

Proverbs 4:1-4

February 4, 2024

Thank you, Tabby. That has always been my favorite song. That is the song they played at my dad's funeral when he died back in the 70s. It has always been special to me. Thank you for that today.

Well, if you have your Bibles today, I want to invite you to turn back to Proverbs. We will be in Proverbs chapter 4 today. Last week, we kind of ended up a four-week series on spiritual growth. We wanted to take, really it started out, I was just going to be one sermon, but it wound up into a series, which is good. We took about the whole month of January to talk about where our church is going, and I want you to have a better understanding of how you fit into it and what I am trying to do and trying to accomplish. I just think that is really, really important for everybody to understand that.

I am always conscious of the fact that I want to help you understand where we are going, what we are trying to accomplish, because obviously it is the church that is going to get the job done. You need to be well advised and just be in tune with where the Spirit of God is leading us, and it is always a good thing just to spend some time like that. So we had some really good messages the last four weeks on your spiritual growth. Last week we talked about Ezekiel chapter 47. I actually showed you the process as moving through the waters that come out of the throne of God, a type of the Holy Spirit of God.

But today we are going to get back to work in the book of Proverbs, which is what we have been doing. We started Proverbs a while back. It has been something we have wanted to do around here. We just never had other things we had to get done first, but we started it, and I have thoroughly enjoyed it. I think I probably have spent more time in my life in the book of Proverbs than any other book of the Bible, and honestly thought I had a fairly decent understanding of it. But I must tell you that coming through and preparing it and going through it to this degree that I have had to do at this time to bring you something every Sunday, it has really opened up my eyes to so many things that I had never seen before, and I have really enjoyed it. I hope it has been a blessing for you.

But, you know, as we come through the first three chapters of Proverbs, we now understand that it is about us as a son, God's son. I told you how that the first seven chapters, every one of those chapters, start out with it talking about "my son," and it is a picture of God speaking to you and me in a practical way. It is a great book that talks about, for you and I, getting the two greatest attributes of God that there are, and that is God's wisdom and God's understanding. My goal as a pastor is to help you do that.

I recognize and realize being in this a little longer than most of you, and seeing probably more dynamics than most of you from my position of just being in Christianity with churches and all of that. I think the number one thing that a Christian has to have if they are going to survive today is the ability to see things as God sees them and understand them as God understands them. Over and over again, we saw the Holy Spirit develop this theme in the first three chapters just from different angles in different ways.

Today we are going to move into chapter 4, and it is a chapter that really, I think, pulls a lot of things together for us as far as getting the wisdom of God and His understanding. All that goes along with it and really helps you better understand why our church is the way that it is. I never make any apologies for our church to anybody. I have said it many, many, many, many times, and I continue to say it that I understand in the day and age of Christianity that we live, our church is not for everybody. Most churches take the position that this is a church that everybody can be happy and everybody needs to just... That is not necessarily true here. I mean, it is a church that you can truly be happy in, but it is going to be based on what you are going to do with the Word of God, not some dog and pony show that we put on up here that just keeps you entertained as we come down through it.

I think it is always important that when people come into our church, I think a lot of people come to churches today looking for something that they do not find in Christianity. Everybody in our church is on different levels, but I can say something about probably everybody in our church. You may be all on different levels. You may be on different levels of understanding the Bible. You may be even on different levels of understanding of involvement. I understand that. But I think the one thread that goes through everybody that would call themselves a member of this church is a simple fact that you love the Bible. The Word of God means something to you. You love it. That is the greatest characteristic, I think, of our church is the fact that there are people here almost without exception, probably without exception. That does not mean you will always do what is right. It does not mean you will always follow everything the way that you should. But deep down inside, there is a core value in you that you recognize the Bible for what it is, and you love it for what it is. Our job is to help that get better in your life and the things that we do.

But, you know, it is a thing where I always want in our Christian life over the years, there will be sermons that you hear, hundreds of them. Then there will be sermons that you better hear. There are sermons that are so exact in what they hold for you in putting a lot of things together. I think it is this way when we get into Chapter 4. This teaching today and probably next week and probably throughout the whole chapter is one of those things that you better really grasp and try to understand. As far as I am concerned, and we have talked about balance in the church. As far as I am concerned, what I am going to talk about today and next week really forms the balance of what all churches should be. I think the balance of all Christianity.

It starts when you begin to understand and begin to look at and see why Christianity today is no longer the force in the world that it once was. I think that you would have to be pretty simple-minded to not understand that most people today in the world look at Christianity as a joke. There was a time when Christianity had some power to it. 150 years ago if you went into a bank and you wanted to get some money for a loan on your house or do something and this that. And the bankers say what kind of collateral do you have? The guy would say, well, I am a member of a Methodist church in town. That is all you really needed to say. Or you said I am a member of the Baptist church. You got the loan based on the fact that you had the character and the quality to be associated with something that back then people really knew stood for something. Do not try that today. I do not think it will work for you in any way, shape or form.

Now, let us read here chapter 4 verses 1 through 4 and we are going to start to kind of look at this and go as far as we can today with it.

Proverbs 4:1-4

1 Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

2 For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.

3 For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.

4 He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words, keep my commandments, and live.

Now, Father, help us today to glean from this what you have. I think probably to help us see probably what is the number one fundamental thing that is wrong with Christianity today and wrong with a lot of Christians. I thank God, Lord, for the men and women that your moms and dads that you brought into this church. I thank you, Father, for their love for you and for the Word of God and for the fact that they want to be and do everything that God wants them to be. Help us today in all that we endeavor to do for you to give you the honor and glory and bless us today with your presence and Holy Spirit of God, lead and guide us into all truth. We will thank you and praise you in Jesus name for a sake we ask it. Amen.

I. The Threefold Application of Proverbs

Now, you want to remember our three applications in the book of Proverbs. Historically, Solomon is writing to his son, his literal son. We know it is a picture of the nation of Israel as God's son and God is dealing with them and them getting the wisdom of God and not to be deceived. But inspirationally, in a practical sense, it is you and me. You and me as God's child, God's son, getting the wisdom of God and the understanding of God that we make the right choices in life. We have talked about anything, we understand now that life is about choices.

In verse 1, he says, "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father." That is God to you and me, and "attend," in other words, stay in attendance with this, "to know understanding." Verse 2 goes on and says, then he gives us the key to getting all that God has where God has placed it in His word. He says there in verse 2, "For I give you good doctrine." Verse 4 goes on and says, then retain God's word in your heart.

Now, when I am done with this chapter, those of you that will listen and will pay attention to it, will understand how and why better, why we do things here the way that we do. I do not make any apology for it. Maybe you will understand a little bit better. Maybe if you are looking for a church, you will say that is the kind of church I am looking for in a world where you do not have anybody who stands for anything today. But that is your choice. But you will at least understand where we are coming from here.

Verse 3 gives the picture of a young Christian being taught by a father figure, Solomon in the story historically talking to his own son, the things of God. He says, "For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother."

II. The Foundation of Bible Doctrine

Now, what this passage shows you is this: it is the fact that the word of God, the knowledge of God, which we want to get, the understanding of God, which you want to get, is simply found in, and here is the key, is only found in the doctrine of the Bible. He says, "I give you good doctrine."

Now, if your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and we know that 1 Corinthians 6:19 says that it is, then I want you to understand that when you begin to build that temple, you have to build that temple on Bible doctrine as a foundation.

Now, the word doctrine means to teach, and that is the way you hear it most times, but it is more than that. It is not just simply to teach, but rather, as it is laid out in the Bible, not just to teach anything, but to teach a very specific teaching on a subject that is the right way to look at it. When we talk about Bible doctrine, and you hear me talking about it a lot, you are going to see it a lot in the Bible today. When you hear me talk about learning Bible doctrine, you are going to understand by the end of this how important it is, because I am talking about specific teachings that are given in the Word of God that are the correct and the right teachings on things that you and I need to know and you and I need to understand. That is the importance of it. Very important. It is a thing where it does not just mean to teach anything. In the Bible context, it means to teach specifically what the Bible teaches to tell us, to give us the understanding of God and the wisdom of God.

Now, doctrine. The Bible is filled with hundreds of doctrines, thousands of doctrines, that are specific teachings in the Bible that forms for you and me the right mindset about things. Then once you get, here is the process, once you get the right doctrine and you get it into your life and it forms the right thinking process, then you start to make the decisions in your life based on those doctrines. The Bible is filled with them.

➤ The Doctrine of Salvation

Now, you take the doctrine of salvation. I have given you this before on Thursday night. The doctrine of salvation is such a grandiose concept in the Bible and such an immense understanding of God's love and mercy. There are probably at least, I think I have given you 12, but there are probably more than that. There are 12 other doctrines that just simply go along with the doctrines of salvation.

➤ Related Doctrines

See, those are all doctrines in the Bible that will give you the absolute specific truth from God on the concept of salvation.

➤ Other Key Doctrines

When I use the word doctrine, I am talking about there is a specific, right, biblical teaching in the Bible on that subject. So I want you to grasp that.

We have a discipleship program around here. That discipleship program is built on 10 lessons. You do not even think of it this way because, you know, we just do it because over the years, you say, well, there are hundreds of doctrines in the Bible. How am I going to ever learn that? Well, here is how it works. Over the years, over the months, when you start to do what many of you are doing and write down these things and learn the right things about things in the Bible, you are learning doctrine.

You hear me talk about the church and where do I go? I go to Acts chapter 11 and Acts chapter 13, the model church at Antioch, being the model for us as a New Testament church. When I do that, and you have heard me say it a hundred times, but when I do that, what I am giving you is the doctrine of the New Testament local church. That is the Bible teaching on it.

In our discipleship lessons, we have 10 lessons. When you come through those 10 lessons, basically those 10 lessons are built on at least 10 Bible doctrines.

1. The doctrine of salvation.
2. The doctrine of eternal security.
3. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit of God.
4. A lesson on the Bible.
5. A lesson on God's will.
6. A lesson on civil government.
7. A lesson on baptism.
8. A lesson on the Lord's Supper.
9. A lesson on the church.

Those are doctrines, specific right teachings from the Bible on those subjects. That is what doctrine is.

III. Paul and Timothy: A Model for Discipleship

Now, Paul and Timothy are a great model. Paul and Timothy are a great model because it shows in a lot of ways what we do. Paul's job was to train young men. His whole life was devoted to taking young men and young women and training them in the Scriptures. There is a great parallel between his life and my life because that is what God has called me to do. He does it a lot better than I do, but that is still my calling. My whole life has been filled with young men and young ladies who want to learn the Bible, moms and dads who come in, and some of you are in your 50s and your 60s now, but when we first hooked up, you were very young.

Steve Bracken, I think, is close to 60. Is not he? How old is he? Fifty-two. He has got a wife. She is 28. Got a wife. Got three kids. In fact, they go places and people will say, oh, is this your grandfather? I mean, this, you know, he will not like to tell you that, but I am telling you that. See? I first met Steve Bracken when he was 14 years old. Jan Hill. Where are you at, Jan? How old are you? Never mind, Jan. Jan Hill has been around for a long time. You know, she was telling me just the other day how that she was reading in the paper the day that Custer was slaughtered out there at the Little Bighorn, you know, as a child. But when I first met Jan, she was not married to John. She was, what, 18, 19, 20 years old? A long time ago, see? John Hill is

the same way. I mean, I remember, I remember, I remember him, I just cannot remember him. Barb Christie and Phil Christie. I remember Barb when she was not married to Phil. Phil was an over-the-road truck driver. I mean, way back when. I still remember the day she came into my office years and years and years ago, weeping and crying and wanting to give her life to God and did, see?

In other words, God puts people in your world like that and you grow and you get to the point where your job is to take them, to help them. We are seeing now cycle after cycle after cycle after cycle of that. It is a thing where some of you have been around 10 years, some of you have been around 12 years, some of you have been around five years, some of you have been around four years, some of you have been three years, but you are all in the same boat. That is what the church is supposed to do. Paul and Timothy are a great model of that. Paul did it for Timothy. You know why? Because Paul then wanted Timothy to go out and do it to somebody else, and he did.

In fact, both 1 and 2 Timothy major on Paul's emphasis to Timothy about keeping true and right doctrine. He goes over and over and over and over again with him. He warns him over and over and over again how not to get messed up on bad doctrine. It is just all through his books. When Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15, he says to "study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." You see?

Now, that is what doctrine does. Doctrine divides. Doctrine divides what is right from what is wrong. That is what it does. Doctrine never joins anything together. Doctrine divides. You see, this is the number one problem that we have in our church, not with the people in it, but as the church. This is going to be the unending source of our problems. We are a church who believes that the Bible doctrine lays out itself correctly. We believe what the Bible says that doctrine rightly divides.

Now, that sounds good and sounds nice, but here is the problem. We live in a world that wants to get everybody together. We live in a world where everybody, we live with churches today where everybody wants to get together. Everybody wants to be the same. Everybody wants to get away with the differences. It is a thing where it will never work for a Bible believing church. It will never work for a church who believes what Paul said. He says all scripture was given by inspiration and is profitable. But it is profitable for number one for doctrine. That shows you what is right. Then it is profitable, the second thing, for reproof. That shows you what is wrong. Then the third thing it is profitable for, he says, for correction. Now it will show you not only what is right and what is wrong, it will show you how to fix it. Then the fourth thing it is profitable for is instruction in righteousness. You see, that is what the Bible does. That is what doctrine does. Doctrine divides error from truth.

When you have error in your life and you get into the Bible, and you know you all, that is the way you got saved. When you and I got saved, we had error in our life. You know how you got saved? You either went to a church or somebody got ahold of you, or somebody witnessed of you, or you read a tract someplace, and what the Holy Spirit of God began to do is take the

specific teachings of the Bible and divide it from where you are at in your life. You did not even have to make a choice. That is just the way it is.

You know, we look at all the problems that are out there, and they are not really complicated. A lot of times people like them try to make them complicated. But at the end of the day, every problem in this world is simply one of two things. The world and the Christians today want to get everybody together. Bible doctrine will always separate everything out and only leave what is right.

Now, I want you to notice that the number one thing that is profitable for above all else in the Bible, it was not salvation. No, I am not underplaying salvation, thank God for it, but I want you to understand that when God gave the Bible, the number one thing that it was profitable for was not salvation, it was doctrine, which is truth. Because I will tell you, folks, without truth, you do not have any salvation. There lies the problem.

If this church was a car engine, then the spark plugs, that is what makes an engine run, would be the doctrines in the Bible. Without doctrine, you have absolutely nothing. In Proverbs chapter 3, he now tells us that the key to our getting God's wisdom and understanding is simply the good doctrine that he gives us, versus the bad doctrine that is out there that man wants to give us.

Now, this is absolutely vital that you understand this because without it, without doctrine, the Bible will never make any sense to you. You will be blown away, as the Bible says in Ephesians 4:14, by every wind of doctrine. Doctrine is, as I said earlier, is the absolute fundamental key to making good choices in life. You make good choices in life based on the doctrine that tells you what is right versus what is wrong.

IV. The Pastor's Role: Command and Teach Doctrine

Now, there is a great verse in 1 Timothy that is, again, Paul to Timothy. But I have always looked at it, as I have always laid out how I look at you, I have always looked at it as my responsibility to you. I never tell you necessarily why the things I have you do or I try to do with you. Sometimes I do, sometimes I do not, sometimes it just is not necessary. But everything I do to try to get you in the Bible, every encouragement I give you, everything I try to do one on one to help you is to get you to this place in 1 Timothy 4:12-13, that Paul wanted to get Timothy to.

He says in 1 Timothy 4:11, he says this, "These things command and teach." Now, that is a commandment to everybody for me to teach these things. So I do. I take the commandments in the Bible real seriously. I think when Paul gives me a model and shows me to do something, hey, he obviously knew more about it than I did, or I do. So I follow his lead. I always look back and see what works. A lot of preachers today, they want to try to reinvent the wheel. They think, well, everybody has just preached the Bible or did this and do that. So I am going to come up with some new grandiose plan that is going to really knock Christianity on its ear. No, it is not going to knock it on its ear. But I will tell you if the kids would not hear where it would knock you on. You cannot reinvent the wheel. Nothing is better and clearer and cleaner than just preaching the Word of God. Nothing that man comes up with, no program, no circumstance, nothing that he

does will ever take the place of just standing in the pulpit, opening up the wonderful words of life and telling you Bible doctrine. That is the key. But we have lost that today.

So he says in verse 11, "These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Then he says in verse 13, and by the way, this is a great devotion. It is a great sermon, but it is a great devotion. If you want to give a devotion at some point, one of your ball teams or something, verse 13 simply says this, "Till I come," that is the rapture of the church, "give attendance," keep doing this. "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine."

Now, those three things are what I try to, whatever I do in the Bible with you, whatever I teach, whatever I do, whatever I give you, in my mind, it comes back to that thing right there. Those are the three things that I want to try to get you to do.

10. Reading the Word of God: First of all, I want to get you to start reading the Word of God, because when you read the Word of God, then you take it internally. You cannot let the Word of God get inside you without it changing you. You just simply cannot. I say it all the time. The Bible is the only book in the world. When you start reading it, it starts reading you. When you start reading, simply the reading the Word of God, one chapter a day, two chapters a day, whatever you do, when you start, and some of you like those little daily bread, that is fine too, whatever works for you. But when you start reading the Word of God, you start taking it internally. You cannot take that perfect, precious book inside you internally and not have it affect you. So the first thing I try to get you to do is read it. I do that by encouraging you. I encourage you on Sunday morning, on Thursday night, I show you things in the Bible that you have never seen before, all for the express purpose of whetting your appetite, so maybe you will start to read it.
11. Exhortation: The second thing he says is "give attendance to reading and then to exhortation." The second thing I try to bring you up to the level to get to is to put it out. Exhortation is preaching. Now, that does not mean you have to have a pulpit and you have to have a church. You put out what you have taken in. Exhortation is like exhaling. You take out what you took in. You took breath in and you put it out. You exhale. Exhortation is taking what God has given you in through the Word of God by reading, and then you put it out and give it to others.
12. Doctrine: Then the third thing is simply, "till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and there it is, to doctrine." You see, I just do not want you to read the book. I am not satisfied with you just being a good preacher of the book. No, what I really want you to do in combination of those first two is I want you to know the book. I do not want you just to believe some things about the Bible. I want you to know why you believe what you believe about the Bible.

The thing that separates us from a cult is the fact that a cult will always tell you what to believe. A real Bible-believing church, and they are so close sometimes that people who are really stupid cannot see the difference. The difference is a cult will tell you what to think. A Bible-believing church will make you think for yourself. You will get in that book and you will take what God

has given you, and you will understand the book. You will know the book. In time, you will know why you believe what you believe.

Hey, I love you to death, and I know you are all on different levels, but you will never really be of any value to God until you really understand why you believe what you believe. Yet, I am going to say that I know that probably everybody in here knows something on a different level than others. You all know something. You cannot tell me you have not been here for three or four years or however long you have come and you have not learned something. I do not believe that. You are all smarter than that. But I am telling you, I am telling you, "till I come, give attendance to reading the Word of God, to exhortation and doctrine." You have got to have doctrine in your life. Solomon said, "I give you good doctrine." Good doctrine is the key to getting God's wisdom and understanding.

V. The Death of Bible Doctrine in Modern Christianity

Now, I said this all the time, and it is no secret that today the churches are in a mess. You know, you get up there late night before you go to bed, and on some of them weird channels, you know, you get a, buy the video, girls gone wild, you know, or something like that. I am certainly waiting for the moment. I am going to order this one. Got to be one coming up. The church has gone wild. Because they have. Absolutely have.

I tell you all the time that churches today are just like the Book of Judges. The Book of Judges is a good yardstick to measure Christianity today. The key to the Book of Judges, which is the weirdest book in the Bible, much like Christianity, is back in Judges 21:25 when the whole answer to the whole mess is simply that there is no king in Israel, and everybody is doing what is right in their own eyes. That is Christianity today. When there is no doctrine in your life, when there is no doctrine in your church, then you are left to your own devices, and we know where that will lead. It is just that simple.

Now, I want to show you something, and I have never given you this before. But I want to show you the definitive verse on doctrine in the Bible. I think it is important for where we are trying to go here and what I want you to try to grasp. Immediately, because you are smart people, immediately you will see where the problem lies today, and hopefully, you know, better understand why this church takes the stand that it does. Again, I am not making any apology for it. We will always take this stand because I understand how important doctrine is.

Now, at the first coming of Christ, and I want you to turn over to Matthew chapter 7 here. At the first coming of Christ, when Christ shows up, He faces some issues. He faces some issues with the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. It was never the common ordinary people who really had a problem with Jesus. It was always the religious hierarchy of His own faith that had a problem with Him, much like you see today. What I am going to show you is the real issue that Christ had, believe it or not, is the exact same issue that we have today. You are going to see it.

Matthew 7:28-29

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Now, that is your definitive verse in the Bible on doctrine. Now, there is your reason, no matter what a preacher tells you, a pastor, a Sunday school teacher, or anybody, this is the reason why we have to have doctrine. Right doctrine is absolutely vital importance to us. Right in that passage, he tells you that the reason the scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees hated Christ was because of his doctrine.

Now, I have got to tell you, they both have doctrine. It goes similar along the same line based on the Old Testament and the Nation of Israel. But the problem is one doctrine was right and the other doctrine was wrong. Is that the problem? Uh-uh. That may be true, but that is not the problem. You know what the real problem is? One guy with doctrine, his doctrine was the final authority. The other guy's doctrine had no authority. You want a final authority in your life? Get the right doctrine in your life.

You hear me talk about all the time about the Word of God, the King James Bible being the absolute perfect Word of God for all things in faith and practice. You know why I believe that? It is the only Bible on the planet today that has the right doctrine. The right doctrine is my final authority. You have shown in that verse right there, right in the middle of it, that the problem the scribes and the Pharisees had was that Christ's doctrine was his authority and the scribes had no authority for anything that they said.

Now, it does not stop there. When you get over to Acts 5:28, when the apostles are there in Jerusalem, this is well before Acts 7, you will find that they are being criticized because, guess what? They are filling Jerusalem with their doctrine. You get into Acts 13:12, and again, in the early church in Acts, it says, "Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." You see, doctrine is the key to everything because it forms up your final authority.

Today we have the exact same issue in Christianity, and we have experienced the death of Bible doctrine. We see exactly the exact same thing in our churches in Christianity today. You see, the Christian world wants to get us all together. They will call it interdenominationalism. They will call it nondenominationalism. That simply means no specific teaching, no controversial teachings, nothing that will divide anybody, nothing that will make anybody bad or good, get rid of all the differences.

Now, in the last 20 years, you have seen this happen with many, many Baptist churches. Many Baptist churches have come to the place that they take the word Baptist off their name. Now, the reason why they do that is because there is a certain set of doctrines. Now, I am the first one to tell you, Baptist can be the goofiest people on the planet. I am not suggesting for any stretch of the imagination, and this is one of their arguments that there are so many goofy Baptists in the Baptist circles that they do not want to be associated with them. Well, let me tell you how many goofy people are in the nondenominational theater of operations. Wherever you go in life, there

are goofy people. Did you ever marry a woman or marry a man and get into the family, and somewhere on that family tree there was not a squirrel hanging out there on a limb? Show me the place wherever you go, whoever you marry, wherever you get into, whatever club you join, whatever fitness center you go to, whatever this, whatever church, show me anything in this world that is not rife with goofy people.

I fully understand it, Baptist, and I have come to the place where I always tell them when they ask me, I say, "Are you a Baptist?" And I say, "I am a Baptist with an explanation." I would like to explain to you why I am. Then they will ask me, "Are you a Southern Baptist?" No. They will say, "Are you a GRB Baptist?" No. They will say, "Well, you must be an independent Baptist." And I say, "No, I am not an independent." They say, "Well, what kind of Baptist are you?" I said, "I am a dependent Baptist. I am dependent on that book for everything." I know the independent mindset, and that is exactly where it leads. You become independent of everything, including that book. I am telling you, they are goofy people. That is the reason, see? That is the reason.

But the bottom line is that Baptist, goofy or not goofy, the Baptist mindset stands for a set of doctrines. That down through the history of the world, since the inception, the Chodensians and the Albigensians and the Anabaptists, it divided people. It divided people over truth. But they all say the same thing. We do it to reach more people. Old Bob Jones Sr. said one time, "It is never right to do wrong, to get the chance to do right."

Now, I like to see people saved. I think that that is the job of ultimately the church, is to win people to Christ and replicate itself. But I want you to know, the number one thing in this church is or never will be getting people saved. The number one thing in this church is and always shall be truth. Because if you do not have the truth to stand on, doctrine, then whatever else you have got really does not matter. You will wind in that same hokey mess that everybody else gets into today, where you do it to reach more people. People do not like Baptists, so you cannot reach them.

Show me one time when Christ was on this earth. I will just ask for one. I will give you \$1,000 for every time you can find one. Show me one time where Christ ever backed off in any specific doctrine that he taught, so somebody would get saved. You know what? When it comes to your salvation or anybody's salvation, it is the hard line up against that book. God is not going to say, well, do not worry about this. Just go ahead and get saved. You have to conform to God. God is not going to conform to you. You have to change your way of life to an absolute standard, an authority. The authority is not going to change itself for you or for me. Come on.

But when salvation becomes the prime focus with all the great doctrines of the Bible, they become secondary issues with absolutely no relevance. They do that because nobody will get offended by their preaching. That is why they do it. What we have seen today in the death of Bible doctrine is men and women, Christians who once believed and understood what they believed about the Bible and had a final authority, has moved into the arena of the scribes and the Pharisees who have no final authority, and to do that, you have to leave. I am going to say it again. You have to leave your doctrinal roots. Like it or not like it without any apology, this church will never leave its doctrinal roots. We know where our bread is buttered, and we know

what is the best thing for us, and it is a book that is much more perfect than anybody in this room, including me. That has to be our final authority.

Now, the devil's move is and always was to get any doctrine that would divide anybody out who did not accept the truth. In the Bible, it is called leaven. You will find when you go back and study the Old Testament that there was a certain bread that they had to bake, that the priest had to eat, called the showbread. It is a picture of the Word of God. The instructions for making that bread are given better than Betty Crocker ever laid anything out. It clearly says that when you make that bread that is a picture of the Word of God called the showbread, it is not to have any leaven in it. Because leaven in the Bible is a picture of a mixture of the things in the world. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Leaven in the Bible represents bad doctrine. You let one bad doctrine come in, it is like raising rabbits. You have got two, you have got four. You have got four, you have got eight. You have got eight, you have got 12. I am telling you, bad doctrine creeping in is exactly what it does.

Now let me show you something else. All the new Bibles, somebody says, why do you stay with the King James Bible? Because it is the only book that stays true to the doctrine. In the New Testament alone, in the New Testament alone, there are 45 times that the Holy Spirit of God used the word doctrine. You go pick any new translation you want. I do not care where you are going to find it. Go get anyone you want and you will find that out of that 45 times, 39 times they took the word doctrine out. They do not want you to have doctrine. The goal of the Laodicean Church is to get rid of doctrine.

I gave you a verse 2 Timothy 2:15, "study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Every new Bible on the market, "rightly dividing the word of truth" is gone. They call it correctly handling it. That is nice.

Now, if you have not figured this out already, let me clue you in here. I get a lot of criticism for some of the things I say. I understand. I get it. Do not ever feel sorry for me. I am a big boy. I totally understand when you shoot your mouth off and say the things that I say, you are going to get it. I get it. I understand it. I got it. But I want you to know something. In my particular case, God has equipped me for this battle.

I love the movie Billy Jack. He died a couple of weeks ago. Broke my heart. Did not eat for a day. But my favorite movie about Billy Jack, you know who Billy Jack was? He was that goofy guy. He was real quiet. He was an ex-Green Beret or whatever he was. He wore that goofy looking hat. He would always show up when people needed anything. He was a martial arts expert. He is standing there in a park one time and there were three guys that were bullying everybody. He was always there to take care of the boys. I love a guy like that. I will never forget, he is standing there and this redneck is just giving him all kinds of grief. Billy Jack is just standing there smiling at him. Then the guy finally says, "What are you smiling about?" Billy Jack says, "Because in a minute I am going to kick your side of your head in and there ain't a thing you are going to do about it." And then he did.

Now I do not know a lot of things in life. But let me tell you something, I am equipped for this battle. You can crack on me all you want. I do not care. Sticks and stones may break my bones,

but words will never hurt me. That is in the Bible. You can crack on me all you want. You say whatever you want to say, I am fair game. I understand that. You cannot stand up here and say the things I say and put it out there on a website and not get clobbered for it. I totally get it. I totally get it. But I want to tell you something. You can crack on me all this time and I will just let it fly. You attack this book and you and I are going to war.

You see this book right here? Now I cannot speak for you, but this book parachuted out of heaven down in Atlanta in my backyard about 30, 40 years ago. I cannot speak for you, but when God wrote this book, he wrote it and put my name in it and gave it to me. This book saved my soul. This book made my family love God and serve God in the Word of God. This book has given me everything that I can ever want in life. This book has protected me and given me and God gave it to me. It has been the absolute standard of my life and I believe it is the absolute internal infallible Word of God. I mean from cover to cover, including the cover. You can mess with me all you want. You start to take a crack on God's book and, brother, I only have one rule in my warfare. No quarter asked, no quarter given. This is God's book. I know I do not need to defend it. I just like to. I like kicking this out of your head in with the Bible and you cannot do anything about it.

Now, I have one of the areas that I get rightly justifiedly criticized for. You are speaking out against churches, denominations, or even preachers. I do not think of myself as being smart in any great way. I mean, I was in the fourth grade so long the kids brought me to the apple. They thought I was the teacher. I am no great intellectual genius. I just believe that God wrote a book and it is a final authority and he gave it to me. If you bring your diamonds over or your money over and say, God, guard this with your life, you know, and I will be back in three weeks, I would guard it with my life. But God gave me something much more precious to guard than something anybody on earth could ever give me. He gave me this book right here. He left it in my care and my keeping. I will tell you what, you know what? Pick on me all you want. You pick on that book. We will go to war.

I mean, I get it. I am not the smartest guy in the world. It is just when you get into dealing with people who have no doctrine, they are the dumbest people in the world. You know what my favorite saying is in life? I live by this. In the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is king. That is a true statement. In the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is king. People say, well, he is so negative. I am the most positive person you have ever found in your life. You know why? Because I am positive. I have got a final authority right here in my hand. That is positive. I am not negative. See, I have got a final authority. I have got a tough job. I know that. I have got a nasty job, but somebody has got to do it. I watch the TV shows on television, you know, the dirtiest jobs on the planet. Hey, the dirtiest job on the planet is being a Philadelphia preacher in a Laodicean church age any day of the week. I will get out there on those oceans and get them crabbed by the little crabbies and do whatever I have got to do with them.

Now look at this. Now look at this and tell me what you think I should do. Here is my dilemma. I have got to face you every Sunday. Here is my dilemma. I would love to be a wuss like most Christians. I would. Anything I am saying here, I am really not talking about any of you because you all love the book. I believe that with all my heart. Whatever level you want, you will take

your stand. I believe that. I believe that. But let us face it. Christianity is just a bunch of wusses out there. You shake the average pastor's hand. You think you just picked up a dead fish. I want to tell you something.

Now here is my dilemma. I mean, I would love to be a wuss just like everybody else, but I have got to face myself in that book every day. Now you tell me what I do with this. Here is my dilemma. Here is what I am faced with. Maybe you do not. Not you. Maybe you do not listen to this. You do not read the Bible. But unfortunately, I started a long time ago and I am stuck. You got addicted to your drugs. I got addicted to mine. I do not know what to tell you.

1 Timothy 4:15-16

15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Now what am I supposed to do with that? Now you see that? I mean I have known God's people over the years, down through my life. I have known God's people that could ever take a stand for anything in the Bible. They ever cost them something. They play it safe all their life. Last week we talked about the waiters of Christianity. They get in the water of the spirit of God to the ankles of the knees, but they do not go any farther.

Now that verse tells me as a pastor. Forget it as a pastor. That verse tells me as a Christian. The one I am to take heed unto myself and to continue in that good doctrine. In doing so, one, I will save myself. Now that is not salvation. Saved is used differently in the Bible sometimes. That is not saved as getting saved as we know getting saved and trusting Christ as your own savior. This is something else. He says that in that good doctrine and doing so, I will save myself and then I will save others, you, from getting what? Deceived with bad doctrine.

Now let me ask you a question. If you are asleep at home in your bed at night and I just happened to be driving by there, you know, and driving out and I see some guy out there with a Molotov cocktail and he throws it up against your house and your house bursts into flames. I recognize the guy, I get his license plate and the first thing I do is beat on your door and get you out. Then I start coming over there and the police show up, the fire show up, and I start to say, hey, I saw him, I saw him, I got his license plate. I know the guy who tried to kill you. I would be your hero. You would love me. You would buy me dinner. But I can stand up here and say, you better watch out for this bad teaching and this bad teaching and this bad doctrine or what this guy is putting out because this is going to kill you. Why am I not your hero? Do not answer that just yet. I have got another question I want to ask you.

Now this is total participation. If you are a visitor here, you cannot really answer this question. Maybe you can just by being the last 40 minutes you have been here. Let me ask you a question. You like what you get here? Two of you. You like what you get here? I mean, Sunday morning, Thursday night, people ministry, New Year's, all the special Bible things we do. I mean, come on. Well, gee, let me ask you a sobering thought. Who do you think over the last 150 years of time?

You think it just happened? You see, it is so easy in churches to come any church here, anywhere you go, take what you like and then complain about the rest. Take it apart.

You see, I take the stand that I take willingly and I will pay the price that I pay, as many of you will, willingly. I do it for me first and then as the Bible says, I will pay the price that I pay. I do it for you willingly. I do it for me first and then as the Bible says, I do it for you. The next generation that that verse, verse 15 gets fulfilled in your life, that "thy profiting may appear to all." It is for your good.

In America, we have a fast moving socialization of United States of America. You have not figured that out yet. We are headed down a socialistic, communistic road. We are headed down a road of entitlements. Entitlements gives the idea that everything is free. You want to get a free cell phone? Get an Obama cell phone. When he put out his Obamacare, it was like your rates are going to be so much cheaper. You are going to your rates for your health care is going to be as cheap as your phone bill every month. You obviously never saw my kids phone bill every month when you were growing up. But anyway, it is going to work out wonderful. It is going to be free. When you cannot pay it, we are going to help. We are going to have we are going to have. We are going to have entitlements that you can get money to get it. Everybody gets the idea. Oh, man, it is free. It is free.

I had a guy one time that had. I do not know how many kids she had in and she come to the place where every time she had one, she she did not have any. She just went off to one of those hospitals that has it. She came out and she said to one of our gals, she says, oh, man, free health care is great. My girl looked at her and said, free health care is great. There is no free health care. There is not nothing free in this planet. Somebody always pays the tab, even if it is not you. Having right doctrine, having good doctrine to have on your lap, to have everything you have got to come in and nitpick. And I like this. I do not like that. No, the charts on the ground. Why is it up there? Why is it that they have got more colors in and that? What is that stupid thing doing up there? What does all that mean over here? Somebody paid the tab and the price for you to have the good doctrine you have. Amen. It is just that simple.

The death of Bible doctrine. You see, when you have a final authority and that is the doctrine you follow, it simply will divide out those who do not want a king in their life, as in the book of Judges, the final authority. Come on, the Bible already told us in 2 Timothy chapter 4, "for the time will come when they shall not endure sound doctrine." We know that. Now, it is just that simple.

Now, I have no problem telling you who is not teaching or teaching bad doctrine. I know, I mean, not just the way it is. You know what Paul said? Paul said in Romans 16:17, "mark them which cause divisions among you." Now, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." You believe that? You like that verse? That verse is a good verse, is not it? Nice little verse. True verse, is not it? But you know what you have forgotten? Romans 16:17 is just as true. Where John 3:16 says that for God so loved the world that he did, Romans 16:17 says "mark them that cause division." Now, why can you accept the one and not the other?

I will tell you why, because God's people, and again, I am not talking to you as individuals here. I am just talking in the sense of God's people in general. Why is it that you can love certain things in the Bible, but in other things that are maybe controversial, you always want to play it safe. You will always leave somebody else to pick up the tab for good doctrine, but enjoy it when you get it. Oh, I am telling you, man. Some of God's people I have met in life have never stood for God in public for anything, ever.

Now, I understand how important doctrine is. I understand what Solomon is saying in chapter 4 when he says, "I give you good doctrine." I also understand that people, pastor churches, want to take it from you. So what? I am supposed to do. Would you like it? That I am just supposed to stand by and let that happen?

Let me ask you another question. Say you are out at the mall someplace, and I just happen to be at the mall there too. I see you over there, but you are busy over there. You are eating at that food court, you know. You are down there with your kid, you know, and everybody. They are having fun. They have got the little playground thing over here. You are out there, you know, and you are distracted. I am standing over here just kind of enjoying with your kids and looking around out there, you know. All of a sudden I see this man come up, and your little girl over here is doing something. I see this man come up, and he grabs one of your kids. Clamps his hand over his mouth so he cannot scream. With everybody busy around, he kind of humps him over and kind of walks him out and gets his own kid, and down the line the kid is quick. Just like any kid who is throwing a temper tantrum. You see that a lot today.

Now if I just stood by and watched him steal your kid, and later after you got the police there, I come down and said, yeah, I saw the whole thing. I was not finished with my coke yet. You would be terribly upset with me, would not you? Would you not want me to step in and keep somebody from stealing your child if I had the ability to do that? That is a question I would like for you to say yes or no to. Then why do you get upset when some man tries to steal your crown? And I try to stop it. I mean, Revelation 3:11 says, "hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Just as I would not stand by and let somebody take your child, I will not stand by and let somebody get up there and preach bad doctrine that will rob you from your crown. You may go ahead and let them rob you, but it will not be because I stayed silent on it. That is my job. Dirtiest job in America.

We here in this church will always operate with the Bible as our final authority. Doctrine will always be the number one aspect that we hold to, and we will make no apology for it. I told you already that the time will come that we will not endure sound doctrine.

VI. The Shift from Preaching to Teaching

What are the major shifts in Bible Christianity? Next week I am going to show you the whole process. Next week I am going to take you all the way back 200 years and show you how we got in the mess that we are in so you completely understand what he is talking about and how important doctrine is.

Well, 2 Timothy 4:3 shows us, "we're not enduring sound doctrine," shows us that the major movement that goes along with no doctrine is simply the replacing of the preaching of the Word of God with teaching of the Word of God. He says, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers."

Now, I totally understand that teaching is important. You want to talk about a church balance, the balance is between teaching and preaching and the blend of the two. Teaching has a purpose and preaching has a purpose. The blending of the two are the key to a successful balance in a church. But you say, well, what is the difference? Well, when you get rid of doctrine, then there is no more preaching and the teaching is also worthless.

Teaching today in most churches is non-offensive. Teaching is there to please you. Teaching is there to pacify you. Teaching is there to make you feel good about yourself. Teaching there is to lift you up, to fill you up, to edify you. I am not saying that is not important, but you do not ever want to get edified and lifted up unless somebody is just tearing the hide off of you in the process. That is what preaching does. You do not ever want to be taught how good you are without somebody preaching and bouncing out how rotten you are. If you cannot get that, you will be in hell. I do not want to tell you.

You should have seen kids that have grown up where the parents modeled them and gave them everything that they wanted. How about that kid that just killed somebody a couple of months ago and when he went before the judge, you know, the defense his lawyer made? It was one of affluence, chronic affluence. What is that? Well, Your Honor, his kids, his mom and dad gave him everything he wanted all of his life and never held back anything and was all positive and all good. He now in his life at 22 years old, he does not know the difference of responsibility and accountability because he has had the affluence of everything all of his life in a positive way. Now he is not responsible for this. Anybody here agree with that analogy? Well, it got him off. That is the world we live in. Killed one or two people smirking and laughing about it as he goes out of the courtroom.

But that is the world we live in. You see the market of Philadelphia in church. I mean, there was a time before most of you were born that good solid preaching was the cornerstone of any ministry. You do not know that because you have come along later. But the market of Philadelphia and age was great preachers, not great teachers. I am not saying that teaching is not important, but the market of Laodicean Church is teachers and no great preachers because there is no doctrine. Where are the Sam Jones's, the Billy Sunday's, the Bob Jones seniors, the White Talmadge's, the Motor Cayham, the Gypsy Smith's? Where are the D.L. Moody's, the Lester Rolloff's, the Phil Ward's, the Tommy Thomas's, the Namel Sabaccas? The hallmark of church today is teaching that has no doctrine and is non-offensive because we have taken everything out. Now we do not have any denomination. We are not Baptist. We are not this. We are just a big gray mush. We can all get together.

Now you hear me say it many times. I am not saying it just to say it. I truly mean it. There are some of you in here, many of you in here, male and female, that I would put up against any pastor in this city. When it comes down to sitting down and discussing that book and laying that

book out and rightly dividing it, I would not worry about you for two seconds. You know why? Because you have doctrine and you have got good doctrine. You know how to rightly divide the word of truth.

Now this is why that churches today have to put on a Las Vegas show for a Sunday morning service or a Sunday evening service. You see, when you do not have the Bible doctrine to feed their spirit, then you are going to have to come up with a performance to feed their flesh to keep them coming and call it a church. My job is to save myself from that doctrine and to save you from it if it is possible. The primary job of any church is to preserve and put out the truth in the form of Bible doctrine. You show what is right and then you show what is wrong and if it happens to spill over and get a church named or a pastor exposed, praise the Lord. I do not know what to tell you.

VII. The Cost of Preserving Sound Doctrine

Look at Romans chapter 6:17-18.

Romans 6:17-18

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

You see, in salvation there was one specific doctrine that you got saved by. Not a hundred, not twenty. You got saved by a doctrine that was held to when somebody paid the price for for the last sixteen hundred years in blood. Versus an organization that wanted to kill anybody that believed the way that you are sitting here believed today. They did not have air conditioning buildings. They did not have nice Bibles. They did not have comfortable chairs. They met wherever they could meet without getting killed by the opposition. Simply so you could have what you have today.

Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:2, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Hey, I am going to tell you something. Just you and I were saved born again by a specific doctrine, a doctrine of salvation. Not just any way to be saved, but he says a form of salvation that was delivered to somebody and handed down through the years. Let me tell you something. Somebody paid the delivery price for you and me to have the gospel.

In building people, the job of the pastor and the church is to protect that doctrine.

1 Timothy 1:3

3 As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

Oh, someone is not getting along and playing well with others. They are teaching a wrong doctrine. He says, "charge them." Call them out on it.

1 Timothy 1:9-10

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

There it is again. Now, are not you glad? I know I am. I know I cannot speak for you. But are not you glad that somebody was willing to pay the price down through history that you and I could have that sound doctrine today? Do you understand that it just did not come? You did not buy it off the shelf at the grocery store like you do a can of beans? Somebody actually paid the tab to deliver the doctrine that you hold in your hand today.

Where would we be if somebody down through history did not speak out? Where would we be today if somebody took the path of least resistance just like so many of God's people do? Where would we be, what would we have, or what would we not have if somebody back then was not willing to stand up and say, that is not right, I am going to stick with the book and pay the price, the delivered doctrine to us? Yet what about the next three or four generations that Jesus does not come? Yet who will be the keeper of the flame that others down the line after us get delivered into them, which somebody was so willing to pay the price to deliver to you and me?

1 Timothy 5:17

17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

A double honor. Now look at that. A double honor for staying with the word and laboring in doctrine. You will not find ten preachers in this city who know what that double honor is, and it is the only place you find it in the Bible, and it is connected with doctrine.

Now in 1 and 2 Timothy and in Titus you find Paul prepared his young men to pastor. I told you that already. Along with Philemon they are called the pastoral epistles. They are about preparing young men to preach. Out of 45 places, the New Testament, that talk about doctrine, 14 of them are found in those three books, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. You know why? That is how important doctrine is.

Now the job of the pastor and the church is to protect that. And those things and pass it on and pay the tab that somebody else can have it. When you start to build a church the right way and you build it on doctrine, you know what God always does? God will raise up the men and the women who will become the strong lions of that church, who will take a stand and be willing to pay the price. That is our job. Taking you young Christians, you lambs, and turning you into lions.

Titus 1:9

9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Somebody gave it to me and paid the price. I gave it to you and I will pay the price. Will anybody else here today carry it on and be willing to pay the price? Will you? He says, as he hath been taught that he may be able by what? Sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayer. You know what a gainsayer is? A gainsayer is somebody who gains things in life by what they say. They will gain advantage over you. They will gain advantage in some situation by what they say. He says, you convince them. You take them on.

Titus 1:10-12

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:

11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

12 One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

Wow, I guess Paul kind of did not have the sweet spirit of Christ there, did he, when he wrote that? Kind of having a bad day, is he? Well, I am offended, and I must tell you I am offended at that. I have never read that before in my life, and I am offended. Look at verse 11. How dare Paul tell somebody, shut up? Well, I tell you, I just beyond me, I cannot believe that. I mean, I will never go to his church. He is negative. He is telling these people to shut up. Look at verse 10. He is calling these people deceivers. Well, they are good folks. I worked down at the drug store in one of them. They are good folks. Who does he think he is calling them deceivers? How ungodly that is. How un-Christian that is. Why he says, look, I subvert whole homes. Why they are just trying to do good? They are just trying to help out here? How dare he say that? I mean, teaching things that are wrong. Well, who does he think he is? Does he think he has the corner on the Bible? He knows everything he is about the Bible. How un-Christian that is.

Then, my God, look what happens next. Now he names names. He says to Cretians, now he limited to a group. Then he says, they are liars. Evil beasts. Slow bellies. I do not know what a slow belly is. I do not think it is a good thing. I have never talked that way. I must confess right at this particular moment in time, I am getting convicted by my own preaching. Compared to Paul, I am a liberal. I may get over there in 2 Timothy 4:10 one time, and he says, "for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." Whoo, that is rough man. You see, when you shoot your mouth off about what you do not like, when somebody takes a stand for the truth against that, that do not take a stand for the truth, when you open a Bible, you look like the king of fools, man. I do not know what to tell you. Brother, I will tell you what, I have said it many, many times, God will always give you the church that you deserve. That is a dying truth.

VIII. The Slow Erosion of Christianity

Now, the death of Bible doctrine, taking a stand on sound doctrine. Next week, I am going to show you the whole process. I am going to walk you through from the whole concept of how it

started, where it came up through, how we got to this thing, because there are messages that you need to hear, and there are messages that you better hear. Because the thing that, and I am not worried about the church. The church is firmly ingrained on doctrine. But you have got to get to the place in your life where you understand that there are some things in this life you better be willing to take a stand on. You better not be too timid about it when it happens.

I was coming over today, and I was driving over here, I was listening to the Fox News Channel, they always have the medical thing on there, and I was not trying to listen to that, but it was on there, and they were talking about pancreatic cancer, and how deadly that is. How that there is... He says, you know, that most people die with it because they do not find it quick enough, but the problem is, even when you find it quick enough, it is in such a hard spot, your pancreas, to do any surgery on, that it is almost impossible to cure it. I think it is the number three or second killer of people in all the world. I was driving over here, and I listened to that, and he said, it is like prostate cancer, I said it is worse. He says, because it is such a slow thing. He says, you can have pancreatic cancer going on in you for five, six, seven years, and there is no test that we can give you. I mean, if you get prostate cancer, they can test your PSA, or they can, you know, test your blood levels and all that stuff. He said, we do not really have a good test for cancer in the pancreas. He says, the problem is, you do not know you have it. Then when you know you have it, you start to turn yellow. He says, when you start to turn yellow, it is too late, and there is nothing we can do.

I was coming over driving, I thought to myself, man, if that is not an illustration of where Christianity has gone. See, we are not going to turn around Christianity. My goal in preaching this message today is certainly not hopefully that some right person will hear it on the website, or some person here will pass out the tape, or even somebody here will go out and take it and change. It is not going to happen. That is not my goal. My goal will always be, as it is right now, my goal is simply to save myself first from bad doctrine and then help you save yourself from it. We are not going to change around America.

As I was driving over here listening to that illustration, I thought to myself, boy, if that is not just the way it is in Christianity. Because I am going to show you next week how this bad doctrine, this lack of doctrine, this non-denominationalism, this stuff that takes all the stuff that divides how it comes through a very slow process, just like that, cancer. Everybody thought everything was going fine, and everybody thought everything was happy, just like the guy with cancer. But suddenly, everybody knew something was wrong, who was paying attention, because the guy suddenly turned yellow. When he turned yellow, everybody said, you need to go to the doctor. He went to the doctor, and the doctor finally had cancer in his pancreas, and because it had went so long, and it was undetectable, nobody thought anything about it. Everything felt fine. Everything looked fine, but deep down inside, something was going on, and it was too late once he turned yellow.

Christianity today will never go back. You know why? Because that erosion of Bible doctrine has been going on so long. Christianity now has turned yellow. They are cowards. They have got a yellow streak down their back a mile wide. Once they get to that point where they cannot ever go back, and the damage has been done, it is the death of Bible doctrine. It is the death of

Christianity. Christianity came to the point for so many years where underneath the surface, everybody was happy, everybody thought it was wonderful. Just one little thing here was not one major thing that you could put your finger on. It was just a little bit here, and a little bit here, and a little bit here. Well, let us get rid of this, and let us get rid of that. Let us not do this because they want them and people to cry. Yeah, that is a great idea. Generation after generation after generation fell into that trap, and as they got all together, the Bible got farther apart, and doctrine became a non-essential, and now one day Christianity woke up, and I see it today, and it is yellow. It is a coward.

Christianity could not take a stand on this book today if their life depended on it. They are cowards. They are afraid to make somebody else mad. They are afraid that they might lose a friend. They are afraid that they might lose a family member. They are afraid that this might happen, or people may speak evil of them, or this, that. Yet, the same people that 200, 400, 500, 600 years ago, who paid the incredible price that you and I could have what we have today, and now we are not willing to take it on to the next level.

You see, that is all this church is ever going to be. It is all I ever wanted to be. I do not expect that they get to be 5,000 people, 2,000 people, 1,000 people. I do not expect those things. All I expected in these last days is the darkness rolls in, and the death of Bible doctrine in Christianity, and the cowards and the yellow jaundice that fits in it all just destroys everything. All I care about is a light in the darkness. I do not want to be the main chandelier in the ballroom of Christianity. I just want to be the light bulb on the back porch in Kansas City, where people can still come and get the truth, where I can put them with people who will help them understand the truth, that we will pay the price that we can give out to others what somebody paid the price that we have today, that we do not just look at all that we have and all the great things we do in the Bible, and we look at all those things that we just take it for granted that it was always been around, or much worse, take it for granted that it will always be around. It has always been around because someone was willing to pay the price, and it will only be around in the future if God's people today are willing to pay the price, to keep it around.

Every head bowed, every eye closed. Father, we thank you and praise you today for the Lord Jesus. Thank you for...