

## I. Introduction and Personal Growth

It was a terrifying, terrifying thing to look out there and see a lady who had been under Bob's teaching for 20 years, saying, "Yeah, what are you going to tell me, punk?" I was like, "Oh yeah, I'll tell you a few things." And I spouted off my 12 reasons for this and the seven reasons for that. She wasn't too impressed.

I grew, and some of the people were here while I was growing. I don't see Penny Hansinger today, but she suffered through me learning how to do this. You suffered through me learning how to do this, and I just don't care about you. Actually, truth be told, Brian is one of my closest and dearest friends. I give him more of a hard time than any other human being in the world. He's one of my closest and dearest friends. I'll say that, and I'll deny it if you ever bring it up again.

The point being is that even four years ago, I thought I was okay. I thought I could. And I could, and I did, and I just didn't do a good job of it. But I change as I get older. I see things differently as I get older. I just do. Twenty years ago, I don't know when I got saved. Sorry, I don't know the date. If somebody didn't tell me, "Bob, it's your birthday," for the first five to ten years of my life, I wouldn't have known. Every year, Mom would get me a cake and buy some presents and be like, "Hey, that day's coming up again." So nobody told me when I got saved. I know for sure when I knew I was saved, and it was driving down I-70 in about 1993, listening to a tape by Bob.

Things have changed over time. Even in four years since Bob said, "Hey, by the way, in case I'm thinking like next week, two weeks from now, I better get on it, right?" Four years later, about five years later, you're like, "Alright, you're on tomorrow." I'm like, "Oh, okay, okay." But I changed. I used to think I was immortal when I was younger. I thought I was going to live forever. "Boy, 50's old, man. 50's like ancient. If I can make it to 50, I'll be alright." I remember having a calculator when I was a kid, figuring out, "What year will I be 50? I'll never make it." I always knew that I wasn't immortal, but as I got older, I began to understand it more. This is kind of the gist of the situation: things change even in four years. The longer I study my Bible, the more I realize I see it differently than I did before.

## II. The Blessing of Sound Bible Teaching

I was just blessed when I got saved to fall backwards—we'll just say backwards here because it's church—into a Bible-believing church and good Bible teaching and Bible preaching. I think it was the best that ever was. I don't think we'll ever see it again after a few more years. I was fortunate enough to stumble on those two or three really good Bible-believing, doctrinally sound, King James Bible preachers. I could have fallen into anything else. It could have been a Joel Osteen experience. It could have been any one of those effeminate self-help preachers out there that know nothing about the Bible but just want to have a good time on Sunday. If you want to

have a good time on Sunday, at First Baptist Raytown, it's like 10 miles from here, this isn't going to be pretty.

But I was blessed. I mean, I was blessed to run into those people. I don't say it to brag; maybe I do. I say it because it could have gone the other way. That's one of the fears that I have for people that get saved. Some of the churches I've been to, we give an invitation and then we pat them on the back and say, "You're saved. Have a nice life." The next thing you know, they show up at a place that wasn't doctrinally sound. We just don't know what's going to happen to them.

I was blessed. The Bible says about Ruth, her hap was to fall into the field belonging unto Boaz. My hap was to just fall into that field that was bought by guys like Bob and Mel. I got to meet those two so many years ago. I was able to sit with Mel for hours and hours and hours over the years. I would go to Las Vegas on business a lot, and I'd pick his brain. I wish I had the amount of time that Bob had with Mel. I don't think anybody will ever get that. But I got to ask him questions, and he would talk. He said things that were amusing. He has some pretty cool stories. You probably heard some of them that know him.

He told me some things I never did understand. I'm like, "Oh yeah, I get that." I just lied to him because I didn't want him to know. He told me things that scared me to death. One time I'm sitting with him in a buffet in Las Vegas, and he said, "Hey Bob, you ever think about the judgment seat of Christ?" "Oh yeah, all the time." I was lying. I didn't know. I'm like, "Well, you got to tell Mel Sabaka you don't know." No. And he told me about something. He told me that he was afraid of the judgment seat of Christ. I thought, "Oh my God, that scared me. If Mel Sabaka is afraid of the judgment seat of Christ, Bob Gregg's in a heap of trouble. A heap of trouble." He scared me.

He told me things about human nature that I still use these days. I still use them. I get advantage over situations from time to time. Those principles that we're hearing are things that I've heard Mel and Bob talk about for years. I remember the time he told me about his calling to the ministry, and that didn't come at an easy time. That came through burying his young daughter. That just tears. That's a whole message in and of itself. There's no way I can tell you that I understood what he was telling me, although I looked at him and I nodded my head. "Oh yeah, Mel, I get that all the time." Well, yeah, it's good preaching. I didn't know what I was hearing.

But as time went by, and time went by, and I grew up, and I reexamined those things, I wrote them down, and I put them in my Bible. I put them in notes. I spouted them off. I was doing a Bible study three weeks after I met Mel. I was doing a Bible study at home in the living room of who was my future wife, with her parents and some friends. I was just repeating what I heard. That's all I was doing. But over time, they began to take on more meaning. They began to mean something to me. Even four years ago, the things that meant something to me then meant more to me than they did 16 years before that. But they mean more to me now than they did then. They just became more than little bits of information, rather than a list in the front of my Bible that I, "Oh yeah, of course, the five crowns. Here's one for this, there's one for that, here's the verses." That's great. But it takes on a bigger meaning as time goes on.

Now that I'm 29, I'm really there now. I've arrived, and I'm immortal, and 50 is way old. If this is old, I'm old. And those things have come in real to me. I've really made it a point in every opportunity I ever have to give a devotion or a message, or in the last church I was at, I got to teach Sunday school to the adults every Sunday. It's practical application of the Bible. For me, if you can't apply the Bible, then the pages are good for nothing more than rolling cigarettes with. There's nothing. There's no power in this book right now. There's nothing. It's just sitting there. It does nothing. But when you open it up, it's a magic book.

Mel used to tell a story, maybe it was Bob, they used to throw a Bible on the ground, in the middle of the street, and say, "Look, watch, look, it's watch." And people would come, "What?" And they'd expect something to happen with it. It's just a tool to talk to people. If you've ever been out in a downtown area with Mel Sabaka or Bob Alexander, watch out because nobody's safe. Nobody's safe. I watched Mel go after this guy who was wearing a shirt that had a Bible verse on it. It didn't have the verse, it had the reference. And he'll ask the guy, "So what's the verse?" "Oh, I don't know." "But what church do you go to?" "I go to this church," or whatever, and Mel just went in on him. And like, "Hey, isn't that wrong?" I mean, I didn't know. "Isn't that wrong?" And I'm like, "Yeah, Mel, go get them."

### III. The Bible's Practical Application

If the Bible's not applicable and practical, it's just not worth anything to me. I can memorize Bible. I can memorize lots of things. When I used to disciple people, they'd say, "Bob, I just can't memorize those verses. It's just too hard." I'd say, "Oh, okay, cool." Some of you young people won't understand this, but I said, "Okay, what are the words to 'Stairway to Heaven'?" They all spouted them off like that. "Where your treasure is, where your heart is, that's where your treasure is." These people could memorize. You can do anything and memorize it, but if it doesn't mean anything to us, it's really not worth anything.

So I'm struggling with what I was going to preach. I'm still struggling right now. I don't know what I'm going to preach. I don't know what this message is about anymore. I knew what the message was when I started. When I sat down, it was a message to do these things. I had three hours. If I'm looking down more than you should think I should, I have no idea what's next. It's going to be a surprise. So we're going to live through this together.

But the point being is James 1:22 says:

*James 1:22*

*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

Don't just soak up this knowledge. The guy that stands here normally is not going to be around forever. Don't make this an exercise and write down everything he says. Learn it, live it, make it real to yourself, digest it, make it part of everything you do, and make it part of every ministry you have. Don't try to imitate them. Nobody can imitate this guy. I've been around. I've tried. It doesn't work. I've stolen his messages. The first message I ever did was lifted directly from Bob Alexander. I gave credit. I said, "This is from a guy named Bob Alexander." And I gave it. It was

at our church in California. And I blew it. I burned it up. I didn't do anything good with it. But there's no other Bobs. Be doers of the word. It's got to be practical application.

I took chemistry. When I took chemistry, I finally realized for the first time ever why the quadratic equation. Why? This little stupid thing that we had to do. Why do we do this? Why do we do this? I knew the quadratic equation. I knew how to manipulate the numbers. I knew how to get the answer. But I didn't know why. It made no sense to me. I took chemistry. And suddenly, "Here's how you solve for this. Use the quadratic equation." I had some facts. I had a list. I had notes in my book. I had no idea what they were for. So the Bible's the same way.

I used to think that the speed limit was there just to stop me from having a good time when I was young. Kids don't listen. I used to think it was really cool to see how far I could get the back of the car in front of me when I was going around a corner. The limits are there for a reason. They're there for a reason. I got perspective now. Do as I say, not as I do, or did, or might choose to do when I get senile next year because I'll be 30. But if you're old enough to say the next thing I'm going to say, you'll know what I'm talking about here. I learn as much from my failures as I do from whatever I might call successes.

The good news is that you're going to get these Bible facts. You're going to put them out there. You're going to try them, and they're going to blow up in your face. You're going to drop something on someone in a message someday. You think it's the most profound thing you've ever done, and you're going to hear crickets at the end of it. You're going to look up, and you're going to get this. I got that look from Mel Sabaka once. The only time I ever had to preach in front of him was at the last church I was at, and I was doing these six things. "Does God hate, yea, seven or abomination?" I had no idea he was going to be there that day. I kind of threw a couple of things together. He was sitting in the front row, and I'm petrified. I mean, I'm petrified. I thought I was going to do a pretty good job. He looked up. Does that look? I'm like, "Oh God." He comes up, and he's like, "Brother." "I hate to tell you this." "I'm sorry, Mel."

Anyways, just try. Make it real and personal to you. It's important. It's an important thing. I know we're all blessed men and women here. We all praise God. We thank Jesus for saving us, cleansing us from our sins, bringing us into the body of Christ. We say, "Praise Jesus, Hallelujah, Amen," all those things. But when the rubber meets the road, can you really say you're blessed? I'm getting to my point. Sooner or later, I'll get to a point. You let me know if I get there. I think I'm dropping something really good on you right now. I have no idea. Skype, just hang up, please. Barb, if you're listening, I'm really sorry. Bob, I'll still send the check. I just won't come back.

## IV. The Providence of God

I was blessed when I got saved into that good Bible teaching. And you know why? A blessed God sent me to St. Louis on a business trip that I didn't really want to go on. That was a three-month business trip. I got invited to a Bible study by a young girl that went to Kansas City Baptist Temple. I didn't want to go, but I couldn't say no because I had already lied to her and said I was a Christian. What are you going to do then? So I was almost late for the Bible study

because she asked me if I had a Bible. I said, "Of course I have a Bible." I had to go buy a Bible. Three Way Bookstore over there off I-70 in St. Peters, Missouri. I went to that store with one thing on my mind: I will not buy that old King James Bible. And I picked it off the shelf. I got it to the hotel room and said, "Oh my God, I got the wrong Bible." A blessed God got me to pick the wrong Bible off that shelf.

The reason I'm even alive today is a blessed God kept me alive when I shouldn't have been. You know why adversity comes your way? A blessed God brings that to you. That's really kind of where I'm going today with this message. One of the times I was with Mel, he said this. Now remember, I tend to lie to Mel. He says, "Bob, you ever think about those songs we sing?" "Oh, all the time, Mel. All the time, they're just great." I hated Christian music when I got saved. I hated it. I thought it was the dumbest thing in the history of the world to stand there and sing these songs. I hated it. I didn't tell Mel that because I knew he'd blast me. "Oh yeah, I think about it all the time." He says, "Do you ever pay attention to the words, Bob?" "Of course I do, Mel. Those stupid people that don't think about the words."

He says to me, "A man ought to really pay attention to the words he sings when he sings those songs because he's singing them to God. He's vowing a vow to God." He kind of emphasized the word "you" there. "You're vowing a vow." Me lying to Mel didn't work. Mel knew who I was. He said, "A man ought to pay attention to those words. If you're not going to live them, don't sing them. Don't sing them. If you're not going to live them, it's a bad thing. A man ought not to vow a vow that he can't keep, that he won't keep. It's not good. It's lying to God. I say, 'God, I'll do this,' and then you don't." That's what these songs are. Some of these songs are. If you know Mel, by the time he gets to a certain point in a conversation, it's loud, and you can't hide. We're in a buffet in Las Vegas. These things are as big as a city block. The whole crowd is silent. Mel and I felt like we were up on a stage, and Mel was like, "You ought not to sing those things." There's just nowhere in the room to hide from. And I'm trying to crawl under the booth.

He was about 72 or 73. I think I met Mel. I know I met Mel in 1993 when I was 18. But at 70-some odd years of age, Mel had come to understand a thing or two about those words. And he meant something to them. They were as important to him. They were probably almost as important to him as the words of the Bible, because most of those songs are Bible words. When he did that, a light went on for me for church music. I can't say I was singing, "Oh, you know, oh, happy day." I don't have a voice that sings, guys. If I had to sing tonight, you'd leave today. You'd leave.

Mel talked about music. He hated gimmicks. He hated gimmicks in church. He hated the repeated altar calls that we see sometimes and the Oompa-Pah bands that we have and all the things to gin up what the Holy Spirit is supposed to be ginning up in our life. He hated those things. One of the last times I ever talked to Mel was, I think, four years ago, and he was out for a Bible conference at our last church, and I got to sit with him. He was staying at our pastor's house, and everybody had to go do something. So they invited me to sit with him for about four hours. It was great. I brought up that conversation because I had, at that time, I was recording music for specials at the church. I played the piano track, and they'd sing to it, stuff like that. And

I was telling him that. I said, "Mel, that really changed me. The things that you told me meant something to me."

He said, and we talked about those things that people do. He'd just gone to visit another church of a guy that used to go to church around here, and he's got his own now. He's got smoke coming up out of the stage, and he's got the lights. And he goes, "You know what, Bob, if the Holy Spirit can't get it done, some pipsqueak with smoke and mirrors and lights ain't going to get it done either." That's the whole point about church. The word of God was attractive to me because it was being served up as the word of God and not a show, not a self-help message, not a feel-good thing. It was just the word of God. Not only that, but the people that were serving it up were actually living it. We'd go out and we'd play sports, and after we played the sport, there'd be a devotion. And I asked, "Why? Why wouldn't you do it first? You pray before you eat." And the guy told me, "Look, we have to earn the right to do that first. You have to earn the right, and then you can deliver the word of God."

I love the hymns we sing. I love the music here at this church. I remember those talks with Mel when we sing those songs. He loved the hymns too. He liked the other music too. His wife sang it. Gene, if you listen to this message, I love your singing. I always did, even back then when I was lying to your husband. I loved it. If the Holy Spirit of God's in it, there's nothing you can do to gin up the Holy Spirit in me. There's nothing you can do. If the Holy Spirit of God's not in it, no amount of light, smoke, gimmicks are going to make it happen for me.

It always makes me wonder, though, if we really pay close attention to these words. Trust me, this is not—okay, I've decided at this point—it's not a message about Christian music. It's not a message about growing up. But I'll say this, do you pay attention to the words? I don't know. If we're willing to put our money where our mouth is. How about this one? "Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise." Would you? Would you really? Do you do it now? You got at least one tongue. Do you sing your great Redeemer's praise on Thursday night? How about Wednesday morning? How about, I know we do it on Sunday morning because it's time, right? Three songs, announcements, two songs, offering, special message. We do that. That's what we do. "Oh, for a thousand tongues." You sing those songs, do you do them?

How about this one? Mel could probably do this one. "When peace like a river attendeth my way." Well, that's cool. I love that one. "When sorrows like sea billows roll. Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, 'It is well, it is well with my soul.'" How about that? You know the story, right? The guy's allegedly sitting over the very spot where his wife and family drowned in the ocean, and he writes the song. Well, I don't know. I'm not sure I could. Could you really do it? Mean it? Think about it.

This thing that we call Christianity is more than just an intellectual exercise. It's more than just a differentiator of the herd, right? "This guy, he knows lots of Bible. This guy, he didn't know anything." It's not that. This is life. This is the real deal. The Bible's important. God left His Word here for a reason. He sent His Son to die on the cross for a reason. And it's more than for us to just look good to do it. I'm not looking so good.

## V. The Lord is My Rock: David's Example

Here's the main text. This is going to really throw you for a loop because it has nothing to do with anything I've said. Psalms 18:2. If you've got a Bible, go ahead and look there. I'll wait for a second. I'll tell you why this is the main text. Sooner or later, maybe. This is David writing. David had kind of an odd life, right? God's man, God's chosen, king of Israel. I don't know. Kind of a good guy, right? Murderer, thief, liar, adulterer. It's David. He's all those things. And he writes this:

*Psalms 18:2*

*The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*

Let's pray. Father, we just thank You and praise You for Your Son, Jesus Christ. Father, we just thank You so much for allowing us to meet here in this church where we can so freely speak of Your Word. Lord, I pray that You'd forgive us when we speak of Your Word and we only hear it and we don't do it. Father, I pray that if there's anything that would be said today, that You would help me say those words. I know that nothing I can do of myself is worth anything. But Lord, thank You for giving me this opportunity to use my rather large mouth to proclaim Your Word to anybody who'll listen. Lord, I only have one tongue, and I know I don't use it enough, but I pray today that You would use it to reach someone that might be like I might have been all those years ago when I was first hearing the Word of God. Lord, I do pray for our pastor's wife, Barb, and all of their family as they are with her today in the hospital awaiting the results of the test. I pray that in the whole thing You'd be glorified and that Your name would be blessed through all those things. And I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

This verse I came about about 15 seconds after I found out I was going to preach today. I saw this verse, and I'd seen it before. I'd seen it a bunch of times before, but the way I saw it had a big effect on me. It made me wonder if when I'm spouting off these Bible verses or when I'm singing these songs, if I'm really thinking about it, because I'd seen this verse a bunch of times before, and it never meant nothing to me. But when I saw it this time, it meant a lot. It's just weird. I'm older now. I'm probably 30 by the time this message gets over.

Have you ever heard the song, "Blessed Be The Name of The Lord"? How easy is it to say that? "Blessed be the name of the Lord." It's easy to say that, right? When times are good, it's easy to say that. But the truest test of who we are and who God is in our life is if we can say that when times are hard, because there's three men in the Bible that said those words, and they were not having a good day. That was it. "Hey, my home closed escrow, blessed be the name of the Lord." "Got a new job, blessed be the name of the Lord." It wasn't that. It wasn't that at all. There were three guys that said that. They all had interesting lives. They all had hard lives. One of the things that they all shared was the adversity they were under when they said those words.

The first one that I found that said that is David. David is this obscure son of a shepherd. When you're introduced to him in 1 Samuel, there's nothing remarkable about him in outward appearances. Ruddy, whatever that is, right? He simply was found doing his father's bidding. He

was out with the sheep. Go figure that. That's a study all in itself. David was not a remarkable person outside of the things that he was doing for his father. And then he becomes anointed as king. There's just something about David that always set him apart when it came to God. He was always facing adversity, of his own making and that not of his own making.

The one that I really always focus on is his own brothers, right? David's out there feeding the sheep, and there's this big battle going on. The Philistines are on one side of a valley. The entire nation of Israel is on the other side of the valley. And who's down in the middle is old Goliath. Goliath's down in the middle. He's blaspheming God. He's saying horrible things about God. Every day for days on end, the nation of Israel makes a noise. "Ah, we're going to get you. Oh, we're going to come. Oh, brother, we're going to kill you. We're going to get you really good." And then they don't. They're making the sounds of war. They're sounding a lot like God's people. They're just not doing anything about it.

David shows up and says, "Well, what's going on here?" "Ah, you know, Goliath, Gath. He's down there blaspheming the Lord God." And David goes, "Well, what are we going to do about it? Let's go. Let's go. Let's get this. I got this." And his own brothers are mad at him. "You're just showing off." He'd been anointed king over them, and they didn't like it. "You're just showing off. You're a naughty little boy." The one verse that sticks out to me in 1 Samuel chapter 17—don't go there, it's just one little verse—this is, and David says, "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?"

David was a man that knew there was a cause. David was a good man, and bad things happened to him, and he did bad things. He was God's man. David knew there was a cause, though. He was a doer and not a hearer only of God's Word. It meant something to him. He had heard something about this Lord God of Israel, and it was more important to him to get it done than it was to be known. "Hey, look, I'm king. I tell you, you guys go do it. I don't have to do this. I'm the man. I'm going to be the guy." But he got in there, and he did it. He got it done. You know the rest of the story, and he leads this tumultuous life. Some of it was his own doing, but the book of Psalms kind of tells you about the pain and suffering, self-imposed or not. It was in his life.

In Psalms 109:30, he's under attack, and it says, "I will greatly praise the LORD." Psalms 111, "Praise the LORD." He's led a very tumultuous life, and his words are, "Praise the LORD." He knew in times of trouble, especially, the Lord's to be praised. Why are those troubles coming your way? God brought them. Sorry. God brought them. Ask Job. Why are troubles coming your way?

Go to Psalms 113, and I'll show you where he says it. This is where David utters these words. He says in Psalms 113:1-2:

*Psalms 113:1-2*

*Praise ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD.*

*Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore.*

David, having lived a life of adversity, again, most or some of his own making, finds himself at a point where he says these words, and it's not, "Hey dude, I won the battle, blessed be the name of the Lord." "Hey, my son is back alive." "Hey, I didn't sin against God." This is a guy that can say these words, and not just on a Sunday morning when everything's going pretty good. I think everything's going pretty good for most of us in here. I'm sure that there's some troubles that we're going through. And it's easy for me to say today, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." You see me on a bad day. You want to know what it's like, ask her. She'll tell you what it's like on a bad day.

David's an example for us in three different ways.

1. His example to us is a warning that even the best of us are subject to sin. You think I got problems? Yeah, the best of us are subject to sin. I think as I study the men in the Bible, the best of them are the worst of them. At the same time, it's the weirdest thing. The only character studies I ever come out in the Bible where they come out good are women. Guys, they're all women. I can't think of a single guy except Christ Himself that didn't have something wrong with them. Maybe it was the women in their life. I don't know, but it certainly doesn't look good for the guys. But he's a warning for us. The best of us are subject to sin. Boy, I'll tell you what, the fall from self-righteous indignation is a long fall, guys. It hurts. The fall from the pinnacle of life is really, really tough.
2. His example is also a comfort to us that even when we sin, the Lord is still there to take care of us. We have to call upon the name of the Lord, blessed to be the name of the Lord, when you don't get the job, or when the house doesn't close escrow, or when you got a blood clot and you're laying in a hospital and you're not hearing what you want to hear, blessed to be the name of the Lord. By the way, that's why this verse is on here, and I'll get to that later.
3. His example is a reminder. In times of need, that's when we need God the most. And that's the point when we don't go to Him. It's the strangest thing is that, "Hey, I haven't seen you for a while." "No, I've been going through a really tough time." Really? Yeah, that's the last place I want to be is around God's people when I'm having a tough time. It's like when I'm sick, the last place I want to be is in a doctor's office. When my car's broke, I don't want to be in the auto shop. And when I need money, I don't want to be at work. It doesn't make sense to me, but that's, it's a reminder that in times of need, God is there. He can be our rock, our fortress, our deliverer, our God, our strength, our trust, our buckler. Do you know what it means? Our high tower. That's what that verse is. It struck me because of the way I saw it.

## VI. The Lord is My Rock: Daniel's Example

The second guy that utters this phrase is Daniel. Daniel's a captive of Nebuchadnezzar, and he's in danger of his life. The king had a dream, and he couldn't remember it. And he says, "Hey, look, wise guys, tell me what the dream was, or I'm going to kill you." "No, okay. Well, give us some more time." "No, not going to give you more time. Tell me what it was, or I'll kill you." "Oh, God. I mean, come on, I get three guesses, right?" "No, no. Tell me what it was." Have you ever had a dream, and it's like a big deal, significant dream? You wake up, and then you remember that you had the dream, but you can't remember what the dream was about. I think

that's what was going on with Nebuchadnezzar. He needed, like, "I'm kidding. You better tell me, or I'm going to kill you." And all the wise guys, they're saying, "Nah, we're all dead." And he says, "Okay, that's it. I'm going to kill all of you."

Little Daniel. Now Daniel, Daniel led a life of adversity. These are characters in the Bible. They're real people that it really happened. There was a little boy named, what's his name? And he got taken from his home, and he got thrown into captivity along with everybody he knew. He got separated from everything he loved, everything he had. Think about it time through history. When God's people have been rounded up and brought to a place, it's never been good for them. It wasn't a summer camp that Daniel was in, and it was bad, and the King's going to kill him. So instead of trying to hide, he says, "I got discovered." "Hey, King, just give me a day. Just give me a day. I'll do this."

In Daniel chapter 2, verse 16, in the darkness of his captivity, God hadn't forsaken Daniel. It never happens. Daniel goes in in Daniel 2:16-20:

*Daniel 2:16-20*

*Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.*

*Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:*

*That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.*

*Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.*

*Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:*

Now let me ask you this. Your boss says, "I need you to give me the answer to this problem tomorrow. I'm not going to tell you anything about it. I already know the answer. And if you don't, I'm going to fire you." And you go home, and you pray to God, "Oh Lord," you go home and grab your wife, you get on bended knee, and you pray to God, "What's the answer?" And you have a dream that night—man, you're not going to have one, but let's just say you did. How are you going to feel the next day? "I'm heading for California. I'm not going back because I know it's a guess, right?" If you guess, you're dead. If you're right, you live.

Daniel goes right back in. He says, "Yep, this is your dream." And you know the dream. You know the story. I know you know the story. I'm not going to read it to you. He gives the King the dream. And by verse 46, let me back up a minute. He took that thing back to his friends. He didn't ask their opinion. He didn't ask for their counsel. They asked for God's counsel. They prayed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. He believed it. He heard it. He could spout it. The verse didn't exist yet, but the principle existed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. And he went, and he claimed that verse. He lived that

verse. God answered that verse. He tells the King his dream. He turns to God in time of trouble. He blesses God's name when it happens. And he goes back. And by Daniel 2:46, the King's on his face, worshipping Daniel. This is a guy who was going to kill him one day, and the next day he's worshipping him. Remember, this is one of his prisoners. It's not one of his trusted, loving guards and his people and his mom and dad. This is a prisoner taken captive.

So he utters those words. It turns out pretty good for him. He tells the dream. He's under adversity, attack, imminent death. And instead of accusing God and saying, "Hey, man, I'm God's people. What are you doing here? God, how is this possible? God, why is this happening to me?" He goes, "Look, God, I know I'm where I'm at because You put me where I'm at. And I know You're there, and I need Your help. I'm going to pray. Give me an answer." And He did. Daniel can certainly say that, but it took a life of hearing God's Word and doing God's Word for Daniel to be able to do that. He had probably gained some perspective. He's a little boy somewhere. He gets taken captive somewhere. He's older now, and he's got perspective. He's been able to filter what he's known of God's Word through the life events that have taken place. And it's working good for him.

## VII. The Lord is My Rock: Job's Example - Faith and Substance

I'm going to spend more time in the book of Job. Please turn to the book of Job. Job is the next guy. He's the third guy that utters these words. You can ask yourself this, is God's name really truly blessed in our life? What kind of person considers God's name to be blessed? You don't see it a lot. You see people going, "Oh man, God sure is blessed." You see it all the time. What is it about Job that we can learn from and model our life after? He loses his entire family, all of his possessions in chapter one. The first half of chapter two, he loses his health. And by Job 2:9, it happens real quick. He goes downhill real quick for Job. By Job 2:9, all he's left with is three so-called friends and a wife who just wants him to curse God and die. I mean, curse God and die, not just curse God, but "I want you dead." This guy doesn't have a lot going for him at this point. So when faced with tragedy, Job turns to the praise of God.

What we know about Job was found in Job 1:1-5:

*Job 1:1-5*

*There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

*And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.*

*His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.*

*And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.*

*And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.*

Job was a man of faith. So you want to be able to say, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." He says it. I'm going to show you. He says it. You got to have faith. His faith allowed him to fear God and eschew evil. To eschew means to get out. We should go away, get away. He feared for his whole family in Job 1:5. He was concerned with his family. He knew that fearing God meant that he had to live a life that reflected that. He'd seen a few things in his life. He's a father. He'd raised seven sons, had three daughters. He knew a thing or two about human nature. He knew a thing or two about faith, and he was offering sacrifices just in case his sons had sinned in their heart against God. This is a man of faith.

My take on Job is that God allowed things to happen to Job, not to teach him a lesson. God knew how this thing was going to come out. He did those things with Job to teach us a lesson. That faith is what got Job through there without sinning. That faith was the thing that made Job perfect and upright. He was perfect in his fear of the Lord. His perfection was that he hadn't lost sight of who he was and who God was. Job's faith allowed him to maintain his fellowship with God when it was good and when it was bad. And his faith told him, "Just in case my sons have sinned and cursed God in their heart, I'm going to do this." And he got up early in the morning to do it. He didn't wait. He didn't delay. He was a man that lived what the Word said.

He deeply believed that God provided all things. He was a man of substance. He had all these things, right? A thousand of these, five thousand of those, ten of these, and twenty of those. He had a lot of stuff. It's not a stretch to say he had 12 people in his family. He had to have a lot of stuff. He had to have a lot of substance. One wife, seven sons, three daughters. There's 12 people. That's a large family by any stretch. But I say this, that wasn't his real substance. The substance I'm talking about here is that he was a substantial person. He wasn't a lightweight.

Job had seven sons. That's a phrase that appears a couple times in the Bible. That's an important phrase. It means he was blessed. The other time you see that is when they're talking about Obed in the book of Ruth. "Isn't Obed better than seven sons?" It's a phrase that you ought to look for. Job was a blessed man of substance. He was a heavyweight. He wasn't a lightweight. He wasn't like that chaff that you see in Psalms chapter one, which the wind driveth away. When I was in the military, we had chaff in the back of our airplanes. What does chaff do? Chaff poofs out of the back of a plane, and it pretends to be something it's not. And then the wind blows it away. It pretends to be the plane. So when the enemy's missile is locked onto the metal on your plane, it now locks onto the chaff. It's pretending to be a plane. A lightweight Christian is pretending to be something that they're not. That's not Job. Job was a heavyweight. He had a testimony. He had substance.

Here's the substance. God Himself says he was perfect and upright. That's a pretty good testimony to me. I don't think there's anything wrong with that. That's success. That's substance. That's what I think this is really talking about. Yeah, Job had a lot of things, but the substance

that I think the Bible is talking about here is he was a substantial person. He was a heavy hitter. He was a deep guy. He knew what was going on, and he meant it. Now let's not get caught up in Job's material success. That's just an Old Testament picture of a spiritual principle. Our substance is not what we have, but who we are and who God thinks we are, not what we have and what we look like.

*Proverbs 22:1*

*A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.*

Job had a good name. That ought to be something we seek. A man or a woman who has a good name is more likely to say, "Blessed be the name of the Lord" when tragedy strikes their life than anybody else. And you know what I'm talking about.

## VIII. The Lord is My Rock: Job's Example - Trust and Suffering

The third thing about Job was he was a good steward of what God gave him. He raised a close family. I don't know. You can take the feasting and partying and make them bad. I don't know. Go ahead. I don't care. They're a close family. They were doing things together. The seven sons are having feasts. They invite their three sisters over for dinner. Sounds like a pretty close family to me. He shepherded those that God gave him. He took care of what God gave him. Well, what do you do with the people that God gives you? Do you give them the very best, or do you give them what you got? When you're discipling someone, do you give them the very best, or do you just go through the lessons? You just get them done, or do you really make a friend with that person?

The guy that disciplined me, he had to do it twice, but it took a long time. It didn't take 12 weeks. It took 12 months, and we developed a relationship that endured for a long time. He invested time in me. That time that he invested in me, the first time he disciplined me, was in a hotel room while I was on a business trip in St. Louis. I wasn't a member of his church. There wasn't really a chance that was going to happen. He stopped what he was doing, and he invested his life in me. That meant something to me. It'll always mean something to me, regardless of where our relationship goes or doesn't go after that. So what do you do with the people that God gives you?

Unless you think it's just a coincidence that we're all here today and we're members of this body of Christ, what do we all do with each other? Are we concerned with the physical, spiritual, and emotional health of each other? When was the last time, other than today, you prayed for our pastor and his family? Don't answer, because I don't want to answer that question myself. I'm not preaching to you. I can't. If I did a message for one person here, he wouldn't show up. That's just the way it is. This is for me. When was the last time we prayed for the pastor and his family? What do you do with the people that you're given? Are you doers of the word or hearers only? There's a difference.

Job was prayerful over his family. This is the fourth thing about Job, found in Job 1:5. He prayed, and he offered burnt sacrifices, and he rose up early, and he did this continually. It says, "Thus did Job continually" at the end of Job 1:5. It wasn't something that he did on Sunday and Thursday and during the prayer reports. That's not what he did. Job's spiritual prosperity came because he was a man of faith that took care over the spiritual condition of his family. He didn't do it occasionally. He did it all the time.

Number five, Job was a servant of God. In Job 1:6, this is the scariest verse in the Bible:

*Job 1:6-8*

*Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.*

*And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.*

*And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

The first time God uses the phrase "my servant" is his friend Abraham. The second time God uses that phrase "my servant" is about his friend Moses. He spoke to him as a man speaks face to face with his friend. The third time God uses that phrase "my servant" is about Caleb. Job's in some pretty good company. "Have you considered my servant Job?" "Have you considered my servant Bob?" I'm not sure he said that. Hope he could. It'd be a good thing. It's good company to have. It's a good name. A good name is rather to be had than great riches. Job had a good name. He was a servant of God.

The point here is Job's in great company. He wasn't just a hearer, he was a doer. He was a servant. Did you ever consider what a servant is? Bible servants were bought with a price. Bible servants were what you call a bondservant. They were bought with a price. Job was mindful that there was a price paid for that fellowship with God. I don't know if you knew about the pre-incarnate Christ. I don't know if you knew. I don't have a clue, but I do know this. You knew that there was a price to be paid, and he was willing to pay it. And that's why God could have this conversation with Satan. Could God have that conversation with Satan about you? "You considered my servant Bob?" Satan would go, "Yeah, sure I have. I just had a nice conversation with him last week." It might be something like that. Not only did Job fear God, he served God. I think they're one and the same thing.

Job was a man who God took notice of. "Have you considered my servant?" I know God takes notice of us all, right? Every idle word, every idle thought, everything we see, everything we do. Yikes. "Have you considered my servant Job?" The Lord asked Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" God took notice, and rest assured that Satan took notice of Job too. I believe that Satan took notice of Job too. "Yeah, of course I have." Then you see it later on. We're not going to read those verses, but he says, "Yeah, I see him. He would, he'd curse you in a heartbeat. He'd curse you in a country second if you just take all that stuff you gave him away." And God says, "Go for it." You think God didn't know? Back there, it's funny. God says, "Whence comest

thou?" Like God didn't know where Satan was. It's like, "Adam, where art thou?" Like God didn't know. God knows. God knew the outcome of this. God could count on Job. Job was a man who was trusted. God took notice of this guy.

I'm going to give a shout out to Marion. Did anybody hear Marion's testimony at the mission last month? If you haven't heard it, you need to get it. I think it was the single greatest testimony I've ever heard in my life. I've never heard a better one. It was about Fanny J. Crosby, and it was titled, "She Hath Done What She Could." I guarantee you God took notice of Fanny J. Crosby. I can't believe it. You need to get that tape. Ask John Busquets to make you a copy of it. It was amazing. Or the CD tape. I'm 29. Tapes.

*Job 1:9-12*

*Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?*

*Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.*

*But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.*

*And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.*

Why? Because my hand's on him, and I'm not going to let you do that. Don't touch him. Job was a man who God trusted. And that's when I wrote that. See, I grow up. I think about things. I trust God. Isn't that backwards? God trusted Job. Satan's accusing God here, saying Job won't hold up under pressure. And that's that same old trick, right? No, he starts out with a question, doesn't he? "Doth Job fear God for nought?" "Yea, hath God said." That's Satan's characteristics. That's what Satan does. He accuses. He does things. He does things that people do to us. Back in the Garden of Eden, Satan says to Eve, "Yea, hath God said." Now he asked another loaded question in Job 1:9.

I know for sure we're supposed to be like Job, but let's not forget. Let's not be like Satan. Satan's acting like people. People are acting like Satan. You hear someone say, "There's people that just can't stand to hear other people praise. They can't stand it." You say something, "Hey, did you hear about this great thing so and so did? Hey, hear about that great message Marion did?" "Oh, yeah, but you don't know what Marion did last week. Oh boy. Did you ever hear about that?" That's Satan, man. That's Satan. There was nothing. I'll tell you this. We stuck that CD in our thing when we left the church that night. And when it was ended, we're all like, "That was the greatest thing I've ever heard. I wish I'd done that. I'm going to steal it the next time I go on the mission." That one, remember.

But they accuse Christians. Christians are the greatest accusers of Christ. I think we don't need Satan anymore because Christians are the greatest accusers of Christians. "Oh yeah, Bob preached on Sunday." "Yeah, but you, boy, did you ever see what it, yeah, of course." It's a great fall from self-righteous indignation. And I can tell you that from personal experience, but that's why I have a loving God. "Oh, you know, so and so's doing really good. Did you see that? You

see that great message Marianne gave?" "Oh yeah, I gave one just like it." They compare themselves. This is what Satan does. We ought not do that. We ought not be like Satan. It's bad enough that we're like us. Let's not be like him. It's pretty easy to say so and so does this or so and so does that because, "Well, Bob's watching, right?" "Oh, I only do that when Bob's around."

Satan accuses Job because of his prosperity. His friends accuse Job because of his illness and afflictions. He can't get a break. You can't get a break. That was just a little sidebar. Don't act like Satan. God trusted Job and blessed Job with His own trust. He's not making a bet with Satan. Satan, like other Christians, is bitter because he's not the recipient of the blessing. Not only did God take notice of Job, God had trusted Job was a man that would bless the name of the Lord. Even under the trial that he was about to go under, God knew what was going to happen. "Whence comest thou?" "Come on. Oh, you were? I thought you were supposed to be over on Jupiter or something. You were on the earth going to and fro. What was it like?" I mean, that's God. He knows that eventually Satan would have Job in a position where Job was left with nothing, right? Later on, Job's left with nothing, not even his health. So he's lost his family, his goods, his wife turned into whatever. And his three friends are saying, "Man, this is your fault, Job. This is you, man. I mean, look at this. You're being afflicted. It's got to be you." And He knew He was going to get to that point, and He knew how it was going to come out. I can't imagine Satan didn't know the outcome too, but he's just like Christians. They're not in it for the win. They're in it for the pain. They know they can't win the battle, but they can inflict as much pain and damage on the way as they possibly can. We shouldn't be like that. I think Satan looked at a picture, it can be looked at as a picture of someone who knows that they're going to lose, but they want the harm nonetheless. They're in it for the pain.

Job was a man who was completely in the hands of God in Job 1:12. And the Lord said unto Satan:

*Job 1:12*

*And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.*

Even while Satan had power over Job, God still protected the thing that was most important, and that was the relationship with Job. As long as Job maintained that faith, as long as Job maintained that relationship, that relationship was available to Job whenever he wanted. The same is true for us. God will not tempt us above that which we are able.

*1 Corinthians 10:13*

*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

As hard as it is for me to intellectualize that, what God said is, "Job, I'm not going to give you anything you can't handle." Boils, death of his children, his wife turning on him, his friends turning on him. The whole world thinks that God's forsaken him, and every evidence at the time

would indicate that that was true. And God says, "No, Job's got this. Job's got My back," is what God would say.

Job was a man who suffered absolute loss. He lost everything. He lost his livelihood. He lost his children that he cared for, the children he prayed for, his home, his livelihood. All of his oxen and his she-asses and all the things that he had are gone, and he lost his own health. He had nothing left. I'll tell you what, I've seen people curse God over the choice of toilet paper in the bathroom at church. I've seen people leave a church over that very issue, guys. I've seen people curse God over a car getting a flat tire. This is a little more serious than that. This is a guy of substance. He suffered complete tragedy. The only thing he had left was faith. That's the only thing that he had left was faith and a life of applying that faith over and over again, and a perspective that changed over the years so that he knew for sure that the little things that happened to him before built up to where now this big deal is a big deal, right? Nobody could say this is not a big deal and get away with it when I'm around. This is a big deal in Job's life. He's going to get through it. You know the end of the story, but why did God trust Job? Job was a man that not only trusted God, he knew God was in control. The reason that God trusted Job to do this was because Job trusted God to get him through it.

Job proves it's okay to mourn. He mourns here. And at the end of Job 1:22, in Job 1:20, he says, "And Job sinned not." And in all these things Job did sin not. He did not sin. It's okay to get mad. It's okay to be sad. It's okay to have sorrow. It's okay to mourn. But he got through it. And at the end of that, I'll read it. Job 1:20-22:

*Job 1:20-22*

*Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,*

*And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.*

*In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

So there it is. Kids gone. Wife's gone bad on him. Everything he has is gone. He's sitting on a pile of dung scraping stuff off of him with a stick. That's Job's life right now. And that's how he comes out of it. "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

## IX. The Lord is My Rock: A Contemporary Example

So you're thinking, now think back, what in the world did Psalms 18:2 have to do with that message? I'm going to tell you. On Friday night when I was at the hospital visiting Barb, there's a chart on the wall, and the chart says, "This is my doctor. This is my nurse." The most important thing there other than the verse was, "This is when you're going to get your next pain medication." I kept trying to tell her, "Look, it's number eight. Number eight on the chart gets you more, and I'll split it with you. It's cool." She was having no part of it, but she's laying in this hospital. She is not where she wants to be. And she's not hearing what she wants to hear, but she's got a smile on her face. The only difference in her countenance was the fact she was

horizontal in a bed. She's just Barb. She could be sitting, she brought the bed in and had her sit right here. She was still Barb.

She's telling me for the first—I sat in a chair next to her bed—she said, "This is the first time in my life I've had six surgeries. This is the first time that I haven't heard things like, 'You did great. You'll be up and around in a couple of days. Everything's fine.'" Stuff like that. She's hearing things like, "Yeah, more tests, umbrella filters, genetic things going on." She's not hearing it. She's laying there with a smile on her face. And there's this verse on the wall. "The Lord is my rock and my fortress." And I asked her about that verse. I think she said, Casey Miller wrote it down on there. Man, she's got good handwriting. Is she in here? I mean, that handwriting was pretty. I got a big old fat number two pencil. That's all I can do.

The point is, she's got this attitude, and she's saying, "I've just been really blessed. And the doctors are really good." I'm thinking, "Man, I was in the hospital for one day about three years ago. I'm like, this is not okay. Don't come here. I don't want to see you." I went to the doctor with a pimple in my nose, and he says, "You're going to die." So I'm in the hospital now. Literally, "You're going to die." I'm like, "What? It's just a..." No, it's not a...

Anyways, she's lying in her bed, smile on her face. She's entertaining 20 people in this, what, 10 by 10 room. She's very gracious. You're very gracious. If you're out there and think she was trying to Skype in, I don't know. But the only difference was now she's in a hospital instead of here, standing by the door, sitting over here. This is a real life, real, real, real situation. I'll tell you this, having spent a lifetime serving God and enduring those sea billows of life and those sorrows of life and the pain and the fear and the loneliness and the rejection that that woman's gone through in her life and the ministry to sit there like that. I'm not sure I could have done it.

I talked to her about that verse, and she said, "Bob, that verse has gotten me through the worst, darkest times of my life." And I happen to know some of those times. I happen to know those. For her to come out of that with the attitude that she has is amazing because I wasn't the guy that left over a toilet paper choice. But yeah, I get mad over less things. My countenance will change quicker than that. But Barb's got more experience than me. She's been deeper in the ministry than I'll ever get. And she's applied those things that she's learned. I'll bet in the end, I'd love to get my hands on her Bible. I've heard her do the seven things that changed about you when you get saved. I know that woman's lived a life. She's not just saying the word. She knows what they mean. She knows what they mean. She says she believes it. "The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." "Yeah, I'm just God. God's really blessed me with good doctors, and I'm going to be okay. And this is going to be alright. And I've been praying, and He'll answer my prayers. He's got me through all these things. He'll get me through this too."

At the same time, she's blessing every single person that walks in that room, every doctor. I don't know. They're probably lost. I don't know if they're saved, lost, whatever they are, but they're looking on the board, and you know, when they look on that board to see where the last time she got a pain pill, they're going, "What is it? Psalms 18:2, 'The Lord is my rock.'" Maybe they'll ask her a question. Maybe she has a thousand tongues to sing her great Redeemer's praise. Maybe she means it. Maybe she means it when she says it. I know she means it when she sings those

songs about being rejected, sorrow. I know these things. I know her family. I've known them for years, and I know what she's been through. She means it. God's in control of her life. God's in control of Barb's life, and God trusts Barb because Barb trusts God. That's why that verse is here today. Really. I didn't know what I was going to do. You try this in three hours. It wasn't that hard.

## X. Conclusion: Be Doers of the Word

What about you guys? Is God in control of your life today? Can God say, "Hey, have you considered my servant?" What would happen if you went through a Job-like experience? How would you come out? I've seen it go both ways, guys. I've seen people go through tragedy in their lives, and God love them. I mean, I'm not judging because I don't think, I don't know how I would handle these things, but it's, it's wrecked them, and I've seen people go through the same thing, and it's not wrecked them, and it's blessed them, and it's blessed others through that. It takes a man of faith or a woman of faith to be able to do that. It's easy to go to God when times are good. It's easy, but when times are bad, that's when it's important. That's when the rubber meets the road. That's when God knows if you're His wingman or not. Are you? Can He trust you? If He needed you in a pinch, would you be there? Because that pinch might not feel good when it happens to you.

I don't think any of us are wishing we could go through what Daniel or David or Job or Barb went through. I don't want to go through that, but are you willing to, if it happens, are you willing to apply that? Are you willing to look in the front of your Bible and go, "Oh yes, seven pieces of armor. I'm going to put on one of them." Right. Are you going to do that? I mean, does it mean anything? The doctrines of salvation. Does it mean anything? I mean, I got them all, seven things Jesus rejoices over. Do you? Can you, do you even know what they mean, or do you just say them? Are they just written there so you have a cool Bible with a bunch of stuff? It means something. These people have meant something to you.

Here's another song. There's a lot of people walking past that chart. Some of them are lost. Here's another song. "What a friend we have in Jesus." Does Jesus have a friend in you? That's really the question. It's not a message about music. You can try to trivialize the Daniels and the Jobs and the Davids and say, "Well, those are just stories in the Bible." It's easy because they're stories in the Bible. You don't know them yet. You should. They're not people you can see and touch and feel. You can touch Barb. Touch a few other people in this room. I've seen go through tragedy in their life. I've seen them say, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." I've seen them. I know them. I can touch them. I can look at them. You just can't, you know, I'm an old man now. And I'd like to be thought of as a friend of Jesus, not just Jesus is my friend. I can't be a friend to you if you're not a friend to me, because I'm not Christ. Jesus can seem to pull that off, but Jesus wants you to be a friend of His too.

I know we love God's Word. We wouldn't be here if we wouldn't, but is this thing real to us? Is it more than just an intellectual exercise? Is it more than something that we do because that's what you were raised to do and bring you here on a Sunday morning? And we start late enough. It's cool. But during football season, you miss the first game. So what? Some people, that's a big

deal. This is a big deal. There's something after this that matters. I'd like to be a friend of Jesus. I'd like this to be real to myself. I'd like to see it be real to you. So real that if we lost everything, if I lost everything, I'd like it to be real enough that I could say, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." I'd like that. That would be a good thing.

So maybe this was a message about church music. Think about them. When you sing them, think about what you're saying. You're saying something important. Maybe it was a message about growing as a Christian and applying what we learn here at church. Maybe it is. Maybe it was. Stop being hearers and hoarders of God's Word. Go do something. And then reflect on what you've done. Because if I look at some of the things I've done, I've got them. I've saved every message I ever wrote. I'm like, "Yeah. Four years ago, I'm like, I'm not bringing that. There's no way I'm bringing that. 20 years ago, oh my God." But I learned. There's people that suffered through it with me. My first message went 15 minutes, and I was done. I was done. And the people on a Wednesday night going, "I don't think you can get done eating, Bob."

Maybe this was a message on how to deal with adversity. But however this thing came at you today, do something with it. Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. Because if you do, He can truly be our rock. He can truly be our fortress, our deliverer, our buckler. You can trust in Him. He can be our high tower. That's a pretty good deal. But it's only an intellectual story. It's only "War and Peace." It's a powerless book when it's like this. And it's only slightly more powerful when it's just head knowledge. Apply it to your lives. Your lives will get better. Hey, thanks for enduring this. Bob will be back next week. Let's pray. Father, we just thank You and praise You again for...