were attacking the church by attacking Paul. He uses a great term, a great phrase to describe them: "those who glory in appearance and not in heart." There is the problem right there.

Paul is the real deal. Paul, as he comes to this church, has the real life experiences, the ministry to back up what he is saying. He has been there. He has done it. I mean, come on. We know that he built seven churches. I am sure he built many, many more, but seven are listed in the Bible, probably tens of thousands of converts. But it is what I told you a couple of months ago. Those that do nothing will always criticize those who do something. This is what you have got. Paul has a, he knows the book better than anybody. He has built more people than this bunch all put together. But you notice Paul never attacks anybody. He just built churches. He builds people, and he preaches the truth. There is not one place in there where you see Paul ever going out after anybody. He will defend himself against some people, but his job was not to attack anybody because when you preach the truth, there is no attack to it. The truth does the job and does everything that it needs to do.

To some of God's people, appearance is everything. The reason why appearance is everything is because that is all they have got. They have no Bible. They have no ministry. They have no souls that they won to Christ. They have no ministry. They have no crown. They have no inheritance. It is all they have. In truth is that appearance is nothing. You see, we live in a Christianity where the bigger the church, the more beautiful the church, the more Gothic the church, people think the better it is. The larger the congregation, that is what everybody thinks that that is where God

must be. Hey, none of those things are proof of spirituality. Large churches, musical programs are not proof of spirituality.

The greatest example of what I call 20th and 21st century pastors in the Bible is found in a man named Saul in his life. When you go back and study his life, you will find that Saul was the exact picture of what Paul is talking about. By appearance, he was everything. He was taller than everybody else. He was charismatic. He was good looking. He could sway people with what he said. He was the king of Israel. He had everything going for him except character. When you study his life, I mean, when Goliath showed up, it should have been Saul who was the leader that went out and took Goliath on, but he would not. He sends out, he lets some little guy go named David, and Saul is hiding. The only thing that Saul will do will get close to the battle, will give this kid his armor, but Saul is not going to go himself. You are going to find in the life of Saul a great picture of 20th, 21st century preachers today. There are 10 comparisons between Saul's life to what you find today in Christians preaching and Christianity. It is an incredible insight into why we are in the mess we get. You know what else? We talked about the seven suicides a couple of weeks back. He is one of them, and he is a spiritual suicide.

These are great lessons for all of us. Being a deacon, being an elder, even being a pastor does not make you spiritual. Going to church, having the right Bible does not make you spiritual. 1 Samuel 16:7, going back to Saul and David when David was chosen as king. God told Samuel about appearance:

But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

That is why he says that there are people who glory in appearance and not in heart. Having the right heart toward God and His church and His word is the only proof of spirituality that we really have.

V. Motivation for Ministry

Now look at 2 Corinthians 5:13: "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God. Or whether we be sober, it is for your cause." Paul cared absolutely nothing about what people thought of him. When it came down to what people thought about his style of ministry, his preaching, and all through the Bible they are just ripping him up in every way, shape, or form. He could have cared less. What he did, he did based on what God had called him to do in Acts 9. What anybody thought of him or his ministry, it never stopped him for 10 seconds. All he was worried about, as I told you a couple of weeks ago in 2 Corinthians 5:9, was that he was accepted of Him. That is all he wanted.

He says, "Some of you think I am crazy." That is the word "beside ourselves." That is what it means. He says, "Some of you people look at me and you think I am crazy. Other people you look at me and you think I am sober." That does not mean he was drinking and had a drinking problem. Sober in the sense of doing what God has called him to do. He says, "We have a crowd of 150, a crowd of 100 people here today. Fifty of you think I am nuts. The other fifty of you

think what I am doing is what God wants me to do. You know what? I do not really care one way or the other." He did not care. He realized that when it came to truth, at some point in your life, you have to draw a line in the sand. This is where you have to stand. This is the truth that you stand for. He realizes that. He realized what my old father in the Lord said: "Nobody is going to like everything you do. Some people are going to love you. Some people are going to hate you. Some people are going to love to hate you. At the end of the day, train the best and forget the rest." That is what Paul follows here.

He says, "Others, if you think that I am doing what God wants me to do, being sober, you said, I do not care really what you think. I do not do what I do to please you." This is what he is telling them. "I do what I do for two reasons." Those two reasons are found in 2 Corinthians 5:13. Look at it. This is a great answer.

1. It is unto God.
2. It is for your cause.

That is all he cared about. He cared about first doing what God called him to do, and then he cared about building people second. I have a favorite phrase that I always throw out in counseling, and it is one of the premier rules that you will get. Many of you already know it. Probably most of you have heard it. It is simply this: "I want you to do right when you come in and you want help. I want you to do what is right. I want to help you. I will do whatever it takes. I will put as many people in your world. I will spend as much time with you as needs to be spent, but here is the bottom line. I do not want anybody doing right any more than they do." That is what Paul is saying. He says, "Hey, look," he says, "Some of you think I am beside myself. You think I am nuts. Some of you think I am doing what God wants me to do. I do not really care one way or the other. I am not doing this for you. One, I am doing it because God called me to do it. Two, I am doing it for your cause, that the people out there who want the truth will get the truth." Never let people who are adverse to truth keep you from getting truth to the people who want it. You better get that piece of advice and get it good.

Obviously, Paul cares about people. Look at the people in his life that he spent his time with, but he drew a line in the sand. He realized that these people in Corinth were wasting his time. He has got a job to do. Now they want to rehash one more time what they do not like about Paul. They want to ask one more time, "Could we see those letters of commendation for you again? Could you prove to us one more time, you are really God's man?" He is not going there this time. He is not going there.

Look at 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, two more great verses.

For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

There are two great things here. You notice how the first thing in 2 Corinthians 5:14, all this keeps going back to the cross. It keeps going back to Christ dying on the cross. Paul said it many,

many times. I have taught it when we studied the tabernacle, how the fire that lit the incense, which is a picture of prayer, the fire that lit the candlesticks, a type of the Holy Spirit of God, all those things, all that fire, they were lit off the fire of the brazen altar. The fire of the brazen altar is a picture of Christ dying on the cross. Let me tell you something. He is saying it. I say it all the time. If what you are doing for Christ right now and what you are doing for God ultimately does not go back for what He did for you on Calvary's cross and that be the driving motivation for everything you do, you are wasting your time. You are wasting your time.

He says, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. And he that died for all, they that which live should not live henceforth lives unto themselves, but unto him which died and rose again." It is a great truth. I think that is the number one problem that God's people have today. It really is two simple things. You get to the point, I get to the point where we are unthankful, and we get to the point where we forget what He did for us. Many people never do find out. I know the standard answers, but come on. But truth is, how do you build on that foundation that we talked about a couple of weeks ago, gold, silver, precious stones, and be so indifferent to the ministry? You see, there is the truth. The truth is you do not. You cannot have a mixture of both.

Then the second thing he says in 2 Corinthians 5:15, "If Christ died for you, and of course He did," he says, "and he that died for all, they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." Here is what he is saying. If Christ died for you, and He did, then we are not to live unto ourselves, but live unto the One who died for me and rose again. What is so confusing about that? See how simple that Bible is? People like to make salvation a really hard thing.

1 John 5:11-13

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

You want to talk about saved, heaven or hell? It is simple. We do not have to talk about this or that or what your experiences were. He takes the big complicated subject of salvation that man makes so complicated, and he boils it down to simply this: "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Who could not get that? Sitting here this morning, you either have the Son or you do not, and you do not have to pray about that. You do not have to look in the back of your Bible to find a date that you thought you were saved. You are sitting here this morning, you either have Him or you do not. How much simpler can it be? But that is the way God does it. It is man who makes it complicated. It is man who wants to add all these other things to make it more complicated. When it comes to salvation, it is simply this: you either got the Son or you do not.

When it comes to ministry and comes to being in fellowship with God and comes to doing what He says, he says the same thing. He says, "and he that died for all, they that which live should

not henceforth live unto themselves, but live to him which died for them and rose again." Christ died for you, you need to live for Him. How much simpler does it get? That is just where it is at. But you see, this is what people do not like about the Bible. This is why when a person starts to get out of fellowship with God, first thing they do is quit reading their Bible. Or they will read a daily bread, they will read a tract somewhere leaves in a bathroom, they will read this, they will even talk about spiritual things, but you will not open up the pages of this book. You know why? Because there is some simplicity of that book, and that Holy Spirit of God will convict your soul, and all you will get out of it.

Like I said a couple of weeks ago, when we are not doing what is right, it does not matter what message I preach, you only hear one or two questions being asked. If you are a lost person here today, I could preach on Noah's ark, I could preach on Daniel and the Lion's Den, I could preach on the great whore of Revelation 17 and 18, I could preach on the kids of Deck, I could preach on the fibber chef, I could preach on the life of Christ, I could preach anything, and all you are going to hear is, "You need to be saved, you need to be saved, you need to be saved." I could preach up here this morning on the Tabernacle. I could pick the most boring subject in the Bible that there is, if there is any, and I could spend hours just putting you to sleep, and I could talk about the different animals on the ark, I could talk about the universe, I could talk about all the great stuff, and all you hear if you are not right with God is, "Why are not you serving me after I died for you?" That is all you hear. That is why people say, "I do not like to go to church or Bible study anymore, you know, I just, it is just talking about the same thing." No, it is not talking about the same thing. We hardly ever talk about the same thing. It is because of the status you are in, you just hear the same thing. You are not going to get anything until you get past that. Why would God give you anything deep about Him until you first get your moral issue fixed? It is so simple. Christ died for you, you need to live for Him. What is your argument? There is none.

VI. Knowing Christ After the Flesh

Now look at 2 Corinthians 5:16: "Wherefore, because of what he just said. Henceforth, know we know man after the flesh." That looks a little strange. This 2 Corinthians 5:16, it can kind of throw you for a minute, but you need to put the note in on this so you get this solved. This is one of these verses that you have to see it for what it is, and then it becomes real clear. "Wherefore, henceforth, know we know man after the flesh." This part, the second part, is a little more complicated or appears to be. There are the people you hang out with again. Over and over again, you keep getting blasted by the people you hang out with. "Wherefore, henceforth, know we know man after the flesh." You see, after our relationship, after we get saved with other Christians, after we are saved should be centered around the book and the things of God. It is just that simple. True Christian fellowship revolves around the person of Christ and the Scriptures.

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.

The light being the Word of God. The measure of Christian fellowship is not what you glorify in outwardly. You say, "We are going to have fellowship. We are going out to eat. We are going to have some people over. We are going to have a time of fellowship. We are going to go bowling. We are going to do this. We are going to play golf. We are going to play softball. We are going to have a time of fellowship." Those things, those things unto themselves are not fellowship, but rather two or three people or a ball team or whatever you want to do, however you do it, getting, giving God the glory in the person of Christ and everything they do around the book. That is what fellowship is.

When we got saved, the Bible says our flesh is now dead. If you are sitting here this morning and you are truly saved, you are stuck with a corpse. That corpse is your old flesh. It stinks to high heaven just like a corpse. It is rotten just like a corpse. It is corrupt just like any dead body in any funeral home that they forgot to embalm that laid out in the heat for a while. It is absolutely corrupt. When we get saved, the Bible says our flesh is now dead, and I cannot speak for you, but I can speak for myself. I have no desire to hang out with a corpse. I just do not.

When I was in the army, because I played the trumpet, I got, it was a good gig. I got sectioned out to play all the military funerals. I was stationed at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, and our fort was the only fort at that time up in New England. So I basically, two days a week, I could count on, this was in a hot point of Vietnam, and lots of boys were getting killed, and many of them came from that area. So I would pick up with the rifle squad and the pallbearers and the flag guys and all that. We would go wherever we go, and I would blow taps, and I blew taps for the only general that was ever killed in Vietnam. They hired in 21 Howitzers behind me in the hill to give him a 21-gun salute. He was a two-star general. I forget how he got killed, but I can tell you some absolute horror stories about funeral homes.

I did a funeral one time of a guy who got run over by a tank. Now this is an absolute true story, and I do not want to give any little kids nightmares, but bear with me on here. I will try to, some of the mamas are going to be mad. You will be mad at me on this one. You are probably okay. But anyway, this guy got run over by a tank. I, you know, and I am, you know, when you are in the, got to blow the trumpet, you are the last guy up. So you got plenty of time to kill. So I get to be buddies with all these funeral guys. I said, I said, I said, because the casket was open, and he looked great. Now he was run over by a 28,500-ton tank, right across his chest, killed him. I do not know how it happened, but he is dead. Casket is open. You think he got run over by a tank. You know, you would scrape him up in a dustpan someplace. Guy looked great. Everybody is in there, you know, and everybody is whining. After a while, you kind of get used to it. I played taps one time, and the lady was the widow. She, I was about here to the stairs. I was away from the casket thing, and I started blowing taps, and she screamed and started running toward me. What she did, she ran right by me. I thought she was going to knock me down, you know, because you did not like what I was playing. Weird things happened, but you get used to it after a while.

So I said to this guy, I said, "Man, well, I always start out with a basic question. Do you guys really put pennies in their eyes?" "No." I said, "Well, I have got to ask you." I said, "This guy, he got ran over by a tank." He said, "Yeah, he did." I said, "How do you do this? How do you, how

do you make somebody run over by a tank? He looks perfectly normal." Now everybody was gone now, you know, and he says, "I will show you." You know how you got the uniform on? They had a casement over him with a uniform on, and he popped that casement just like he was taking the hood of a car. Underneath, you could tell he was run over by a tank. He put it back down, fixed them all up. I thought, "Whoa."

One time I got to a big old funeral home, and I got lost. I was supposed to meet the rifle squad behind the back. This was a big old Victorian place, and I got lost, and I got to be out there because this is going to be a big deal. If I am late and they cannot find me, I am in trouble. So everybody left. I do not know how it happened. The funeral director was gone. I had always the general. That is what it was because I had to play to the colors when they brought him out. So I had to cut back through the funeral home, get out the back, get with the rifle guys, and then go do the deal. So I am back in there, and suddenly I realized, "Where do I go? How did this was a huge place? How do I get to the back?" Nobody is around. Everybody went. So I start finding my way through a funeral. That is not the best thing in the world to do. I walked into this one room, and it was completely dark. But I could see the back thing light around the door. So I knew that door went out. But it is pitch black. When I closed this door, I could see nothing. So I am walking through there, and I got this eerie feeling that I have been placed in. Probably it is not where I want to be. So I turned, I found a light switch, turned it on, turned around. There were four bodies in there, and they had them all propped up, draining them or whatever they do with them. I mean, I thought to myself, "Exit stage left, man." I will tell you what. I have no desire to hang out with a corpse. If you are here this morning and you are saved, your flesh is that corpse. You are just like those people hanging on the meat hooks in there. You are not like that guy that ran over the tank. I wanted out of there as fast as I could. You know what? Because I am alive, and they are dead, and we do not like dead people. So why do you get along with your flesh so well? Like you say, "Well, those were two graphic illustrations." Yeah, but you got the point now, and never go to another funeral again, but that is okay. That is okay.

But he says, "Wherefore, henceforth, know we know man after the flesh." The New Testament local church does not exist for entertainment. The New Testament local church does not exist for socializing. The New Testament church does not exist for partying, a new self, but rather that everything that we do, the underlying theme, the underlying goal is:

Ephesians 4:12

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Yeah, I have to tell you, you can entertain people. Party? Well, this place is one party after another. We go someplace, and it takes us an hour to say goodbye. We have fun in everything we do. Socializing? We are the most socialized, unsocialized, mid-fist I ever met in my life. But the goal is different. It is built around a book. There is not anybody for the night, say, 95% of you that were someplace, and somebody comes in as a stranger that somebody brings in that everybody is thinking the same thing. You may not act on it, but you know that there is a person who probably may be lost, and somebody brought them, and you want to make sure that they get

what they need. I see it. I see it all the time. I watch some of you react to people and do everything you are supposed to do because you pick up on that. It does not matter what you do as long as the bottom line is the Word of God in dealing with people. We see it in softball. We see it in volleyball. There is a family right now that came out to play last year in softball, and they are lost, and you guys made such an impression on them just because of the spirit that you had of bringing them in. Some of you young men doing things with their kids. You have no idea of the impact that you made simply because the goal is right. You see, we can party. We can socialize. We can do all the fun things. The bottom line is our fellowship always has to be based on what Christ did for us in that book going back to Calvary. It is just simply that encouraging and building people.

Then the last part of 2 Corinthians 5:16. This is where it might look a little confusing, but this will be a good piece to get straightened out. You will want to get this note in your Bible today. "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know him no more." That is a weird verse. Here I am up here telling you to walk with Christ, have a relationship with Christ, and there is a verse that says, "do not, henceforth know him no more." What is that all about? That is a great principle for all of us. It looks a little confusing. You will see the reality of it when I explain it here in a minute. But in studying the Bible, you have to have a balance. You hear me teach about it all the time that the Bible is doctrinally, historically, inspirationally. You have to have a balance between the three.

What he is saying here is this, and this is the first note you want to get down. Knowing Christ after the flesh, when he talks about this, it is a reference to the first coming of Christ. That would be a reference to Christ's earthly ministry. That would be a reference to your books Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the early part of the book of Acts. Here is early ministry at the first coming of Christ. Now I have to be the first to tell you there is some great material for all of us in those books. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are phenomenal historical books. I think that every Christian at some point needs to take a study on the life of Christ. I think that the chronicle of Christ's three and a half years in ministry is an incredible study. I think that you learn a lot about human nature in people by studying who he deals with. I think that Matthew presents him one way, Luke presents him another, Mark presents him another, John another. You have heard me say it many, many times. I think in one of the gospels you have the most clearest chronology of the last week of his life from when he goes into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Every day is accounted for right down the line. This shows you absolutely that there is no such thing as Good Friday. It is bad Wednesday when you see it from the Bible. That is invaluable. I do not even know how to tell you how important that is.

But in spite of all that, he says, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh," Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, His earthly ministry, "yet now henceforth know we him no more." Here is what he is saying. The power of a victorious Christian life and the ministry and building people and building your relationship with God and building this church is not found in the life of Christ. It is not found in the earthly ministry or the four gospels, but it is found after the resurrection and the power of the Holy Spirit of God in Paul's writings. It is found in the books that he writes to you and to me as churches and individuals in church history.

You had a group called the Paulicians, and the Paulicians were greatly persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church. The reason why they were persecuted was because the Paulicians were saying, "Well, as a church, we put the emphasis on Paul's writings." The Roman Catholic Church was putting the emphasis on Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the kingdom. They were busy trying to prove everybody Peter was the first pope of Matthew 16. They were busy doing all of this. These guys said, "You are out of your mind. The books that write to us, the books that go to us that help us build the right relationship with God are the books that Paul wrote." Since they are called Paulicians because they put the emphasis on Paul's writings. You know what we do in this church? We do the exact same thing. You know why? Because the Bible says, "Yea, that we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more." You do not put the emphasis on the first coming of Christ. Oh, you study it. You get everything out of it. But you realize the balance. If you want to have the victorious Christian life, you do not get it out of the historical books. You get it out of the books that Paul wrote you, and the whole thing goes around Colossians 1:27.

Colossians 1:27

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

That is where it is at. For a child of God, a victorious Christian life takes place after Acts 1 and 2. It takes place after the Holy Spirit of God comes. Now you all know this great verse, and it is a verse that I will probably have marked in your Bible. It is Philippians 3:10.

Philippians 3:10

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

You want to know Him? I want to know Christ, do you? You want to know Him in a way that you minister and you become everything to Him in a relationship? Absolutely, Bob, "that I may know him." Look where it starts. "Power of his resurrection," see? "Fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death." The Christian life and the victory of it for you and for me starts after the resurrection of Christ when the Holy Spirit of God comes. All this starts after the resurrection, and that is when you put it into your life, and that is what you build on. The power for you and for me in life and ministry is in the power of a risen Savior.

You ever see the books that Paul writes to you? You ever see how he breaks down? He writes to seven churches. Oh, I am sure he wrote probably to a thousand churches. But in your Bible, he wrote to seven, and then he wrote to three individuals: Timothy, Philemon, and Titus. Seven and three in my book is what? Ten. As a Gentile, you want to have the victorious Christian life? Those are the 10 you get into. It is just that simple. Ever see them? Ever see them?

The first one is Romans. You know what Romans does for you? Romans teaches you as a Gentile member of the church what you were supposed to believe that is different from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

You know what you got in the next book? 1 Corinthians. You got in 1 Corinthians. The next thing you do after you know what to believe is you start to minister. But he puts your 1 Corinthians there to show you how not to minister.

Then the second book he puts in is 2 Corinthians. He teaches you how to minister.

Then he wants to keep you pure. So the next book is Galatians. You know what you have got in Galatians? How to keep false doctrine out of the church with the Judaizers coming to that church.

But then you have got to understand the church. If the church is going to be what you need to be and what you are going to operate through, then you need to understand it. So the next book, Ephesians, he defines the church in the book of Ephesians.

But then if you are going to have the victorious Christian life, you have got to learn some principles. You have got to have some promises. You know what the next book is? The next book is Philippians. You know what you have got in Philippians? You have got the 10, 10, 10 Gentiles, the 10 greatest promises to the church in that book. If you had no other book of the Bible and you just had those 10, you could survive. See how that thing works? It is incredible how it works. Most of God's people never see it. They never see it.

But then you have got to watch your balance. You have got to realize that we live in a Laodicean church period. So we have got to learn how to survive in a Laodicean church period. So you know what your next book is? The book is Colossians. You know what you have got in Colossians? I will tell you what you have got. You have got Laodicea mentioned five times. You know what the book of Colossians does? It tells you chapter by chapter how to live a victorious Christian life in a Laodicean church. Yes sir, brother, right down the line.

Then you have got 1 Thessalonians. That is the next book. Well, we need to have some models. We have got all this stuff down now. We need to have some models. You ever see how many chapters are in 1 Thessalonians? There are five.

Chapter 1 is the model church.

Chapter 2 is the model servant.

Chapter 3 is the model faith.

Chapter 4 is the model walk.

Chapter 5 is the model life.

See how it works? Well, you have got to round this thing out, so you have got 2 Thessalonians. You know what 2 Thessalonians is? It builds on the theme and brings you right back to what ought to be the desire of your heart, the return of the Lord. See there are seven right there. Seven churches.

Now we have three individuals. So you have got 1 Timothy. That is an individual where he writes to the churches. He teaches them doctrine about the churches and what we are to do. But when he writes to these individuals, it becomes real personal.

In 1 Timothy, you have got the model Christian.

In 2 Timothy, you have got the model ministry.

In Titus, you have got the model steward.

In Philemon, you have got the model prisoner.

Now you know what you need to have in your life to be really successful? I will tell you what you need to have.

3. The first thing you need to have is character. You know what is missing in Christian's life? Character.
4. The second thing you need to have? You need to have a work for God.
5. The third thing you need to have? You need to have faithfulness for God.
6. The last thing you need to have the right attitude.

Let us see if it fits.

7. 1 Timothy: model Christian. There is your character.
8. 2 Timothy: model ministry. There is your work.
9. Titus: model steward. There is your faithfulness.
10. Philemon: model prisoner. There is your attitude.

You do not get the victorious Christian life out of the earthly ministry. Great material. Need to learn it. But you have got to have the balance. That is why Paul says, "You know what? We knew Christ after the flesh. We know all about His earthly ministry. But if you want a ministry in a victorious Christian life, henceforth know Him after the flesh no more." That is what he is saying. That is what he is saying.

VII. Conclusion and Next Steps

So far, I am closing this thing out here. So far, in this chapter, which deals with my perspective of the ministry, we have seen now two out of the three perspectives in this chapter. You want to get them down.

11. In 2 Corinthians 5:1-11 was our perspective of the judgment seat of Christ.
12. Today, 2 Corinthians 5:12-16, our perspective of ministry.

Oh, you have got it now. You have got it now. But now next week is the one. Next week is the one. Next week, you are going to get the perspective of how you are to view yourself. I am going to talk to you next week about the seven things that changed about you the day you got saved. Now you people who are prospective in dealing with people, who want to work with me, let me tell you right now, this is going to be a lesson that you are going to use and use and use and use

over again. So when I go through this next week, you better get it down. One of the things that you will do once you get into these classes is that you will be buddied up with somebody, and you will teach them to you and new to them, and they will grade you, will grade each other. You will teach this lesson right here that I am going to give you next week. So you better get it down because this is going to be invaluable. I use this all the time. Many of you know exactly what I am talking about. You use it all the time because it is key.

Getting the right perspective starts with the judgment seat of Christ. Everything that you and I do needs to go back to the day we stand before Him. The second perspective has to be about the ministry itself, understanding it now in the simplicity that you do. But the real key, bar none. The key to it all. The key to the judgment seat of Christ, and no question about it, the key to your success in ministry comes down to one thing: how you see yourself as God's child. How you see yourself. 90% of the problems that God's people have go right back to that one issue. You do not understand how God sees you. We are going to talk about that next week. All right, now to close out the chapter.