

Proverbs 11:28

October 29, 2023

If you have your Bibles this morning, let's turn back to Proverbs chapter 11. As you know, we have been in the book of Proverbs for quite a lengthy time now, and we will be in it for a while. There is so much in that book. I think that you are seeing, as I have told you before, how the book of Proverbs is really a book on the issues of life. We have just covered so many different aspects for you and how important that it is.

Remember last week, I personally think we had one of the greatest lessons on how to really learn the Bible and get it into your life. Most people, I really believe this, most Christians probably have a desire at some level to learn the Bible, but I think they get so discouraged so quickly because they get areas that really do not work for them. I showed you out of Proverbs chapter 11, verse 27 last week, how the Bible says,

Proverbs 11:27

He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

I showed you two key words. If you remember all through our study on Proverbs, I have been focusing on key words. Key words are really not only the key to the book of Proverbs, but it is key to many things in the Bible. The key words were the word "diligent" and then the word "procureth." I showed you what both those words really mean as far as the Scriptures are concerned.

Then I showed you how, through the life of David, the Bible says that David was a man after God's own heart. How, in my own personal life, many, many, many years ago, I found the process to learn the Bible. I showed you that it was found in Psalms 119:1-176. It is the longest chapter in the Bible, and it is a chapter where every verse in there deals with learning a different aspect of the Word of God or God teaching it to you. I showed you how I did that process for myself, building a prayer to ask God for His Word. That is what the word "procureth" means. It means to get something by asking for it, letting the Word of God so dominate our lives that we, even like David—and I used him as an example because David was so ingrained with the Word of God that even when he was at a fellowship with God, it was so easy for God to break his heart and to deal with him by a man coming to him and preaching the Word of God, the man of God, and the principles right there that just really broke his heart and brought him back to the Lord.

I showed you that that is really the key for you and for me. We all get deceptive in our lives. We all get things in our lives that are not the way they should be, and some people go a long time with it; some people go a short time with it. The key to how long you go in our deception is simply how much of the Word of God you have in your life that God can use to break you and bring you to, as David wrote, the great Psalm in Psalms 51, one of the greatest Psalms in the Bible that shows the five aspects of reconciliation with God, getting right with God.

Then I did not say this last week in particular, but it was very obvious, and so I want to say it now, that the real key to learning the Word of God is simply loving it. When you love the Word

of God, then you will learn the Word of God. And I showed you that that is the difference between people who believe the Bible is the Word of God versus others who just believe that it is a good translation. If there is something better going to come out next year, you are not going to diligently invest everything in your life into that book. You are going to wait for the better one. That is just human nature. But to me and to anybody who believes the Bible is the Word of God, I believe that when God wrote that Bible, He brought it down to man and gave it to man. It is God's exact words that He wanted me to have. It dictates in my life that I diligently go after it and procure it and to study it all the days of my life.

Now today we are going to look at the next verse. And the next verse is going to be Proverbs chapter 11, verse 28. It says this,

Proverbs 11:28

He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

Now Father, help us today to glean from Your Word all the things that we have, and Lord, we love You. We thank You Father for everything that You have given us in our church and the good folks that are here, Lord, that love You and love the Word of God and want to grow, and especially the young men and the young ladies and the young couples and the people who are in their senior years in life who love that book and love the Word of God and want to do something with it. I just thank You for that mindset and the love for the Word and for doing the Word of God and for what they do for others. And Lord, my mind thinks of Victoria this morning, that You will just really take care of her and bless her and Lord help her. And we just pray diligently Father and ask You that You just help that little girl and let our church be the ministering agent that can give her the strength and give her the spiritual stability that she needs. Let her know that we down here do love her and care for her, and we will thank You and praise in Jesus' name for her sake we ask it. Amen.

I. The Danger of Misplaced Trust

Now this week in this verse here, we are going to get into the Bible a little bit. Not that we did not last week, but last week was just pure plain preaching. I mean, last week I just took that thing, and it is such a natural passage to preach on, but today we are going to get a little deeper. And last week, like I said, we just had some good preaching. At least I think it was good. You may have thought it was not. But this week we are going to get into a deeper aspect of this verse. And I want you to get your notes in your Bible if you have not done that here yet. And we are going to cover some really valuable things today that I think that you will want to get into the Bible. And I think they will really help you with an overall understanding of the Word of God from this great passage.

And I told you many, many times, everybody seemingly today wants to put out a study Bible. It seems like that when a guy gets 30, 40 years in the ministry or whatever, and people obviously think he learned something about the Bible, he compiles his notes and puts them into a Bible, and everybody buys them because they actually think that if I buy that, I will know the Bible like him. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I am not saying there are not some good study

Bibles out there, but I am saying this: the greatest study Bible you will ever find and ever have is your own. The one that you and God put together for yourself.

Now the first part of this verse says, "He that trusteth in riches shall fall." Now the standard teaching here is this: that the verse is talking about money. And that is true, but there is a little more to it than that. People think of 1 Timothy 6:10 where it says that the love of money is the root of all evil, and that is true, that is true. And riches and rich people many times have a hard time finding God, and it is true. Jesus said one time in Matthew 19:24 that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And that is true, it is true. Riches many times will obscure somebody's faith. It will get in front of the things of God. I mean, when you can buy all that you need and have need of nothing, faith really becomes of no relevance to you. There is no importance to it anymore. You trust in yourself and what you have, and you trust in your riches.

But in the context of our whole passage—and we have sectioned out verses 23 through 31 as an incredible passage; we have been breaking it down verse by verse—but in the context, the key word here is not just riches, but it is the word "trusteth." And in a practical sense, he is talking about whatever a man trusts in his life other than the Word of God, he will fall. Last week we just finished the verse on how the Bible should be everything to us. And we also know that Luke chapter 16, verse 11 talks about and tells us that the Word of God is the true riches. And so it is more than just money in verse 28. It is a broader scope. It is really talking about anything in this world that we love more and trust more than the Word of God. But it takes money many times to get those things, so you can see where it all starts.

Unfortunately, the world is filled with many things that many Christians value more or on a higher level than the true riches of the Word of God. I have been in churches all my life, and there are people in every church. I do not think we have any here, but in large churches you have it: people who are very rich, very affluent, they have a lot of things. I remember years ago a lady that was, she had a diamond on her finger that was, it looked like the whole diamond. It was huge. And I have always thought it was strange how people, they want you to notice their big diamond but they want to pretend like they do not want you to notice. Have you ever noticed that? Or they will play it down. You cannot miss the thing. It looks like two searchlights shooting down aircraft in World War II. It is so bright. But when you say, "Oh," and the women go crazy. Women love diamonds. I have seen them go, "Oh, that is such a beautiful thing." She says, "Oh, it is nothing." Oh, no, \$9,443, and it is nothing. No, those two armed guards behind you there, it is nothing. They play it down. "Oh, it is nothing. There is nothing."

And I have always looked at that where somebody will have something like that. Hey, there is nothing wrong with things like that. I am making a point here. I watched that situation one time, and I watched that woman with that diamond on her hand. And it was, to her, it was a status symbol. This couple wanted to be looked at as somebody uppity-uppity in the church at that time. And to them, how you dressed and what you had was everything. And I remember just thinking about that. Everybody was going gaga over that ring. And it was absolutely a beautiful ring. But I thought to myself, that very day, God had given me four or five things out of that Bible that just knocked my socks off that I had never saw before. And I spent the whole

afternoon putting them in my Bible. And I can remember as like it was yesterday. I was more excited, or certainly just as excited, about what God had given me in that Bible than the ring that she had on her finger. In fact, maybe it is just me, but if somebody would have offered me the ring or the five Bible verses that God gave me, I would have taken the ring. Now that I am thinking about it, I mean, I could have done for missions, you know. I mean, you know, that is rationalization, by the way. I had taken the things in the Bible.

Unfortunately, in our own Christian world, there are some things that Christians value more or put on a higher level than the true riches of the Word of God. And what he is saying here is this: when our trust is misplaced and we deceive ourselves, the things of this world that we really trust in will in time cause us to fall. Because in time, they will betray us.

Years and years and years ago, an old farmer out in Kansas had heard about my counseling ministry, and his wife had brought me into him. And he was suicidal. He was probably, at the time—I am sure he is dead now; this has been 25, 30 years ago—he was probably in his 80s. And this guy probably had a farm out in Kansas. He was probably one of the hardest workers you ever saw in your life. He probably never sick a day in his life. He ran a farm. He did everything himself. He plowed the fields. He fed the cattle. He did the hogs. He did the whole nine yards. This guy was an incredible work ethic and one of the strongest individuals that I ever saw in my life. He had had a stroke. And now the doctor says, "You can never do any of that again." And now his whole life had fallen apart. And he is now depressed. He is now suicidal. He is now having all kinds of weird things in his life that he is struggling with. And so his wife brought him in, and I sat down and talked with him. I really did not help him. There was really nothing I could do. He did not want to hear about God. He did not want to hear. So I learned more from it than he did because it was a great lesson to me of what that verse says.

Here is a man who worked all of his life, probably one of the hardest workers that you ever met in your life, and all his life he trusted in his ability to do what he did well. And then one day that ability betrayed him. And what he trusted in all of his life let him down. And once it let him down, he had nothing to hold on to because what he was trusting in was himself or the things in this world. And my friend, they will always let you down, and you will always fall. And it is a natural process for a Christian. At some point, it will lead to a complete breakdown of our lives, a total collapse.

For a Christian, the spiral downward starts out with getting out of fellowship. When you get out of fellowship with God, that leads to a loss of that fellowship, and that leads to a loss of your joy. And you lose your value system. Once you lose your fellowship and you lose your joy, now that leads to disappointment after disappointment in everything you do. And now you lose your perspective. Once you have a prolonged disappointment in life, and nothing really goes well for you, that leads to depression. It leads to anxiety. It leads to emotional issues. And you lose the concept of who you are. Once the depression and the emotional issues set in, it will lead to many other things in a person's life. Many times it is alcoholism. Many times it is drug abuse. Many times this is where the strongholds of a person's life come in and takes over their life. And then when alcohol and drugs are the strongholds in somebody's life, it will lead to a total complete collapse. It will lead for broken families, health issues, loss of jobs. It will be a complete and

total collapse that many times ends up with somebody wanting to or actually committing suicide. The whole fabric of a person's life will fall apart based on simply trusting the wrong riches. Boy, you want to know what is wrong with America today. That is the number one thing that is wrong. Our priorities are out of whack.

II. The Righteous Shall Flourish as a Branch

Then he says in the last part of verse 28, "but the righteous shall flourish as a branch." Now, I want to take a little time with this today because honestly, this is one of the greatest studies in all of the Bible. You probably just look at that and would not think that it is, but what I have done today, you will see where it is in verse 28 talking about the study of the branch. And let me say at the start of this, as you get this down, this branch here is fundamentally the Lord Jesus Christ. And in the Bible in the Old Testament, I do not know if you know this or not, but you have a reference to four branches in the Old Testament. I am going to run you through them here in just a second. I told you we are going to get a little deep today. You are going to kind of work through your Bible a little bit today. So right now, while I am giving you some introduction, you may want to get familiar with the index. But you are going to find in your Bible, you have a reference to four branches that will represent Christ in four aspects. They will show you four distinct aspects of the Lord Jesus Christ, His nature, His life, His ministry, and His deity. And in a practical sense, they are four aspects to my life and your life as a Christian as you develop your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, as a Christian in the context of our text the last couple of weeks, we have been talking about having a successful Christianity. A Christianity that two types of Christianity we have been talking about: a sacrificial Christianity, and then a convenient Christianity. And we have been focusing on showing you how to have a sacrificial Christianity, a successful Christianity. It says the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

Now, allow me to walk you through these, and maybe you just want to write them down and get some notes. You do not have to turn to it. I will read it for you. But the first one is found in Jeremiah chapter 23, verse 5. And here is what it says:

Jeremiah 23:5

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Chapter 2 will be found in Zechariah chapter 3, verse 8. Here it says:

Zechariah 3:8

Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

The third one will be in Zechariah chapter 6, verse 12. And I speak and speak unto him, saying,

Zechariah 6:12

Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord:

The fourth one will be in Isaiah chapter 4, verse 2. And it says here:

Isaiah 4:2

In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

Now what you have here is the Lord Jesus Christ, the branch laid out and illustrated in four distinct different branches in the Old Testament, branches of a tree. And it is an incredible study to learn these four aspects of Christ and then to apply them into your own life. In a practical sense, taking him and applying to my own life, they are the same four aspects that we should have in our lives. We have talked a lot in Proverbs chapter 11 about a balance. Proverbs 11:1, "a false balance that abominates the Lord." If you want to understand the balance that Christ had, study these four branches. If you want to begin to put a balance in your own life, then take the study and make the application to yourself. Get the same four character qualities that the branch represents in Christ, making the same four character qualities in your own personal life. And these are some more that, like I said, it gets a little deeper, a little more to it than that that we are going to delve into here.

III. The Four Gospels and the Four Branches

Now here is the next thing I want you to see. I want you to see that each one of these four branches will line up to each of the four gospels. It is an incredible study. And that four gospels portray the Lord Jesus Christ in four different aspects. In scholarship, the great scholars of the world have a problem with the gospels. They call it the synoptic problem. The synoptic problem is from a scholar standpoint, he thinks that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John should all, because they cover the same time period, he feels in his scholarly world that they ought to follow each other almost exactly. And of course, the problem with a synoptic problem is that they do not. And a scholar will never figure what I am about to give you out because he does not believe he has a Bible. And if you do not believe the Bible is the Word of God and you just spend your life going through dead dusty manuscripts and looking at all the stuff, then you will never get something like this. So he sees the four gospels from an extraneous position that never allows him to see what God is really doing. So he sees four things that cover the same time period, and he says in his educated mind that they ought to all be exactly the same. But when you begin to read them, it is very clear that they are not the same. And the reason why they are not the same is because each gospel will portray the Lord Jesus Christ as the branch in a different way. So therefore, they are not going to be exact. It is going to, and there is no scholar on earth that will figure that out.

Now watch this. Jeremiah 23:5, that is our first one. Let us look at that one. Let me show you how it matches up. Jeremiah 23:5 says,

Jeremiah 23:5

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Now that is Matthew. Anybody who knows anything about the Bible knows that the book of Matthew is about Jesus Christ being portrayed as the King of the Jews. In Matthew chapter 1, you know what you have? You have the genealogy of Christ. But it is not his human genealogy, is it? No, in Matthew chapter 1, the genealogy they have there is a genealogy of the kingly line going back to David. You know why? Because Matthew presents him as the King of Israel. In Matthew chapter 2, you have the birth of the King. In Matthew chapter 3, you have John the Baptist who is heralding the coming King. In Matthew chapter 4, here he prepares himself as King by fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies. In Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7, here is where you have the constitutional makeup of the King's kingdom. Matthew chapter 10, you have descending out of the 12. And as 12 go out and preach the kingdom and the coming King. You know what happens in Matthew 11 and 12? That Israel rejects the King. And in chapter 13 through chapter 25, you know what happens. Now the kingdom goes into a set of parables to hide the truth about the coming King to Israel. And in Matthew chapter 26, you have the Passover of Christ the King. In Matthew chapter 27, you have the crucifixion of the King. And in Matthew chapter 28, you have the resurrection of the King. In Matthew you have the coming King and the establishment of the kingdom. You have 52 times in the book of Matthew a reference to the kingdom of heaven which is Israel's literal kingdom of which they have to have a King.

Most people do not stop and think about this. But you know what? God's relationship to Israel and Israel itself is such a major part of your Bible that it actually takes up about 75 to 80% of your Bible? When you lay it all out, you say, "Well, I want to learn the Bible, do you?" Well, if you do, then you better learn Christ coming as the branch and the King to the nation of Israel. That is 80% of your Bible. You know, you have got to be exact with the Bible. I hear people today, "Well," and I understand it, and please, I am not criticizing anybody. I am not in a criticizing mood today. I feel the love today. I am not. So anything I say is not a criticism. But let me criticize something here for you. I hear a lot of people, and I know they are well-meaning people, and I would never stop them or say anything about them at all. And they talk about Christians today. They talk about the fact that, "Well, you know, Jesus Christ is my King." I have people at a time, you know, "Well, he is the King, he is King, he is my King," and all those things. And I understand what you are saying. But you have got to be exact with the Bible. You know why Jesus Christ is not my King? Because I am a joint heir with him. We have a kingship together. It is not that he is the King and I am a lesser king. Romans chapter 8 makes it very clear that we are joint heirs together. His kingship is my kingship. You have got to get that straight. You get that not straight, and you are going to have some problems moving on down through your Bible. He is not my King. I am a King with him. I am a joint heir. So the first branch here in Jeremiah 23 matches up to Matthew and it says the King.

I look at Zechariah 3:8 or just listen to me.

Zechariah 3:8

Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

Now the next branch is called "my servant." And that will match up to the Gospel of Mark. Because in the Gospel of Mark you will find that Jesus Christ is portrayed as the servant. I told you that in Matthew you have his genealogy in Matthew chapter 1 going back to his kingly line. Have you ever noticed that in Mark there is no genealogy? There is no genealogy in Mark because he is portrayed as a servant. And a servant does not have a genealogy. He is a slave. And so he comes portraying himself as a servant in Mark. In Mark the book focuses on what Christ does, not what he says. It focuses on the work of his ministry. The book shows us Philippians chapter 2, verse 7, the model of the mindset of ministry.

Philippians 2:7

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

Notice four keys for us that Christ had. First of all he came as a form of a servant. You do not get saved so you can get from God. You get saved so you can do for God. You do not get saved so you can amass great fortunes and great wealth. You get saved because you are going to be a servant. And you serve him the rest of your life. When Christ came that was my model. He came in the form of a servant, book of Mark. Bible says that he made himself in this passage here in Philippians 2:7 that he made himself of no reputation. He did not make himself of any notoriety. He came with no reputation because he came as a servant. Then the third thing it says here that he humbled himself. He humbled himself. He made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant and made the likeness of men. And then it says that he was obedient to the cross. Those are four great concepts of you and me being a servant. This is why we will go up to Lincoln in a week or two. This is why we will give to others at our own expense of doing what we do. We are to be servants. We do not stand around expecting everybody to give us something. We understand that what we already got from God is worth all the millions in the planet. We take that and we give it to others and we are obedient to the cross when we do it. Now you want to understand the heartbeat of ministry? Then get Christ down as the branch. Learn to take on the form of a servant. Learn to do what you do without anybody's knowing and looking and seeing what you are doing. Humble yourself. Be obedient to the cross.

All right, look at the third one, Zechariah chapter 6, verse 12.

Zechariah 6:12

And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord:

Now this will be the gospel of Luke. And here the gospel of Luke portrays him as the Son of Man. Here is where you see him dealing with people and you learn from the human side of the Lord Jesus Christ, his nature. Christ has three distinct natures. And when you begin to look at this, you begin to see it. And when you come down through here and he is portrayed as a Son of

Man, this gospel really lines up with the ministry going to the Gentiles. Luke is an interesting writer. Luke is not one of the original 12. Paul picks Luke up out there in the book of Acts. And when Luke writes the gospel of Luke, he is writing about events that he has never really been partaking of. He was not back there like Matthew or Mark or John. Luke was never associated with them. He had to, on his trip, find people who understood who was there. So when he writes, he writes differently than everybody else. That is what these guys cannot see. He is in Paul's ministry. Paul's ministry is to the Gentiles. So when he writes his gospel, his gospel has a slant toward the Gentile church, even though it is written to the nation of Israel. In this gospel, you will find that in chapter 3, you are going to find that you have another genealogy of Christ. And this genealogy of Christ runs back to his earthly family. It runs back to his family all the way back to Adam because it is dealing with him as the Son of Man. You will find that in chapter 2, you have his human birth. God waited till he had a physician, Luke, to record by a doctor the physical birth of the Son of Man who also was the Son of God. Three genealogies in the gospels. Matthew is the genealogy of the King. Luke is the genealogy of the Son of Man and his human side. And then in John, which is the next one, you have his genealogy as the eternal Son of God.

Look at Isaiah 4, verse 2, the final branch.

Isaiah 4:2

In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

Now here is our fourth branch. This one is the branch of the Lord. This will be the gospel of John, our third genealogy. Here, his genealogy goes back to Christ or goes back to God. In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. Now we see his genealogy going back to God as the eternal Son of God and the eternal Word of God. So when you come down through John, it is all going to be focused on him coming down. Matthew, the King. Mark, the Servant. Luke, the Son of Man. John, the Son of God.

Did you ever notice why the gospel of John was written? You probably do not even have this in your Bible. Turn over to John chapter 20, verses 30 and 31. This is the reason the gospel of John was written. Matthew was written to show you the King of the Jews. Mark was written to show you the branch of a servant. Luke was written to show you the branch, the Son of Man. But when they write John, John is written to show every man and woman on this planet the branch of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Look why the book was written, verse 30 of chapter 20.

John 20:30-31

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

The gospel of John was written for one reason, to show you Jesus Christ as the Son of God coming down and dying on that cross for you, God himself taking your place and you might get saved. Those little books back there that I talked about, John and Romans, that church that they went down and played at this week does those with Bearing Precious Seed. You know what they just do, John and Romans? If you are going to give somebody just two books in the Bible in the New Testament, it needs to be John and Romans. You know why? Because John will show you right there how to be saved and then Romans will show you as a Christian in the New Testament what you believe after you are saved. That is why. And they are incredible, these four branches. And you want to see and understand your salvation, then get him laid out as the branch of the Lord. If you want to flourish, and that is one of our key words today, trust and flourish. If you want to flourish in the things of Christ, then get these four aspects down and be like him in them and you will be a branch that will flourish. One will show you our relationship to the Jew, about 85% of your Bible. One will show you our relationship to ministry. One will show you our relationship to the human side of Christ. One will show you the heavenly side.

IV. Israel as the Natural Branches

Now turn over to Romans chapter 11. And I want to show you doctrinally now, now we are going to Romans. Romans is the book of the Bible that is the handbook of Christian doctrine for the New Testament church. Not Matthew, not Mark, not Luke, not John, not Acts, it is Romans. Now you know that. And I am going to show you in Romans now, the doctrinal teaching by the apostle Paul to the Gentile church on you and me as the branch. I have given it to you before. Remember now Paul writes to the doctrine of the church. And every chapter in Romans follows a different teaching that he is laying out to the church. Romans 9, and we went through this a couple of weeks ago on Thursday night, Romans 9 shows you how the Jew got messed up. And at night I showed you eight things that the Jews missed that caused them to miss the first coming of Christ. Romans chapter 10, the gospel then goes to the Gentiles. And in Romans chapter 11, God tells us that I am not done with the Jews yet. So you see the progression. Romans 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 give us all kinds of doctrinal stuff that we need to know of what the church is to believe. In Romans chapter 9, he turned to the Jew and now he shows the church why the Jew got kicked out. Then he goes to chapter 10 and he shows you that when the Jews got kicked out, the church got put in. And then in chapter 11, he says, "Okay, they got kicked out. You got put in, but now I am bringing them back in with you." And off you go.

Now let me show you that in this great passage. A couple of weeks ago, Paul brought a question in the Bible study of a friend in his work about the nation of Israel. And I told you as I laid this teaching out that 98% of God's people today have lost their perspective of the church in relationship to the nation of Israel. And I remember showing you that night, and I have done it many, many times, that in Proverbs 22 and Proverbs 23, you got two landmarks. One landmark in 22 was the Old Testament nation of Israel. The other landmark in 23 is the New Testament church. You lose sight of those two down through history. You are as lost as a frog in the hail storm, man. I mean, you will never get it together.

Now look at Romans chapter 11, pick it up in verse 13. Let me show you what I just told you.

Romans 11:13-21

13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

Now how many times have somebody read that and scratched their heads and said, "What in the world is he talking about?" Let me show you how easy it is. Let me show you how easy the Bible is. When you keep those two landmarks, when you learn about the branches, when you get the stuff that I am talking about today, first thing he says here in verse 13, 14, and 15, he says, "I speak to you Gentiles in as much as I am an apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify my office." If by any means I may provoke the emulation, emulation means to get somebody to get moving, to get somebody up to speed, to get somebody on equal footing. And here he is talking about the Jews, that he wants to provoke them and emulate them, and the church too, that everybody gets on the same page understanding what God is doing with the nation of Israel. "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from death?" You see what he is saying there? He is saying that God's casting away the nation of Israel brought the salvation to the world. And what he is saying is, even though God cast them off, God is going to restore them like somebody coming back from the dead. You see all kinds of examples of that. In Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, every example you have of a dead person who is dead and then gets resurrected by Christ is a picture of Israel who is dead spiritually, getting resurrected and coming back to God. Every one of them.

Now watch this. Now look at verse 16. "For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy. And if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if the branches were broken off and now being a wild olive tree were grafted in among them and with them, partakers of the root and the fatness of the olive trees." Now here is what he is saying. Israel was the first fruit. And Israel are the branches of this tree. He talks about the lump. The lump is the whole tree, everything, the root, the stem, the leaves, the fruit. We talk about what is the lump sum. The lump sum is everything. And what

he is saying here that Christ is the lump. He is the sum of everything in this tree. And in the Old Testament, here is what he did. God, the branches, the first fruit of that olive tree was the nation of Israel. They are the natural branches. And what he says down here in verse 17 that some of the branches were broken off, that breaking off of those branches took place in 606 BC when God put them into captivity. Then what did God do? When he broke off the natural branches, he took you and me, the Gentiles, who he calls a wild olive tree. And you know what he did? He took that wild olive tree and he grafted it into the tree Christ. And that is how you and I got in. The natural branches got broken off Israel and then he took the wild olive tree, you and me, Gentiles, and he grafted us in. Do you ever notice how they will graft things into a tree? They will take something and they will put it up against the tree or they will cut it, bear it and put it together and it will wrap it around and what? A year later, you take that off and that two things have welded themselves together. That is exactly what he did to the Gentiles. He broke off the natural branches and he took you and me, the wild olive tree, and then he grafted us into Christ. And that is how you and I got in. That is what happened. That is what he is saying. And he says because of that, we with them, partake of the root and the fatness of the olive tree. We now with Gentiles have everything in Christ. Remember a couple of weeks ago, I think it was verse 25, I talked about the fatness of the Lord. There it is. When you and I got grafted in, we got everything in the New Testament that we could ever have in Christ.

Now, look what he says. Verse 18, "Boast not against the branches. If thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." What he is saying is do not get so high minded now because you are in and the Jews are out that you think I am finished with them. Because if you think that way, here is what he is saying, that thinking is not of the root, Christ. That thinking comes from someplace else. And he is saying do not get high minded about it. Boast not against the branches. That question we had the other night when that guy was ragging on Israel and talking, he was boasting against the natural leaves. And he did not know what he was doing, but that is exactly what he was doing. He did not understand. And Paul says, look, I am writing the book of Romans to the church. I am giving you the doctrine of handbook of Bible teaching for the New Testament church. And in that, you better understand God dealing with Israel. Christ is the olive tree. He is the tree. And there were some natural branches, Israel, that were the first fruits, but they disobeyed God and they got broken off. And then you and I, the Gentiles, got grafted in. So do not go around thinking that you are better than the Jew or you replaced the Jew because God is going to restore that Jew again. Boy, that is some great teaching that you better learn.

"What will thou," verse 19, "what will thou say then? The branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." Verse 20, "Well, because of unbelief, they were broken off and thou standest by faith, but be not high minded but fear." He says, "Yeah, Israel got broken off, you got grafted in, you are there by faith. They got in by the law and because of disobedience, I broke them off and grafted you in and you stand by faith, but do not get high minded because I am not finished with Israel yet." Look at verse 21, "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." You have got to be careful with that Jew, man. God says, "I did not spare to clobber them, I will not spare to clobber you if you take position up against them."

V. Trees in the Bible

Now you want to get this too. Trees in the Bible by themselves are a tremendous study. You have in the Bible a fig tree. Now we know that that represents self-righteousness. In Mark 11:4, it represents the nation of Israel. When Christ came out and the fig tree was barren, you have a vine tree over there in John 15 and Deuteronomy 32 that also will represent Israel. Some places like in Deuteronomy 32, it represents the blood of Christ. You have a chestnut tree. Remember back in Genesis chapter 30 and verse 37, that is the first place you find a chestnut tree. What was it doing? Jacob was taking a chestnut tree, cutting it up and putting it into the feed of the cattle to make them strong because Laban said, "You take all the one-colored cattle, I will take all the other-colored cattle," and it was something in the chestnut that made the cattle stronger but come out his color and he got a better deal out of the deal. You know what chestnut tree in the Bible stands for? Strength, spiritual strength, spiritual strength.

You have cedar trees in the Bible. That represents the house of God. Every piece of the furniture and everything of God's house in the temple was made of cedar trees. You have fir trees. They are called evergreens. In Isaiah chapter 14, verse 8, that is a picture of the faithfulness of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament saints. You have the bramble tree. Back there in John chapter 19, verse 2, the bramble represents the curse. When Christ was crucified, they gave him a crown of thorns off the bramble tree. You have an oak tree. First time you find oak in the Bible, Genesis chapter 35, and you know what they are doing? Somebody is taking all of their gods and all of their trinkets and all of their false religions and they are burying them under an oak and then they are going to get right with God. You know what an oak represents? Crucifixion of Christ. That is where he bore your sins and when you get dirty and you have got to get clean, you go back to the cross. Oh, they are a tremendous strength. You got a palm tree. Palm tree will be the millennial reign of Christ, Psalms 92. In Psalms 37, verse 35, you have got to call it a great bay tree. You have got to represent the antichrist. And here in Romans chapter 11, verse 17, you have got an olive tree and that olive tree is Christ. In the Bible, the olive tree will always be a picture of the tree of life that you found back in Genesis 2 and 3. It will always represent salvation. So when you get over there in Revelation chapter 11, verse 4 and God sends down Moses and Elijah, the two witnesses, the breed of salvation of Israel, what does he call them? The two what? Olive trees. It all beats the Bible, man. Bible has got it all together for you because it is Christ and he became my tree of life when Adam got denied because he brought sin into the world. Look at Psalms 52:8 sometimes. And he is an olive tree in Romans chapter 11. I mean, it is so clear.

I mean, when Christ is crucified before he goes to the cross. Now get this. Here it comes. When Christ is crucified before he goes to the cross, he goes through a great agony in a garden, the garden of temptation. And it is the same garden and the same temptation that the first Adam went through back in the Garden of Eden. Same garden. That garden that he went through is on the Mount of Olives because he is an olive tree. And that is the exact same place of the second coming of Christ where he steps off the horse, the mountains go asunder and he goes into Eastern Gate. It is an olive tree. And that garden is called the Garden of what? Gethsemane. Gethsemane means olive press. Now here it comes. Do not want to miss this. He goes through that agony in the garden and he is pressed out of measure. He goes to the cross and he is squeezed on the cross and out of the squeezing of the olive press and Gethsemane comes the Holy Spirit of God, the

olive oil. And in Acts chapter 1 and 2 because it was squeezed out of Christ in the cross, there is the church age, Acts chapter 1 and 2. I do not know what God's people study today. And that garden, he is pressed beyond measure and he goes to the cross when he is crucified. Now when he is pressed beyond measure, that Holy Spirit of God comes out and comes into the form of the church age. And that is why you and I got drafted in right there.

Now Christ in a doctrinal sense is this righteous branch. In the Old Testament when God wanted to reach the world, he used the natural branches, Israel, to do it, the first fruit, Romans 11:16. Then through unbelief, they got broken off into captivity. Nebuchadnezzar comes down to 606, Sennacherib comes down 587 and the natural leaves now or branches are broken off. Out of the New Testament when God wanted to reach the Gentile world, he takes the Gentiles and he grafts them into that tree, that olive tree and forms the church. And when you and I get in that book, the true riches and do the work of God, we then flourish as that righteous branch because we are grafted into the tree of life and we bear fruit just like the tree of life does. Now let me ask you a question, how is your flourishing going this morning? You know that Bible is pretty clear and it always unfolds itself around the scriptures themselves. It is an incredible thing when you look at it.

VI. John 15 and the Church

Now I want you to turn to John chapter 15 and now I want to show you, I showed you Romans 11, now I want to show you John 15, I want to show you Israel as the branch. Get all this down. So probably be a tape you want to pick up and go home and work through it again or pick it up on Thursday night or come on over and see me. John chapter 15 is the great chapter on "I am the true vine." We all know it, let me read it.

John 15:1-11

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Now that is one of the greatest chapters in the Bible, John chapter 15, that shows you Israel as the branch. Now you are going to hear this all the time. You are going to hear preachers preach John chapter 15 to the church and make it Christians. Everywhere you go you hear that. In time you are going to learn to evaluate anybody you hear speaking about the things of God based on the things that they say. And you can tell very quickly when somebody starts getting off base out of the scriptures and it does not line up with the doctrine that Paul writes to the church. It seems like, I do not know, it seems like every five or six years somebody comes up with some new thing and guys who do not know the Bible have to grab on to this new thing. And along with that I do not know why they bother sending me emails about it because I really do not care. Every time one of these guys come up with some new thing I will get about 200 emails if somebody wants to know what I think about it. I remember about five or six years ago somebody came up with this cock-eyed thing about the ashes of a red heifer and they are all excited. They are sending me stuff saying, "Bob, what do you think about the ashes of a red heifer? What do you think?" I said, "Leave my mother-in-law out of this." "What do you think about this? What do you think about that?" And I am saying, I told them, I said, "You know what?" They said, "Well, do not you know right now, right now over in Jerusalem there is a bunch of Jews getting together and they are breeding cattle and they actually came up with a red heifer and when they make Israel make that sacrifice of that red heifer then that is going to bring the Lord back and that is what they got to do to get cleansed from their sins." And I asked the guy one time, "Where in the world are you getting this?" Let me tell you something. You could have 100,000 red heifers. They could line up to what you think a red heifer ought to be, whatever a red heifer is, you could be almost perfect at everything you want. You could have 10,000 of them. No, no, wait, have 100,000 red heifers and you still could not do a thing with it because if you do not know who the tribe of Levi is in the nation of Israel, you cannot do a thing with it. And nobody today knows those genealogies. Those genealogies will not come in until you get into the tribulation period. And they are talking about, "Well, the Jew is going to build the temple right now." The only temple that is going to get built right now or in the tribulation period is going to be the Antichrist. Christ's temple is going to be built in the millennium and he does not need no ashes of a red heifer to do it. That is where they are at. They never take it through the Bible.

Big thing in the last years of blood moon. I must have got 100 emails. I thank God every day for that delete button. 100 emails. "Well, what do you think about the blood moon?" "Oh, there is four blood moons and these four blood moons line up." You know, when a guy knows nothing about the Bible and he cannot teach the Bible or he cannot preach the Bible, you have got to rely on stupid stuff like this. And the only ones dumber are the people who believe it and listen to it. There is no blood moon in the Bible. I will give you \$100,000. You show me the blood moon in the Bible. There is no, that does not seem to bother anybody. Now, you know where the blood

moon starts? It starts with that Mark Blitz guy who the El Shaddai ministry blows the big ram horn. You see any ram horn here? And his whole concept is he is a charismatic. He believes nothing about the Bible. And he picked four places where you had a lunar eclipse. He forgot that in the same year or the same five years span, there was 400 other eclipses. He never said anything about those. He picked four ones and said on these dates, the moon is going to turn to blood. And the moon did not turn to blood. He based it on Joel chapter 2. Joel chapter 2 is when the moon turns to blood in the tribulation period. But he cannot write it about his Bible. They have got all these Christian pastors running around all excited, telling their people, "Oh, the blood moon, the blood," like I know something about the Bible. I do not know the Bible, but I found something that is exciting. Yeah, it probably had nothing to do with the word of God. And you find it all the time.

This passage in John chapter 15 has nothing to do with you. And it has absolutely nothing to do with you and me as Christians. It is another one that they could not find a way around if their life depended on it. Now, the reason I know that this passage in John 15 has nothing to do with the church is five simple things. And I got kids in the high school class that could see this.

Now, the first reason I know that John chapter 15 has nothing to do with me:

- There is no church yet.

No, I hate to be the master of the obvious. There is no church yet. When he writes this, he is writing this to the Old Testament Jewish disciples at the first. There is no church yet. He is not writing this to the church. He is writing this to the 12 disciples, apostles. Sometimes the obvious, I was watching last week, the NFL just settled a \$1 billion lawsuit for head injuries. And they were going back and forth. Some liked it, some did not like it. And the guy was defending it. And he said this, he said, "You know what? Science is," he said, "Well, why was not this all brought up back when?" "Well, science now has gotten greater and more intuitive. And science understands these things greater. And now it is come to light." Oh, I guess science now has figured out banging your head into a brick wall a hundred thousand times in 10 years is going to cause your head problems. Do you know that? You know that? You know that? Take that kid out there and teach himself. You know that. Mattie, Mattie, where is Mattie? Where is my Mattie? You know that? Did not mean to wake you up, sorry. Who does not know that? That is the obvious. And who does not know in John chapter 15, it is not in a church. Church is not even there yet. Maybe that does not bother some people, it bothers me.

Now look at verse 4. He says, "If you abide in me and I in you." Now I got some news for you. I cannot abide in Christ. I cannot. And he cannot abide in me. You know why? Because the day I got saved, I became him. Not like me saying I am abiding with myself. I am one with Christ. On my good days and my bad days. This is like the over there in John chapter 10, they always use that, you know that, "Well, eternal security. How do you know you cannot lose your salvation?" "Well, Bible says that Christ is in God's hand. I am in Christ's hand. I need another hand. I am in Christ, no, on top of this one. I am in Christ's hand. I am clasping the hand of God. There is my eternal security. I cannot fall out of his hand." I got one better for you. I am the hand. I am not in God's hand. I am part of his body. I am his hand. You see how you get your doctrine screwed up?

You get these cock-eyed ideas. "Well, I am in the hand of Jesus so I cannot fall." No, I am not in the hand of Jesus so I do not fall. I am the hand of Jesus. If I fall, you know what he has got to do? He has got to cut his arm off. And he already did that. Because on the cross of Calvary, God said, "Jesus is my right hand man." I am the right hand of God the Father. And you know what God did on the cross? He cut his right hand off for you. And because he cut his right hand off for you, I became in that tree and grafted in. I am part of the tree. I am him. I am not in his hand. I am his hand. Abide with Christ. You are Christ. It did not say abide with Christ. It said abide in Christ.

Now, the next thing is the husbandman and vine. My goodness. At least 50 times in the Bible, it will always be a relationship to Israel and Christ as the husbandman. With Israel as the vine.

Now here is the killer verse, the next thing. Some aspects do line up to the church. Have no problem with that. But then you got a problem, because when you get to get verse 6, if you want to make this the church, there are some of these people who will not abide, who get gathered up and cast into hell. Now you got a Christian losing his salvation. See the problems you get into?

Look at verse 14. "You are my friend if you do whatever I command you." It is conditional. That is not the church. That is Israel. The promises to Israel were conditional. The promises to me, I am with Christ.

Now let me show you something. Let me show you the difference between an Old Testament passage to the Jew and a New Testament passage to the church. Second Timothy chapter 2, verses 12 to 13. Hate the polis, the dirty trick. It is using the Bible. He says in verse 14 to John 15, "You are my friends if you do what I command you." Now look at 2 Timothy 2:12-13.

2 Timothy 2:12-13

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

It does not matter. It does not matter if I am God's friend today or not. He is still my friend. It does not matter what I do. My relationship with Christ is not based on condition. It is based on the eternal death of Christ on the cross. They are not the same. And you see there the example between something in the gospel written to Israel and in a clear teaching of Paul to the church.

Now when it comes to the Bible, you have to be exact. And you get exact by rightly dividing the word of truth, 2 Timothy 2:15. You have got to learn to separate out what he writes to the nation of Israel and what he writes to the church. And if you want the branch that matches the church, do not go to John chapter 15, go to Romans chapter 11. And you will see that Israel, the natural branches, they got taken off because they had a conditional relationship with Christ and God, and they did not keep it. They did not do what God commanded. They broke verse 14 and the branches got pulled off. And when the actual branches got pulled off, then God took you and me, the Gentiles, and grafted us in Romans chapter 11. And now you have the church age. And on the cross of Calvary at Gethsemane, the olive press, the olive tree that bears the olive fruit was pressed beyond measure. And the olive press, the Holy Spirit of God came out, bang, got the

church age. Romans is the doctrine to the New Testament church, not Matthew, Mark, and Luke. I am not saying you cannot learn some great principles. I am not saying in John 15, you cannot find something here and something there that you cannot apply to you. I am saying this, when you take that thing across the board and put it into the church, then you have got somebody losing their salvation and being cast in a lake of fire. You got salvation being conditional. You got the whole doctrine of abiding in Christ when you are Christ, all messed up. And this is the problem that God's people get into. The number one problem I see in churches today and with Christians today is a lack of being exact when it comes to the word of God. I ask people all the time, some people, you know, I have had people say, "Well, that does not bother me." Well, my answer, I question them as is. In your Christian life, and I ask you, in your Christian life, how much error do you want to allow? When it comes to you and God and learning everything about your eternal destiny, how much error will you allow in that? Now, I cannot speak for you, I will not allow any. If you want that branch that matches the church, then you go to Romans 11.

So in Proverbs 11:28 says, the last part of the verse, "the righteous shall flourish as a branch." He is simply saying that branch in the Old Testament matches up to the four gospels. You will find one matches up to his relationship to Israel as the King of the Jews. You will find one matches up to his servitude to the nation of Israel as God's servant. You will find one matching up to his human aspect of the human Son of God, the Son of Man. And then you will find one matching up to his deity, the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternalness of God. And each one of those books, they are written differently. They are applied differently. They are not a synoptic gospel. Each one brings a different aspect of the relationship with Christ with the Father to Israel. And when you see it and you understand it and you apply it to your life, then you come away with those four concepts in your life. You will understand the church's relationship to Israel, that will be Matthew. You will understand your relationship to ministry and serving other people. That is Mark, your relationship to your flesh and the things that you deal with and your nature as a Son of Man. There is your human side. And then the glorified side of you, that is your one with Christ. He is not your King. You are a King with him. You are a joint heir. And all of the concepts that go along that keeps your doctrine straight. And you learn from the models of each one and you will be just like Christ in all four aspects. And that taking us all the way back to Proverbs chapter 11, verse 1. That provides the balance in a Christian life. It was the balance in Christ's first coming. The four opponents to make that balance. He was a King. He was a Servant. He was a Man. And he was God. Someday you are going to be a King. When you are reigned with him, right now you need to be a servant, but you got a human side to you. But bless God, you got the godly side to you. There is your balance. Now we will hold up there. Do not forget when we...