

# Proverbs 11:23-24

April 5, 2015

Last week, I told you we are in the book of Proverbs this morning. We are going to continue on down through here. I told you last week how we moved into the last section of Proverbs chapter 11. Proverbs chapter 11 has been a great practical chapter for us in so many ways. Probably this last section is one of the greatest passages in all the Bible that really lays out what it takes to be a Christian and even to be a church in the right way for the Lord today in the days that we live in.

I talked about last week and I built last week's sermon around several key concepts. One of the key concepts that I even asked you to think about the rest of the day was the basis of which Christianity do you have? Do you have a convenient Christianity or do you have a sacrificial Christianity? Do you have a Christianity that is there when you need it, but you are not there when it needs you? Or do you have a sacrificial Christianity that you realize that all that God has done for you, He wants some things back from us?

We talked about that. I took you back to Revelation chapters 2 and 3 and I showed you, and we have been through this many times, the seven periods of church history. I showed you how the law of human collapse was at work in the first and second century of Christianity. I showed you that the church at Ephesus was the first church period. Paul talks about them in Acts chapter 20. Then it goes into Smyrna, and then it goes to the church of Pergamos, the third one. The Bible says about Ephesus that we begin to see the first falling apart of Christianity. They left their first love, the Bible says.

We see then it moved down to Pergamos, which brings us up to about 300 A.D. to around 500 A.D., the start of the Dark Ages. I told you that the name Pergamos means "much marriage." It is a time when Christianity back then literally gets married to the world. The Bible says we are engaged to Christ. I began to make the parallels to us today as a New Testament church, that in a New Testament Christianity, for the most part today, unfortunately, is again married to the world.

I think one of the greatest revelations of history and the Bible is the great study of how God deals with Israel and how God deals with churches. The Bible gives us in the book of Proverbs two landmarks. When you do not get these landmarks down, then you get lost. The Bible says we end up in the fields of the fatherless.

## I. The Danger of Missing Landmarks

Most of you do not know this story, but when I was just a young guy, probably in 10th or 12th grade, maybe a sophomore somewhere in there, freshman, I read a story about a B-24 bomber and its crew. It was a story that had just come back to light. It was a story of a plane named the Lady Be Good. The irony of this is that 72 years ago yesterday was the anniversary of the Lady Be Good in 1943, on April the 4th.

The story was simply this: they left on a bombing mission over Italy. They flew out of, I forget where they flew out of, but they flew out and the weather closed in and they could not permit the mission, so they kind of got scattered with bad weather and then they flew back to their base.

The Lady Be Good never showed up. She never came back. For 15 years, it was a mystery what happened to that plane.

Then around 1959, an oil expedition that was British Petroleum in the Libyan desert was looking for oil samples and they came across this B-24 that was lying in the middle of the desert. When they looked at it, they marked it on a map as a reference and they took down the tail number and the name on the plane. Sure enough, the name of that bomber was the Lady Be Good. So the Air Force got involved and nobody could figure out how the Lady Be Good had disappeared for 15 years.

They began to bring search teams in and it was almost like they had disappeared. The plane was almost left undisturbed. It had bellied in, but it was completely intact. The coffee, after 15 years, the coffee in the thermos was still warm and drinkable. The machine guns still fired. It was almost like everybody just left the plane and disappeared into thin air. It deepened the mystery.

They began a pattern of searches and it was not long before they started to find little strips of parachutes, little articles of somebody's clothing, and a flight jacket here or this here. They began to search in a circular pattern and the first thing they found was one of the men who was still in his parachute that he bailed out and his chute did not open. They moved out a little farther and they found arrow strips made out of parachute cloth indicating a direction that they were going. They moved out a little bit farther and it was not long before they found the pathetic little camp of about four or five of those crew members, their bones laying in the sand for 15 years. There were all their personal articles. There was a diary and it began to reconstruct what happened. It was not until some years later that they found the rest of the crew. A couple of them had the strength to go on when those crew members there did not have the strength and they died there.

The diary indicated that what had happened was that they had went toward their bombing mission and then they had turned around because of the weather and they came back. But because of the clouds, because they could not see, the navigator, by the way his name was D.B. Hayes and he was from Lee's Summit, Missouri, the navigator missed the landmark. When he missed the landmark, they continued to fly and they actually flew right over their base of Naples in Italy and then flew on into the desert some 300, 400 miles before they ran out of gas. They thought they were over water. In the diary, it says that because it was at night and they could not see, they bailed out expecting to hit the water, but they landed in the desert. The plane then just augured in after a period of time. It ran out of gas. If they would have gotten to the plane, which only came down probably five or ten miles from where they came down, they would have survived. They could have made it, but they did not.

I looked at that lesson and I followed it through history. As a young kid, it just captivated me, the story of the Lady Be Good. You can go online and Google the Lady Be Good. It will tell you the whole story. There is a whole website devoted to it now. I remember looking at that story and reading that story and years later, I thought to myself, "What got those guys killed?" What got those guys killed is because one man missed the landmark. When he missed that landmark, they thought they were going in the right direction when in actuality they were going completely in the wrong direction.

There are a lot of people, when you miss the two landmarks in the Bible, one in the nation of Israel, the other the church, you are going to head in the wrong direction and you are going to wind up being killed spiritually. It is just that simple. When you understand that in the Old Testament, Israel goes into captivity of the world, marriage of the world, two times. I told you this Thursday night when we were answering this guy's question. The first time is 606 B.C. They come out of it 70 years later and they go on and on and on. Then at the first coming of Christ, they get another opportunity to get the truth. They crucify Him and reject Him. So in 70 A.D., the second thing happens when they get taken into captivity the second time. They have been into captivity now under the world, even though they are back in the land, they are far from God. What is going to end this second captivity is going to be the second coming of Christ, which is going to happen at any time.

In the same way, the church gets married to the world two times. It is incredible. The first time is in Pergamos, as we were studying last week. They come out of that at the Reformation with Martin Luther and then we go into the greatest period of time we know in history as the Philadelphia Church age. But then again, around 1900, we see the church go into apostasy with a Laodicean church period. Again, it loses, it leaves its first love, the Word of God. The second one for the church will be ended by the rapture of the church. Quite a remarkable study in history and the Bible, unknown today to most of God's people, but certainly nonetheless quite remarkable.

## II. God's Search for a Man

The thing we talked about during this Pergamos church period, I showed you that God had a man. God always has His remnant and they will always take their stand no matter how much the church goes into apostasy. In a Pergamos church period, God had a man. In the period that we live in today, God is going to have some men.

I told you how the job of any church, the job of any pastor, is to take the men and the women that God gives him and God brings him and then to help them get to the goals in their life of being everything for God that God wants them to be. The book of Ephesians talks about perfecting the saints by the work of the ministry for edifying the body of Christ.

A favorite passage of mine was always back in Ezekiel chapter 22.

*Ezekiel 22:28-30*

*And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken.*

*The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.*

*And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.*

All through this passage, you find the great study going on that this is the state of Israel in 606 B.C. But I must tell you, it is also the state of Christianity today in 2015. Just as God, when

Israel was at its worst and had profaned everything that was good, had taken the holy things and made them the profane things, and the profane things and made them the holy things, today the church has done the same thing. We talked last week about Eve's client and a new men's ministry in their church, "Beer in the Bible." How contradictory that is to everything. But that is where it is at today.

Just as in 606 B.C., God was looking for a man, was looking for a woman that would stand up, make up the gap, stand in the gap, make up the hedge. That gap and that hedge is a breach in the wall. He is looking for a man or a woman that will fill the void of truth in Israel, that will keep the nation from being destroyed by the judgment of God. In our time, it is the same thing. Nothing has really changed. We drive cars, they drove chariots. They wore robes, we wear clothes. Nothing other than that has really changed. God is still looking for a man or a woman today that will fill the void of truth.

The question is, will you be that man or will you be that woman? It is the only question that God's people today really need to answer. It is not about, "Do you love God?" It is not about, "Do you read your Bible?" It is not about, "Do you love people?" It is not about, "How often you go to church?" It is about, "Will you settle in your heart that you are going to be that man or be that woman that God is looking for?"

We seek many things from God in our lives. Yes, we do. Every time we have a need, every time we have a struggle, every time we have something go south in our life, we seek God on it. But all the things that we seek from God, if you would add them up in your life, and how many times you have come to God and we said, "Oh God, I need this and help me with this and help me with this," there is only one thing God ever sought from any of us. Only one thing. There is only one thing that God ever looked at man and desired from man after that man was saved and after that man would take a stand for Him and make up the hedge in the gap. That is all God ever asked for us.

### III. The Principle of Duplication and Desire

Last week, we knew the man by his name, Antipas. We know now that his name means "against everything." We built last week's message around one key word that will always separate the Antipases in life from the rest of Christianity. It is the word "desire." A desire for the things of God to become in our lives the fulfillment of God's salvation to us.

I said it last week: it is either a convenient Christianity or a sacrificial Christianity. It is either a Christianity that is built on your convenience, when you will give God whatever is left in your life, or it is a sacrificial Christianity, that you will put yourself to the side and give God the very best of what you have.

Now today, we want to again read our passage that we will begin to look at and we will see one or two more principles out of here. We will not finish this up today again. I want to take the time to give you everything out of here, but I want you to see, as I said last week, I have some goals for you. Maybe you do not have any goals for yourself, but as a pastor, I told you last week, a pastor with a church needs to have goals for his church and for his people.

Now I want to read Proverbs chapter 11, verse 23 here. We will pick it up in verse 23 and we will read verse 24. Here is what it says, last week's verse and this week's verse.

*Proverbs 11:23-24*

*The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.*

*There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.*

Father, thank You for today and thank You for the good folks that have come out today. Lord, I know today is Easter and people around the world are celebrating the resurrection of Christ. Lord, I would be less than honest if I did not say that, Lord, I have somewhat of a problem with that. I think Christianity has come to the place where it has traditionalized everything that is so real to You. Setting aside one day to mark the resurrection when that day ought to be the number one day of everything in our lives, of every day of the year. The day that Christ came out of that tomb and gave us the newness of life. Not just one day a year, not just the fact that we bring in and go out and get nice clothes and bring flowers and palm trees and all that stuff. But every day of our life we should look to the risen Savior. Because without that day of coming out of that tomb, Father, we would be locked in our sins. It is not something that we just set aside once a day and make a pilgrimage to our favorite church to examine it and to have a good time and give ourselves a good conscience and a good warm feeling. But it is a time that every day of our lives we need to look inside and thank God for the day that He came down and died on that cross, died on that cross and went into that tomb and on the third day resurrected and He gave us the newness of life. Thank You, Father, for that. Maybe because of that, we may get more out of this today. May it spur us. What good does it do, Lord, to go to church on Easter and put all the little particulars in the right place and then to forget about it tomorrow and go right back to the way we were? Let this message change us today. Let us see that our Christianity needs to be a sacrificial one, not a convenient one. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Last week, I told you that the job of this church and the job of each of you as a Christian is simply one simple task. That is one of duplication, one of reproducing yourself in others. For me as a pastor, I have one job, really fundamentally. My job is to take what God has put in my life and then reproduce it in you. If a pastor is dull and boring and what he does with the Bible, if he does not love the Bible, if he is not excited about Christianity, his people will not be either. Everything rises and falls on leadership. A church will only be as good as the pastor is, and his desires, good or bad, will become their desires because that is the way it works.

I talked about parents to their children. We have a very young church in the sense of a lot of young couples with a lot of kids running around here and more adding every week. In fact, I do not see Courtney here this morning. She is in with the kids. Well, that is a good place to be when your due date is tomorrow, in with the kids. I have my rubber gloves right here in my back pocket, just in case. Families got the water boiling back there. I am proactive.

Parents to their kids. I have heard parents all the time say, "Well, my kids just cause all kinds of problems in the home." That is not true. Kids do not cause problems in the home. Kids just reveal the problems that are already in the home. We have to reproduce ourselves as parents in our kids. It is a simple thing, just the way it works.

Then the third thing is Christians to other people. Once you have your family online and now you are ready to take on other people, building the principles that are in your life and the goals that are in your life into the life of somebody else. Today, we will see exactly how to do that. We will see the principles that are involved in understanding how to do that, the process of a biblical spiritual growth process.

## IV. The Principle of Scattering and Increase

Now I want you to look at verse 24. It is a great verse with a great set of principles. As I said, I am not in a hurry to get through this because I want to develop all of these things. But verse 24 says this:

*Proverbs 11:24*

*There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.*

Now there are some great principles here and I want to, as I said, take some time and develop them. First of all, look at the first part of verse 24: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." What he is saying there is that we scatter something, we lose it. Ecclesiastes says there is a time to cast away. So we are casting something away, we are scattering it, we are losing it, but yet the Bible says we still have an increase by it. In the Bible, one of the greatest principles found anywhere is the teaching simply this: if you want to keep it, you have got to give it away. That is one of the greatest fundamental principles anywhere in the Bible.

## V. Biblical Examples of Scattering

The greatest example I know about that is the story of Moses. If you go all the way back to the Old Testament in Exodus chapters 1, 2, and 3. Moses was born back there when Israel was under the iron heel of Egypt. The Pharaoh had made a decree because he wanted to keep the population of male Jews to a minimum because he did not want them growing up and overtaking his empire. So he puts out a decree that they kill all the male children, that they are not allowed to live.

Moses' mother has a male child. The Bible says that they hid him for about three months, but then it was very obvious to the neighbors that there was a male child there. So Moses' mother is in a dilemma. She wanted to do something to protect her child. She believed in God. She loved the Lord. She believed that God was her deliverer. So you know what she did? She took that little baby and she put a little basket together and she put him in that basket. Then she took him down because she knew if she kept him, she was going to lose him. So she said in her heart, "Lord, this is the baby that You gave me. I cannot keep him because if I do, I am going to lose him. So I am going to give him to You." She took him down to that River Nile and she put him down there in

that little river in that little basket and covered him up. Then she goes back in a corner someplace or the woods and she just watches to make sure nothing happens to her child. Tremendous story.

Now, if you want to work with people, if you want to be a great counselor, this is one of the greatest studies you want to get down. This is your first basket case in the Bible that is in denial. Write that down now. That is important stuff. You like that, did you, Mama? Come over and give me a hug. So anyway, she takes that little basket, she puts it down in there, she stands over here. Lo and behold, here comes Pharaoh's daughter down. She is coming down to take her morning bath. That is the way they say it when you are up in the upper crust of things. She is down there and she is washing in there. She hears this little child crying and she goes over there and looks into this little basket and there is this little baby. She knows it is a Hebrew baby. But she wants to have compassion on it. She does not agree with everything her dad is doing, but she is the king's daughter. She can do whatever she wants to do. So she takes that little baby and she takes it into the palace there in Egypt and she is going to have that child for her own. So she says to one of her servants, "It is a Hebrew child. I want you to call a Hebrew woman to come and raise this child for me even though I am going to take this child to be my own."

So you know what happens? They go over there and I am sure that Moses' mother is fretting over there. She sees her going. She says, "Oh man, of all the people that get this." She is back at her home walking up and down, fretting and all this thing and just sweating bullets. "Oh man, maybe I did not do the right thing. Man, she took her in there. She is going to take her in and give her to her father and they are going to kill that." And the phone rings. She picks up the phone and guess who it is? It is the official magistrate for Pharaoh's daughter who says, "We need you to come and be a mother, a surrogate mother to this baby that the princess found." You know what happens? Because she was willing to give that baby to God and give it away, God orchestrated the circumstances and gave the baby back. He needed to be raised in the Egyptian environment because of what God was going to do with him. He needed to learn the fine tunings and the understandings of the inside of his own people plus the inside of Israel. God used the events of his mother who trusted God and gave that baby away and then God gave the baby right back. It sets up one of the greatest principles: if you want to keep it, you have got to give it away. Incredible.

Another great example is the example of Hannah in 1 Samuel chapters 1, 2, and 3. Hannah is another great example of that. She wanted a boy. She wanted a child. She is barren. So she asked the Lord and prayed. In 1 Samuel chapters 1 and 2, I am telling you moms, if you want a great prayer in the Bible for your children and you want to dedicate them to the Lord and you want them to be used to God, it is Hannah that you want to go to. God answered that prayer and God gave her a little boy. She took that little boy and she brought him up so far and then she fixed him a little coat. She fixed him a little hat like the one Paul has over here and she got all those things and she took him down to Samuel. The Bible says that she says, "God gave him to me. God gave me the desire in my heart when I was barren and because He gave him to me," great word, she says, "I am going to lend him back to the Lord." She took him down and gave him to Samuel or Eli. Eli brought him up and trained him in the ministry and gave him everything that she needed. What did God get out of it? God got the greatest prophet and one of the greatest

judges that Israel ever saw. If she would have kept him to herself, just as Moses' mother would have kept Moses to herself, they would have lost them. It never would have happened. But you see, she had a desire and her desire was to reproduce herself into Samuel.

The clear teaching is whatever you give God, I do not care what it is, whatever you give God and whatever you give up in your life, whatever you put into God and say, "Here it is," will always come back better than when you gave it to Him.

You know what is true of life?

*Matthew 10:39*

*He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

We put so much on life. We want to live. Everything about life is living. Live for this, live for that. We have got to do this. Have fun. We have a bucket list. The things that we want to do for ourselves before we die. I have never seen a bucket list of a child of God and what I want to do for God before I die. It is only about what I want to do. Yet the Bible says, "He that loseth his life, shall find it." You will never be or do anything for God until you give up the control of your life. When you do, I am going to tell you something, your life will be better.

Just look at some of your lives today. Some of you, and I look at you, and we are in the ministry together, and I would not trade you for the world, but let us go back a couple of times back. Some of you struggled with that. You know that? Probably almost everybody here at some point, you struggled with a decision to give your life to God or to keep it to yourself. You had to take into account, "Look at what I have. Look at what I might have to give up. Look at what I might get." Every man and woman in this room who is where you are supposed to be with God or trying to be, you came to that conclusion and you had to decide. Sometimes it was about going to this church where you really were going to be a kind of a lawyer to God or going to Dead Street Baptist Church over here where you could do whatever you want to do. But you had to make a choice and you know what? You are living testimony today that your life is better after you made that choice. It is true of life. You gave up your life. You lost your life to the world and you found it in Christ and the things that He wants to do for you.

It is true of our kids and our children and our families. Giving up your children to the Lord, doing the work of reproducing and duplicating yourself in your children, will always bring them back better than when you gave them up. It is simply that clear. It is just simply, now follow me here. You give up your life to God. Then you give up your family to God. Now you have those two things working for you. Now God takes them and then gives them back to you better than when you gave them up to Him.

## VI. Sowing the Word of God

It is the same thing with the Bible. This is where our verse 24 comes in today: scattering the Word of God. You have to give up that Bible. You have to give it away to others. When you do, it comes back on you better than when you ever gave it up. The mark of a sacrificial Christianity will always be simply giving to others.

I love this church. I love the people in this church. But the thing I love about most of you or all of you, because it does not seem to matter where you are at on what spiritual level. It really does not. I stand back and watch it. It does not seem to really matter where you are at. I have seen some of you that are probably not where you need to be with God and you know that, but you still have this endearing quality. You are never too busy to help somebody else with something that they need. You are always there for somebody. It is the same way with the Bible. You have to give that book away to others. The key to reproducing yourself and transferring what you have to somebody else is simply that: giving of the Word of God and yourself to others. When you do, that book comes back to you better than it does when you had it and you kept it to yourself or you did not do anything with it. It is just that simple.

I look at the people that go down there to Wichita. I know we go down there for you and you are up here today. We go down there because we love you and you want to learn the Bible and I know it helps you. But I see the growth in my people because they are willing to make that sacrifice. There is nothing that will grow you up and commit you and dial you in than when you start taking what God has given you and scattering it out. This thing I am telling you right now, this thing in Lincoln, I cannot even just stay on top of it. It is happening so fast. I never would have dreamed that four years ago when we were having those Bible studies on the conference lines up there and I was teaching them the Bible through a phone, I had no idea that would explode like it has right now. It simply comes back to what I have always told you: I do not care how bad the world is. I do not care how dark Christianity is. There are people out there who still want to know the truth. When you do what is right in your life and they have a desire in their life, the Holy Spirit of God puts the two of you together and it gets done. It is that simple. It comes back better on you. It comes back better on you. We see it in Restart. We see it in Turnaround. We see it in everything we do. I see it when you start to disciple somebody. This is why I push you and prod you to get involved, to do something. Because you just cannot keep hoarding what God gives you. You have got to scatter it because when you scatter it, it will come back and it will increase in your life. That is one of the greatest single principles in the Bible. It really is.

In the Bible, there are two great examples of this. Last week, I gave you just a brief rendition of Matthew chapter 13, verses 1 through 9.

*Matthew 13:1-9*

*The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.*

*And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.*

*And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;*

*And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:*

*Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:*

*And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.*

*And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:*

*But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.*

*Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

That is one of the greatest stories in the Bible that shows you when you sow the Word of God. He goes out there and some of the seed falls by the wayside and nothing happens to it. That is a picture of the people who are careless in their life. They do not really care. They are party, party, party. They do not really care about anything spiritual. So when you sow the seed, it goes by the wayside. Some of that seed that he sowed fell on stony places. That is the man's heart. All these are pictures of a man's heart. The heart is hardened. There is no depth of anything for anything to grow because of the hardness of their heart. Some fell among thorns, the Bible says. The thorns sprung up and choked them. That is the people that many times you associate with that when you start to do what is right, they will choke it off in you because they do not want you to do what is right. Ah, but then some fell into good ground. Some fell into good ground and when it gets scattered, it increases. 30-fold, 60-fold, 100-fold. That is what it does. You scatter it to the wind, the Holy Spirit of God, and then they increase.

Now the next one is found in the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 11. This is a great one.

*Ecclesiastes 11:1-6*

*Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.*

*Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.*

*If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.*

*He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.*

*As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.*

*In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

Now the first thing he says here, and I just want to give you a quick rendition of this, the first thing he says there is, "Cast thy bread upon the waters." In the Bible, water is likened to large bodies of water, likened to people. It is a thing where we talk about the sea of humanity. It is a picture of casting the bread, type of the Word of God, upon the waters. My greatest example of this, I always love to do this with my little grandkids, when we go back to Ohio, there are a couple of parks down there, got a lot of ducks. I will go buy four or five loaves of bread, bust it

all up, and go feed the ducks. They have this big water here, the ducks are, "A-k-k-k-a, a-flack, a-flack," out there, doing everything. I love getting big handfuls of bread and throwing it up in the air, hitting that water, and watching 120 ducks commit suicide running into each other in the middle of that thing. That is what the Bible is talking about. I am going to tell you something. There are people in this world today that are just as hungry for the bread of the Word of God as those ducks are for the bread that you put on the water. But you know why they never get it? Nobody goes to scatter it. Nobody goes to put it out. "Cast thy bread upon the water."

Then it says, "and thou shalt find it after many days." Now there are two aspects of that. The first aspect is the judgment of the seat of Christ. It is going to come back for you at the judgment of the seat of Christ because you scattered the water. The second aspect of that is that it may take four or five years for you to see the results of that.

John Wesley one time was a circuit riding preacher and he was riding his horse from place to place preaching the Word of God. One night about two in the morning, he was going from one place to the other and a highwayman came up and put a blunderbuss on him. John stopped there and the guy said, "Give me everything you got." He gave him everything he had, which was about four or five shillings, and he says, "On your way." As he was starting to drive away, John Wesley stood around and he said, "Young man, wait a minute." That guy turns around and puts the gun on him and he says, "What?" And he says, "Young man, someday you may tire of the life that you are now living and when you do, I want you to remember the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses us from all sin." He put the gun down and went on his way. Four years later, he was preaching at a church someplace in another town and at the end of the service, four years later, that man came up, restored the money. He says, "Mr. Wesley," he says, "here is the money I took from you. I am the guy that robbed you." He says, "I am sorry." He says, "Here is everything I took from you." He says, "I have been looking at you for three years." He said, "A year after that night, I got saved and he said, I wanted to find you." He said, "The thing that just wore me out was what you told me was the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses us from all sin." Scattering it. Putting it out. Putting it out. "Find it after many days."

Look at verse 2: "Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth." Now there is a good principle. He says, "Give a portion to seven and then to eight." In other words, we know in the Bible that seven is a number of perfection. What he is saying here, do not only do what is required, but go above and beyond. Go beyond what is expected. He says, "Give a portion to seven and also to eight." Why? "For thou knowest not what evil may be upon the earth." He says, "You do not always know what you are up against out there when you are scattering. So give it everything you got and then give it some more." That is what he is saying.

Look at verse 3: "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth; and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." You know what he is saying? He is saying just as sure when the clouds get filled up with water, they are going to rain and the rain is going to come down. He says just as surely when a tree, when a tree in the Bible, people are likened to trees. In the Bible, it says trees are likened to people. He says when a tree falls to the south or falls to the north, that is a picture of a man going

to hell or going to heaven. But when everywhere he goes, that is where he stays and God's judgment is sure. So that is why you scatter the Word of God and put it out.

Look at verse 4: "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." Now that is being afraid of the world around you. Being afraid of your friends or your family or the people in your world that have a convenient Christianity when you want to have a sacrificial Christianity. That is people who will try to dial you down and not make you so on fire for the Lord. Because they are not and you are showing them up.

I had a young guy one time years ago, one of the smartest kids I ever met in my life. He got really on fire for the Lord and loved the Lord, but his mom and dad were just about as far out in the left field as you could ever be. They were nice people, but they were not going to do anything for God. They were always giving him problems. They were always saying to him, "Are you going to church again tonight? Well, what if you are going here tonight?" I understand there has to be a balance between your family, but he did too. But it was not that. It was the fact that every time he went to church and they did not, the Holy Spirit of God nailed them. The more he got involved and the less they were involved, the Holy Spirit of God nailed them. This kid was a sharp kid. I never forget, he told me this one night and I said, "Man, that was really good, pal. That was a good answer." But his mom and dad were giving him a thing again because he was going someplace, doing something with the church and they did not like it. His dad said to him, he says, "Let me ask you something, son, why do you have to spend half your life at that church?" With all the respect in the world, with a kind voice, he said back to his dad and his mom, "You know what, Mom and Dad? I have to spend all that time there because you two will not pick up the load and do what you need to do. So because you will not pick up the load and do your part, I have to do my part plus your part. That is why I am going to church tonight. Tonight, I am just doing it for your part." You talk about ending the conversation. That was incredible that a young man had the insight to be able to say that, be able to do that. But it was true.

He says in verses 5 and 6: "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike." You see, when we put the Word of God out, we do not always know what God is doing. Just like I cannot explain how bones grow in a womb or how God does this or how God does that. I cannot explain what God is doing. I look at a circumstance and I see it as I see it, but I do not see it the way God sees it. Because I do not see it the way God sees it, I have got to give it my extra. I have got to make sure that I am doing everything I need to do. I have got to go above that because I may be missing something and I do not want anything that God, I cannot speak for you, but I do not want anything that God is doing not to make it because I do not do my part. So in the morning, you sow your seed. In the evening, you withhold it not. "For thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike." You do not know what God is doing, so you just put it out. You do know this:

*Isaiah 55:11*

*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

You put it out, He will use it. You put it out, He will use it.

## VII. The Investment of Scattering

Now verse 24 says, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." In Bible Christianity, the idea of giving something away to God and getting an increase, that is the idea of an investment of our lives, giving your life away to the Lord. Our system of capitalism is built on the same thing. You have a system where you have to spend money to make money. A competitive system that people can make money, make a profit, and return on their investment. Christianity is the same way. You want to grow spiritually without making the investment of the people in the Word of God. You cannot do it. You have to give what you have out to others. You have to scatter it and then the increase comes. Just as we saw a couple of weeks ago, sin has wages. The wages of sin is death, it does, but Christianity in doing what is right has a payday too.

This year will be our 12th year as a church. I told you last year, we get everybody together, we run about 250 people. But 12 years ago, we started with about 14 people. When you look around you today and you see what we have got today and the ministry that God has given us and the people that have gotten saved and all the things that God is doing, I can simply tell you this: it happens simply because there are people in this room today that were willing to give up on themselves and make the investment in other people and duplicate what they had in somebody else and it kept on going and kept on going and that is what builds a church.

I look across here and see some of you guys and some of you gals that are invaluable to me in the ministry. You do incredible things. But you know what I also see? I see one or two gals, three or four or five gals out here that took eight or nine of you, 10 or 12 of you and invested every day God in you and made you what you are today because they duplicated into you what somebody duplicated into them.

It is a simple concept. It is true in life. If you want to be in good shape, you have to make an investment in yourself. You know you have to eat right. Put the Twinkies down. You do not know it, but we have a camera out there of everything that you guys take off that table when we are making notes. Some of you take those cream pies and stick them in your purse, stick them in your pockets. Some of you guys have brought cargo pants back into style simply because you can get more in the pockets of them. But you invest in yourself. You start eating right, four or five days a week, you work out, you exercise. You take time to invest in a program that will make you fitter, stronger, physically, make you better. But you have to be willing to make that investment.

I always love these commercials. "Get fat burner pills." Guy squashing a grapefruit. "You do not like grapefruit? I do not like it either. Get you fat burner pills. You can eat all you want, do all you want, never exercise, eat the fat burner pills and you will lose weight." That is ludicrous. The guy knows you will get away with it because you will die of a heart attack and overweight before you figure it out. There are no fat burner pills. There is no magical formula to being in shape. It

takes a desire on your part to say, "You know what, I want to change what I am doing and I am going to change the way I am eating."

Gymnasiums, fitness clubs, they stay in business because thousands of people join and never go. I see it up where I go. You get these old geezers up there that are 60 years old. I will tell them. They have all these machines. They will sit on the machines and they will talk back and forth. I say, "You know what, you obviously did not buy a membership here for a workout." "What do you mean?" "You got a camping permit because all you do is sit on the machines. I need the machine." "You know what, thank you for keeping it warm." Not necessary. "But I need the machine." You see it wherever you go. They make millions of dollars because people get the idea, "Oh, I am going to a gym." You ought to see the place day after New Year's. Packed to the walls. Just wait three or four days. Gone. Where are they at? Oh, they are over at Quigley's Donuts over here someplace.

In your spiritual body, it is the same way.

*Hebrews 5:14*

*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

Exercising your spiritual body. In Christianity, you can see the difference in any church, any church, those who make good investments and those who do not. You see it in kids, you see it in our lives, you see it in families, you see it in churches. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth."

## VIII. The Danger of Withholding and Poverty

Then he says this: "and there is that withholdeth more than is meet but it tendeth to poverty." In the Bible, there is a great story that illustrates this. You are all familiar with the story. It is a story about when the Lord went back to heaven and He gives some pounds to some people. In Luke chapter 19, verses 12 through 26, you know the story, He gives one guy ten pounds. Or excuse me, He gives every man a pound. "Here is your pound," ten guys. "Here is your pound, here is your pound, here is your pound." Then the Bible says that He goes back to heaven. Then He comes back to the point at a time and He says, "I want to see now what you did with what I gave you." One guy says, "Lord, I took Your pound You gave me and I made some good investments. I got You ten pounds." He says, "Lord, I took the one You gave me and I got You five pounds." The other guy says, "Well, Lord, I took the pound You gave me and I just saved it and put it away. I did not get anything done with it, but I got the one pound You gave me." Now that is a story that illustrates a man making an investment in what God gives him. Exactly what it says.

When He comes down through there, He says in verse 23:

*Luke 19:23*

*Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?*

He says, "How come you did not put it into a bank? How come you did not put it where you could get usury?" That is interest. "Why did you just keep what I gave you and do absolutely nothing with it?" Yet there are a lot of God's people that take everything that God gives them, everything that God bestows upon them through salvation, and they just keep it. They never do a thing with it. It is an incredible study, incredible study.

Look at verse 15. If you are there, if not, I will just read it. He comes down through there and He says, the last part of that verse, excuse me, verse 23, He says, "Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?" He says, "I will get it back, I will get it back with interest, interest in it." That is what He is saying. He comes down through there and He says in that verse, He says that, "I might know how much every man hath gained by trading." I have told you a million times about life. He says it. He says, "I wanted to see how much each man might get and gain by trading." I have told you a thousand times, one of the greatest principles of life is life is a trade-off. If you want to have a relationship with God and know the Bible, you have got to trade off something for that. If you want a relationship with God, you have got to trade the world. How many times I have seen a young gal lose everything, probably the jubmancy to Christ because she traded the guy that God had for her for Bozo the Clown. She traded or he traded and he made a mess out of their life. You will trade in life one thing for another. The concept of making good or bad choices, making good smart investments. We trade away many times our millennial inheritance for the things of the Lord.

Then verse 24 says, "There is that withholdeth more than is meet." Now you see that? Here is another angle on that verse. This is a great principle. He says, "There is that withholdeth more than is meet." You have got to hold some things back in the Bible. You do not scatter it all. He says that "is meet." There are things that you need from the Word of God that you keep for yourself to help you meet the needs that you have got to have. There are promises. There are truths. There are principles. There are verses that you need. They are for you. God gave them to you. They are meat for your needs. You do not scatter them out. You do not take the Bible and just get everything out. You have got to have stuff for yourself that gets you through. You do not give it all out. You have to keep some of it, that book, just for yourself. You withhold some of it. But when you keep it all or do not even get it at all, it leads to poverty.

It is true physically. Those who will not invest what they have in time will run out of money. You have a retirement and you have some money in your retirement. So you invest it and you live off the investment of getting the interest. Never touch the capital. If you do not do that, you can live off your money, but you are going to run out sooner or later. It is smart. It is smart to make good investments.

In your spiritual life, if you do not put out what you get biblically, scatter it. If you do not get it out and get an interest on it, get an income coming back on it spiritually. Let me tell you something. Every week you get a lot here. We break the bank. Spiritually winning the lottery every week. I give you as much as I can and give you the Word of God. I give it to you as much as you can handle. But the Bible also says in Luke chapter 12, "to whom much is given, much is required." You have got to do something with it when you get it. In a spiritual sense, you will wind up in poverty. Spiritual bankruptcy.

I have seen men and met people that they have just absolutely, they are so spiritually worthless and spiritually broke that they could not buy a corn dog spiritually. They absolutely have not two spiritual nickels to rub together. They do not know the first thing about anything. I have seen born-again Christians who are just totally broke spiritually. I have seen families like that. Generation after generation after generation, nobody picks up anything from God.

One of the greatest illustrations of our working with homeless people, why I like to do it, always keeps it fresh in my mind, is because a lot of God's people are in the same boat. Spiritually speaking. We see some really bad ones. People who live in a cardboard shack or live under a railroad bridge, 10, 12, 15 years, waiting, begging for a food truck to come by. They get a bath, no hygiene, ragged clothes, always getting whatever handouts, only when some good-natured person comes along and gives them something. They do not have one solid quality of life and anything that they do that they can call their own. When you talk to them, you can see in a glance why they are where they are at, because they all made the choices that put them in that decision and put them in that situation. Bad investments on booze, bad investments with drugs, the world that landed them right where they are at.

Yet you will see God's people who live in great homes, nice houses, drive nice cars, wear \$100 suits, have all the food they need, and yet inside spiritually, they are just as destitute and homeless and broke as the people you are going to give a hot dog to today. They too will live off the spiritual handouts that they have to get from other people. They will never learn how to get it themselves or give it out to somebody else. The longer they go without a good bath, spiritually speaking, washing of the water by the Word, the longer they go without good, solid, hot food, manna from heaven, doctrine, meat, the worse they get and the more problems they have. It is all because of the choices they made on the inside.

## IX. Conclusion: The Call to Action

Our job, the job of every Christian, the job of every church, and we have come through these things just to help you get to a place where you begin. I told you when we started, eight things in this passage, I have given you two of them now. Last week, we saw about the right desire, how you reproduce and you duplicate what you have with God in others. We saw that last week. This week, we talked about loving your life or losing your life to God so you can find it and have everything that God wants for you. Then take what God has given you, scatter it out, the Word of God, give it to others, give it to the world, cast your bread upon the waters of your family, cast your bread upon the people at work, cast your bread upon the people that God gives you in your church, in your world, and then you make those investments. It will come back on you as an increase. It will come back in everything that you do. You will always be better off after you give everything to God you have than keeping it yourself. But it is a process to get there. We will hold up there. I will call you back here in just a few minutes and we will get back. Do not forget you guys are going to be here.