

Proverbs 18:8-12

Sunday 11/20/2016

We live in a time where, as I have told you many, many times, every period of church history has had some issue doctrinally that they had to struggle through. The issues that most people struggle with today have been put to rest a long time ago. These people do not know anything about the Bible, they do not know anything about history, they do not know the church, the true church, and how it worked through all these issues. So they struggle with it today because they do not understand it. All of the fundamental issues that so many people struggle with today were put to rest many, many, many years ago as the church worked through them in each period of church history.

I. The End-Time Doctrinal Struggle: The Word of God

I told you that the issue we are all struggling with today in the Laodicean church is the issue of the Word of God. Do you have the very words of God? Do you have a book that is trustworthy, that is absolute, that is perfect, that has no mixture of error in it, that is the very words from God to you? That is really understanding the issue of our day.

I think probably last week when I ended, I gave you what singly was probably the greatest verse on the whole concept. That is in Proverbs 22:21, where he simply talked about that I might make you know the certainty of the words of truth. That is the bottom line. Do you know for certain that the Bible you have contains the words of truth?

The Bible says, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." For God to write one book that uses words one way here and then uses them someplace else, that is a double standard in the mind of Christ. Of course, we know that cannot be true. If you have them, do you delight in them? We talked about that last week, how the man who wants to corrupt the Word of God sees the Bible as nothing special. The Bible is nothing more than any other book to them, so they feel free to correct it. We saw a good look into the mindset of why men do that today.

II. The Devil's Character Traits and the Sins of the Saints

Our next set of verses today will focus again on what the devil did or is doing. They will become what I call the secondary sins of the saints.

John 8:44 says, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." He lists those things that he does. Once we get saved, we know that we are free from the penalty of sin, but unfortunately, we are not free from the presence of sin. We still have to deal with our old sin nature. Within that old sin nature, you are going to find the residue of when you were of your father the devil.

I have told you before, people who, before they get saved, have a problem with lying and cheating and things like that, that is going to be their biggest struggle. People who have problems with drinking or alcohol or smoking or whatever, whatever your fundamental problem was

before you got saved, most likely is going to be your number one issue you have to work on after you do get saved. That is because the residue of that stays within your flesh.

I call these the sins of the saints, the fundamental issues that we have to deal with, the character traits that the devil had that he passed into us when we were in a fallen state. Even though we get saved, that old sin nature will still carry some of those things that we have to deal with.

Somebody says, "What is the difference in getting saved?" Here is the difference: before you got saved, you had all these problems and you could not do anything about it. After you get saved, when God separates your soul from your flesh and gives you the Word of God, now you still may have the old flesh, but now you can get control of it and you can handle it. That is the difference. That is what the Bible does for you. It does just that.

Our text today, Proverbs chapter 18, will be verses 8 through 12. Let us read it and we will talk about it.

Proverbs 18:8-12

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.

Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.

Aaron Kress, would you ask God's blessing on the service today?

III. The Words of a Tailbearer: Slander as a Wound

This passage, in the context of what we looked at last week, talks about a slanderer, somebody who is a talebearer. In the context, it will actually be talking about somebody who is slandering the Word of God. Nobody likes anybody to say something about them that is not true. We all like the truth to be told about us. Sometimes the truth is not pleasant, but it is still better than lying about something. We all would rather have somebody tell us the truth about us than to lie about us or to slander us. God is the same way.

Within the context here, when a person corrupts the Word of God, he is taking the very words of God, the mind of God, what God is saying to you, and he is being a talebearer. He is telling you that what God said was not true. He is slandering the character of God by saying something different. This is how this passage, in its context, fits into what we looked at last week. There are a lot of things in here that, in a practical way, we want to look at, but I wanted to give you that first. It is a great passage and it has a doctrinal application, which I just gave you, but it has some really good practical things too, and we need to look at them today.

Look at verse 8 here first: "The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly." As I said, in the context here, this again will be about the devil and his crowd, the "Yea, hath God said" society.

In Proverbs 6:16, the Bible talks about six things that God hates. We have talked about it many, many times. It is not my plan to spend a lot of time on that today. We have talked about it many, many times. We talked about how in that passage he says six, but there are actually seven. What he says is he pulls the seventh one away from the six, puts six over here and one here, showing you that the seventh one is the capstone of all the things that the devil does. These seven things make up the character traits of the devil: how he operates, his mindset, the way he goes through history and lays things out. The seventh one completes everything and makes it an abomination.

Let me give them to you very quickly here:

Proverbs 6:16-19

These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

- 1.) A proud look,*
- 2.) A lying tongue,*
- 3.) And hands that shed innocent blood,*
- 4.) An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,*
- 5.) Feet that be swift in running to mischief,*
- 6.) A false witness that speaketh lies,*
- 7.) And he that soweth discord among brethren.*

I told you how the seventh one is the capstone. It is the abomination. It pulls everything else together with the other six. When you come back and look at these, these are the character traits of the devil. These seven things are in operation all down through history and all down through the Bible. Let me show you what I mean. Watch these seven things and see how they correspond with your whole Bible very quickly.

- 1.) A proud look. We know that is Genesis 1:1-2, Ezekiel 28, and Isaiah 14. Pride was his problem.
- 2.) A lying tongue. That is Genesis 3, where he said to Eve, "Yea, hath God said?" and then he lied about what God said.
- 3.) Hands that shed innocent blood. That will be Cain and Abel, where Cain killed Abel.
- 4.) A heart that devises wicked imaginations. That will start in Genesis 6, where the Bible says that all the imagination of man was totally wicked, and that

will run all the way up until the beginning of the law, where God gives the nation of Israel the law.

➤ 5.) Feet that are swift to run to mischief. That will be from Exodus, where they get the law, up to 2 Chronicles 36. In that time, Israel, chapter after chapter, book after book, is running to mischief with Baal worship and departing from God.

➤ 6.) A false witness that speaks lies. That will bring us up to the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that there were false accusations against Him. The Bible is filled with it. We know that they lied against Him, made false accusations against Him, and got Him crucified.

➤ 7.) The seventh one, the capstone which makes all of the other six an abomination, is sowing discord among the brethren. There is your church age. That is the favorite sin of the saints in the church age: sowing discord among the brethren. That is it.

You see how the Bible puts all of those things together in an incredible way. Our text here in verse 8 is talking about the words of a talebearer, and one that slanders through false accusations.

Revelation 12:10, talking about the devil in relationship to the nation of Israel, calls him "the accuser of the brethren." You see a good example of the devil slandering and doing exactly what this proverb says when you go back to the early chapters of Job, where the devil goes before God and accuses Job, slanders him, and does all of the things that it says a talebearer does about Job.

It sets up for us, when you understand the fundamental context of it, some tremendous principles for us as God's people today in a church age to better understand why things are the way they are. I am somebody who has always had an investigative mind. I have always asked myself why things are the way they are. In people ministry, I have showed you many different things, and I have always told you if you see something, that old saying, "It smells like Esau, but it feels like Jacob," or vice versa, whatever it was. You always want to look at something and investigate it and see it and understand it for what it is to the best of your ability.

When you get into situations dealing with people and these principles, you are going to find that people are going to accuse you of things that you did not do. People are going to slander you with things, and it helps you understand the mindset of having that mind that investigates, that looks and asks yourself, "Why are things the way they are today in the church? Why, in any given situation, what is wrong with this picture?" Then understand to the best of your ability so you do not wind up being deceived.

John 8:44, I gave it to you earlier, says, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." Now I know the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." I get that. But in the flesh, we still have that residue. Even though it is separated from your soul and your soul is sealed and you go into heaven, you and I still have to deal with some things in this life.

So we see the main deception of the devil will always be the major issue for us and God's people. We see that these secondary sins, so to speak, were there. God's people today have a problem with pride. That is probably the number one problem they have. The second thing they have a problem with, we talked about it last week, is the Word of God. So they corrupt the Word of God. They lie about the Word of God. The third thing they love to do is sow discord among the brethren.

Our verse says here today, "The words of a talebearer are as wounds and they go down deep into the innermost parts of the belly." I have been around in the ministry for quite a while, and I have been around talebearers for quite a while, and slanderers all my life. I have seen the damage they can do to people and I can see what happens. In my opinion, and this is just my opinion now, a person who is a talebearer, and I understand, I need to make it clear here, I know that when we work with people together, you know the rules that we follow in people ministry, I will not go through them this morning, but you know that we work together and all those things. So there are times we have to discuss where they are at, what they are dealing with, and all these things so we can help them. I am not talking about that.

But in my opinion, a person who is a legitimate talebearer, someone who is purposely slandering others to their hurt, there is no way they are trying to help anybody. They are trying to do what the devil tried to do to Job and all down through the history of the Bible, tried to do with Israel. One who purposely slanders others to their hurt, to me, it is the lowest form of cowardice on the planet. It is a person who cannot have the courage to face whoever they have a problem with. They do not have the courage to sit down and deal with whatever the issue may be. To me, it would suggest a man or a woman who is absolutely void of any character or courage or spiritual perception in any way, shape, or form. They cannot deal with anybody about it.

All they do is, you see it in social media. I realize the internet has a lot of good things on it. I get it. There are things you can use on there. It is an amazing tool. I get it. But it is like anything else in life. I am not on social media. I do not have a Facebook page or any of those things. People are sending me emails all the time, "Is your Facebook place where you hang out?" or whatever those things, "Your Twitter account," or whatever. I do not even know what a Twitter is. I have no idea. I thought it was one of those soft drinks.

Social media is just filled with it. You have people on there that just trash everybody everywhere they can. You do not have to be a Donald Trump or somebody running for president that tweets out messages. You can be just somebody out there in any church in any city anywhere who just gets on there and just throws up all over that thing. It is absolutely incredible. It is filled with the venom of people who have to hide, in my mind, hiding behind a computer keyboard to get out what they have to say instead of just facing the person and dealing with it. But that is what we are dealing with.

Sometimes it is in a secret little group. You go out to lunch, and I have been had for lunch so many times it probably sticks in people's throats. It is a thing where, and you probably have it too, people go out and you get a group of ladies going out, they do not like something in the

church, and they hack up everything and tear it apart and all that stuff. They talk about this person, talk about that person. It is wherever you spend time sowing discord.

The key to the church is unity. The key to Christianity is unity. Sowing discord is un-unifying the unity. It tears apart and destroys the single thing that everything in Christianity is built on, and that is unity. The verse is quite graphic. It really needs little commentary on it, even though I want to make some practical things out of it.

Fundamentally, a talebearer or a slanderer, to put it in common everyday terms, is an assassin. They will assassinate a person's character. They will assassinate a person's reputation behind their back without them ever knowing it. In our military world today, we are all in awe of the concept of somebody that is a sniper. The special forces have their sniper training, the Marine Corps have their sniper school. All the branches have a school that is dedicated to teaching people how to be a sniper. A sniper is somebody who hides out one place and has a rifle with a telescopic sight on it and can shoot people. They all wear T-shirts, "Long distance calling, the next best thing to being there." They get in a position where they can kill people at great distances.

I think probably the greatest sniper that ever lived was a Marine guy by the name of Charles Hathcock. Most people do not know who he was, but there was a book written about him called *One Shot, One Kill*. This was back, today we have very sophisticated sniper weapons. Most of them are bolt action .50 calibers that shoot a round about that long. It will go 10 miles, and you can hit anything you can see as far as you can see it. They are very accurate. We all love to get onto YouTube and watch them over in Afghanistan and places. I have watched them many times where the spotters have them on camera, where this guy is looking over a rock someplace. He is like 800 yards away, and the guy has a .50 caliber sniper rifle next to him, and all of a sudden you hear the gun go off, and his head goes like a watermelon everywhere. We all like that kind of stuff, if you like watermelon, anyway.

We like that. We hear the story today of men who were snipers, and we stand in awe of that. I cannot remember the guy that just got killed, Chris somebody. He was a sniper. A great shot and all that stuff. But most people do not know that it has only been the last 40, 50 years where being a sniper has been accepted. For a long time, somebody in the military who was a sniper was separated from the rest of the military. They looked at him as cowards. They had snipers in the Civil War. They had snipers in World War I. They had snipers in World War II up through Korea. Even in Vietnam, many times the men who were the snipers were looked at with disdain by the other troops because of the way that they shot somebody.

For a long time, not much today, but for a long, long time, there were rules to warfare. Most people do not know this, but there were rules to warfare. Back in the 1800s in Europe, when they fought, it was comical. They would meet on the battlefield at 8 o'clock in the morning and they would fight to 5, and then they would all take off and go home and eat. They had hours for the fighting. The joke in Germany is, "In case of rain, the war will be held in the auditorium." There was a chivalry to it. In World War I, when they were flying their little biplanes, and Von Richthofen and all those guys, they did not do anything. They were gentlemen about it. He would

shoot a guy, and the guy was dying, and he would fly up alongside him and salute him. If there was a dogfight someplace and the guy ran out of ammunition, then the other guy would not shoot him down because it was not crooked. There was chivalry to it. There were times when they would shoot down a German plane or an American plane that they would fly over the next day and drop a wreath on it. War was different back then.

There were times back in World War I and World War II that on Christmas Eve, they were killing each other just 200 yards away in the fortifications, and they made a peace for Christmas. They were in the middle of the battlefield, where 20 minutes ago they were killing each other, they were sitting out there sharing their link sausage and their K-rations and everything, and singing Christmas hymns together, and then the next morning they were back killing each other. So being a sniper back then was not accepted. They were kind of shunned as being someone who was a coward in the way they killed people. That has all changed now, and it is accepted now.

But in truth, in Christianity, the weapon of choice for the sniper who wants to slander you will be their tongue, and it is likened to a weapon, a sword.

Psalms 57:4

My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

Psalms 64:3

Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:

They are snipers, and they get in a hidden position to assassinate your character. Historically, that is all talking about David. A lot of people were after him and said a lot of things about him. Doctrinally, that is all Christ on the cross because they said a lot of things about Him. But inspirationally, it is you and me.

You begin to see how this verse, Proverbs 18:8, says that like a wound going down deep into your belly. I do not know if you know much about it, but the worst kind of wound you can get, other than one that is a fatal wound or a shot in the head or someplace, is a belly wound. Especially many times in World War II, when they flew those missions, the guys did not even eat breakfast before they went, simply because they knew if they got a belly wound, the bullet going in and ripping their stomach open with everything that is in there, plus all of the stuff, it would just be septic. It is a very, very bad wound.

In the Bible, the belly is always a picture of our emotional stability. So when it talks about going down deep into the belly, things people slander you with will have a deep impact on your emotions if you allow it to. This sword, their tongue, used in talebearing or slander, not only lacerates the skin and draws blood, but it also pierces the vitals of the victim and cuts them deep inside them emotionally, just like a real sword. You can be in a situation where you are having a great day, enjoying everything, looking forward to having lunch or dinner, and you can get one phone call and you are sick the rest of the night. You do not want to eat now. Your stomach is

churning over, and whatever they said on the phone had nothing to do with your stomach. But in the Bible, your belly is like your emotions, and it says that slander goes down deep. It cuts deep. It is a lot of things that cut deep. A lot of things that will affect the person emotionally.

Here is your first little study, if you want to get this into a study and get it in your Bible. There are two swords in the Bible.

➤ 1.) In Hebrews 4:12-13, you have a sword that is the Word of God. That one cuts and it divides asunder, but it divides and cuts asunder in a good way. It cuts and divides asunder your soul from your flesh. So the first sword is the Word of God, and it does cut and it does divide, but it does it in a good way.

➤ 2.) The second sword is found in Psalms 57:4 and Psalms 64:3, and that is the devil's people whose tongue is like a sword, and it cuts and divides you from the fellowship of God and His people.

One is used to strengthen you, the other one is used to destroy you. It is just that simple. That is why the Bible talks about, listen, there are many people out of church today completely, who will not go to church anywhere. They are broken and hurting, all because some dear saint of God went to work on them with a sword of their mouth instead of going to work on them with the sword of the Spirit. It has destroyed them. People, by what they do, sometimes by what they say, but certainly by what they say, have no idea how you can destroy somebody.

I have seen men and women destroyed from serving God just because of something somebody said to them or something somebody did to them, because it is such a deep wound. Especially if it is somebody you think is your friend. One of the greatest passages in the Bible was about Christ, and somebody says, "What are these wounds?" And he says, "These are the wounds that I got in the house of my friends." When your friends deceive you, they wound you. They go down deep. It is a thing where you are either going to uplift somebody with the sword of the Word of God, or you are going to slice them up with the tongue of your mouth, with what you say. Cut them to pieces.

You need to know this for sure: few people in life will ever escape the sword of somebody's mouth. I can guarantee you, maybe you are just a young Christian who is trying to get on your feet, trying to get going. But right now, you will not escape it. Your older ones that have been around for a while, you know exactly what I am talking about. I know exactly what I am talking about. I have experienced it too. I am telling you, there is nothing more emotionally unsettling and makes you sick to your stomach than being cut to pieces by what somebody says about you that is not true or does to you.

If you ever decide to get into the ministry, whether it is here or anyplace else, you need to get prepared for it. I tell people all the time, especially in the people ministry, the work of God is not for thin-skinned people because you will not escape this, especially if you get into working with people. People will always look to blame you for their failures. They certainly will. They can make the biggest mess out of their life, and at the end of the day, it will be somehow your fault.

You will pour yourself into somebody. You will trust them. You will try to help them. You will do everything you can for them, and you will give them everything you have, and they will wind up in time tearing you apart. It is just the way it goes. It is just the way it is. The quicker you learn that great lesson, the better off you are going to be. It is so true. In the ministry, it will happen hundreds of times if you stay in it and you do the work of God. That is the way it is.

As you grow spiritually and you mature and you are used of God, and some of you will, some of you have, some of you are, you will always want to remember the number one personal rule of the ministry of growing spiritually. I do not say this rule to impede your growth spiritually. I want you to be everything that God wants you to be. But there are some things that you need to understand if you are going to grow spiritually and let God use you. I am not very flowery with words. I do not know a lot of big \$25 words to make things sound impressive. I just talk to you just like you can understand it. The greatest personal rule that you need to understand, that you are going to get nailed in the ministry, is simply this: the higher you go up the ladder of maturity spiritually and the higher you go up the ladder of dealing with people, the bigger target your rear end is. They are going to take a shot at it.

Talebearers are without a doubt the greatest cowards you will ever meet. They can never be men or women enough to face the people they are against squarely, only behind their backs. In life, for me personally, there are some things that I rank down below even where the sewer rats live with all the muck and the mire of a sewer. Certainly, someone who is a slanderer and someone who goes out to hurt people with what they say, especially when those people have not hurt them or do something to somebody that somebody has poured their life into them, it is the lowest thing a person can do.

IV. Slothfulness and the Waste of Time and Money

Look at Proverbs 18:9: "He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster." Within our context, this is so true. People who talk about others get so consumed with their slander and their talebearing that they never get anything else done. That is what it is saying. Yet, there is another great practical thing to this that I want to see. When a person wastes anything in life, no matter what it is, it will all be connected with what they focus on in life or what they do not focus on, I should say.

The greatest aspect that we waste, in my mind, will be time. Time is the number one thing that we probably waste more than anything else.

Psalms 90:10-12

The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

He says the bottom line for man is that the average is threescore and ten, 70 years, which means I have four years left. Do you ever stop and think about that? The Bible says in Psalms 90:10-12, based on that, "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

There is something about time that God wants us to know. The reason why He wants us to know it is because the number one thing that we waste as God's people is time.

Now, I am not saying you should be a monk. I am not saying you should not have any fun and just do the ministry 24 hours a day. There are people out there like that. They are the most boring, meanest people you ever met in your life because, as an old Chinese proverb said, "No work and no play make Jack a dull boy." I am not sure that is Chinese, but I think he ate at a Chinese restaurant one time when he said that. It is so true, but we need to stop and number our days and apply our hearts to wisdom. Let me tell you what I am talking about.

The Bible says that we all have 70 years. Let us say we all do, say we are all going to die at 70. I take myself for an example. I did not get saved until I was 20. So now, out of that 70 years, I only have 50 years left. I tell you all the time that I am glad you are here and everything, but it takes you about five years to really get onboard and learn everything and get all your stuff squared away where you really, I am not saying you cannot be effective, but where you really start to dial in and get effective. So now you are down to 45 years.

Most people do not stop and realize this, but in a lifetime of 70 years, we sleep 15 years of that. So now you are down to 30. Most people do not even stop and consider this: in a lifetime of 70 years, you eat six years of that. Some people in one day. But now you are down to 24. You count vacations, ball games, social events, all the things we do, and they are okay things. Not to mention the time they were at a fellowship. What do you have? Probably 10, 15, maybe 20 years to give God out of your life of 70.

That is applying your hearts unto wisdom. That is numbering your days. Most people, God's people, they are so into themselves that they never stop and number their days. They never apply their hearts unto wisdom. They never take the Word of God and really look at it in that way or figure out how to do anything else. Time is the biggest asset that we have in ministry, and we waste it most of our lives.

Obviously, we have people, so you are not down and despondent. I know I can just read some people's minds right now. Show me a problem. We come into church here, and you are 40 years old or you are 50 years old, and you are saying, "Man, I only have 20 years left if I am 50 and I am going to die at 70." So you put the pencil through it and you just figured out you have 20 seconds left.

It is always good to have somebody in your life that always covers the bases for you. In life, as a human being, God will put somebody special in your life that when you are having issues and struggles and times that they will just be that special person to always get you everything you need and cover the bases for you. But in the greatest spiritual way, you know who that is down here? That is the Lord Jesus Christ. Because He has just told us that we are to number our days and apply our hearts unto wisdom. He just said man's life is threescore and ten, 70. I just put the downside to it and showed you, you only have 15, 20 years left. You may have come into this church, and you may be 40, 50, maybe 60 years old. You may be sitting there sweating bullets right now thinking you are a failure in life, but I will tell you something, you cannot do anything for God.

This is the beauty of God who covers all my bases for me, just like we have to cover the bases of others. Because in Ephesians 5:16, with all of our sin and all of our stupidity and all of our problems and all of the time that we waste, He tells us that God has made a way for us to redeem the time. You can redeem the time that you lost. You are sitting here this morning, and you are 50 years old, and you are thinking to yourself, "Man, I have 20 years left, and based on that analogy that Bob gave me, I am in deep trouble." Well, you may have wasted a lot of your life, but God covers all the bases. He made a way for you and me to redeem the time so you do not wind up with the judgment seat of Christ empty.

It is things like that that make you love people, that love you so much that they are willing to do what they have to do to help you be successful. That is what makes you love God even more every day. Some people just do not get it. "Well, I do not know why you can love God the way you do. I do not know why some people can just love God all the time. I have so many things in my life." You do not have a clue. The reason why you love Him is because He does things just like this. He never, never, never does not cover my bases. When you become the man or the woman God wants you to be, and you look at the people that God has put in your world, you will do the same thing.

The greatest gift to us is the time that God allows us to do His work. The greatest gift that God gives us is the time that He allows us in our sinful condition, that He cared enough to come down and save us, to orchestrate our lives in a better fashion that we can now take every moment that we can take and understand and give to Him. The greatest gift to us is the time God allows us to do His work.

One of the greatest passages in the Bible on the second coming of Christ, over in Matthew chapter 20, is all built around time. When Jesus was on His earthly ministry, He kept saying over and over again, "Mine hour is not yet come." It was about time. For you and for me, we waste the time that God gives us. The greatest gift to us that we have as Christians is the time that He has allowed us. He has given us a season. The past is gone. It can never be retrieved. The future is not here yet. What you have is the gift of this very moment. I guess that is why they call it the present, the gift that God has given you to serve Him in this hour of your life. Every day of your life, when you wake up tomorrow morning, you get a fresh, brand-new 24-hour period that is called a day in which we do the work of God, knowing that His day is coming, the day of Jesus Christ. Our time that we serve God is counted toward a day, the rapture of the church, when we give an account for our time. Israel's time is up against the day, the day of the Lord, when they will give an account to God for their time that God gave them. It is time.

The Bible says that "He that is slothful in work is brother to him that is a great waster." The second thing that is a great waste in Christianity will be money.

Isaiah 55:2

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

What do you spend money for which is not bread? I know here again, I am not somebody standing up here saying that every dime and every dollar you have needs to go to the Lord's work and you suffer for it. I am not saying that. I have actually known a lot of Christians when they first got saved. I had a young guy years and years ago, and he was a zealous kid, and he was a nice kid. But he was just zeal not according to knowledge. He made an appointment to come in and see me, and he had a decent job. He said, "I want you to know," he says, "the Bible says that the tithe belongs to the Lord, and that is 10%, and we can keep 90." He says, "I am so thankful for what God did for me, I want you to know what I am going to do. I am going to give God my 90 and I am going to live off the 10." Well, I can appreciate that, but that is not realistic. I know it is not realistic because if it was realistic, that is what God would have told you to do. But I appreciate something like that, but it is not going to work.

God does not expect you to not have a nice car or a nice house. God does not expect you not to go out and see something you like and buy it. God does not think you should not have things that you want to have, a CD player or a cassette player. They do not have cassettes anymore. Those are really cheap, by the way, now. I told you years and years and years ago, I had everything that Ruckman ever did on cassette, on every book of the Bible, years before he ever put anything in print. That is where I really learned the Bible. Those tapes are 40, 45 years old. We are now in the process of trying to put them on, some of the guys are working to put them on CDs so we can have a library here to do it. I was talking to Aaron the other day, he came over and got a load of them, and he called me up very sorry. He says, "Man," he says, "I am getting all the stuff off, but every time I rewind them, the tape breaks because it just snaps off the end, and now we lost it." I said, "Did you get it?" He said, "Oh, I get it, but I ruined your tape." I said, "Those tapes are 45, almost 50 years old. Do you expect them to last forever? As long as you got it, do not worry about it." Those things are old, man. Those things are old. I remember going through those things and looking at them and just pouring over those, and they were some of the greatest material you ever had in your life.

It is a thing where it is okay to spend money on things. It is okay. This is not a church. I am not a pastor that says that there are some churches where if you drove in a Jaguar, it would be all over you. Hey, if you can afford a Jaguar, you are welcome to it, man. They eat a lot, but if you can have one, do it.

Let me tell you what I am telling you. In Christianity today, we think that bigger is better. We think that if it costs a lot, then that makes it even better. It is a lot like spending \$100 million on a building when you could get along with just buying a Butler building and get everything you want for \$10 million. What you could do in ministry with that \$90 million. That is the difference of going out into church, buying a \$300,000 sound system when you can get one for \$10,000. It will do everything you want to do. I can guarantee you, I did not cost \$10,000.

In Christianity, we like to set a style. We like to look like we are slick. We want people to be impressed. Today in the Laodicean church, people are impressed by what they see, not so much what they hear. So we have a big church that has a grandiose auditorium, big screens all around the thing. People are really amazed. Did you ever watch Joel Osteen on Sunday morning or whenever he is on? Did you ever notice that he is in that cathedral stadium, whatever that was

down there that he has now? Did you ever notice that some people are six miles away, and when you are sitting way out the back or on the sides, he looks up on the stage, he just looks like a little guy up there. But they have him blasted on these big screens. His face is blown up like this. He fills the whole thing. People get in awe of that. It is a very subtle thing. You can hardly see him, but there he is, big as life, bigger than life. People think, "Man, this is where God is at because God is big like that." That is how people think. That is exactly how they think.

They want to be slick, so they have see-through podiums. They will have their message on a teleprompter like some politician. He is walking around talking and going through this great delivery on a sermon, this great detail. Then people out there saying, "Man, he really knows the Word of God. He has this whole, how does he memorize those sermons every Sunday?" He does not. He is reading them off the thing right on that deal. They want you to think he is. I kind of used to do the same thing when I was a young preacher. When I make my sermons, I write them. Now they are kind of that size. But early on, I used to write them real big. I did not have all the volume of what I kind of know now to draw off of. So I would have to write it real big so when I would run by the pulpit, I could grab something as I was going by and see it.

They want to appear to be very slick, professional. Their suits probably cost more than your grocery bill for a month, maybe two months. They all have those microphones that go over there and come around like that. Something like this. They would never have their shirt wrinkled like I have to have mine done. No, they get those things, and it comes around there, and I have to tell you the truth, it looks slick. It is good. It is almost like you are an astronaut or something. You are a fighter pilot. You have that little mic key around there. But it is all designed. It is all a lot of money spent. It does not sound any better. It does not work any better. It just gives the appearance because it costs a lot that it must be better.

Organizations are famous for asking for donations for a worthy cause, and people give to it. A guy gives \$100 to an organization, a relief organization, whatever, and then you find out that out of that \$100, a dollar goes to really the help of the people, and 99 of it goes to the structure of salaries and things that you have to have. Churches do not need restaurants, though we have one out there in the lobby, Gary brings it in every Sunday. They do not need Starbucks, though we have a mechanical version of it on Thursday night. There is no need for fitness centers, racquetball courts. They just need the Bible and what God provided for them and being satisfied with it.

There are people who would look at this church and laugh at the way we are down here. There are people who would never sit in front of this church because to them we are not a real church. People tell me that because we do not have our own building and because we do not have all of the things that go on, that they actually think that a real church is the structure that you have. Let me tell you something, I can send you some churches that have really nice structure, and you will find out very quickly they are not a church. That is where we are at today.

I love this place. It is my heart and soul. We have all put our blood, sweat, and tears in this place. I would hate to leave this place. I would hate to lose this place. Someday it may happen, but I am so comfortable here. If I die, God forbid or God willing, however it works out, if I die, my

funeral, I want it right here. Right here. Right where I preached, right where we have worked it out, right where we put out the Word of God, right here. The only ones I want here are the ones that I already have the list made. Everybody in the church and the ones that I want to come. Everybody else, there will not be enough room. We do not want a bunch of people just coming in and saying, "Well, I am glad he is dead." There were probably more of them here than you at that point in time, but that is okay.

V. The Strong Tower of the Lord

In Proverbs 18:10, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Here is another little study that you will want to put in your Bible. There are two fundamental towers in the Bible. I do not know if you know that or not. There are two fundamental towers in the Bible for you to examine and for you to study. They both represent two different things.

➤ 1.) The first one is the Tower of Babel. You will find that in Genesis 10-11. The Tower of Babel will represent the man-made system of the world, not only in religion, but in everything. When they built that tower, if you will remember, their claim and their desire was that the top would reach unto heaven. They were trying to get to God through that tower, so that represents the world system.

➤ 2.) The second tower in the Bible was the Tower of the Lord, or a strong tower. Sometimes it is called the Tower of David. That is God's system.

So if you want to take a study or have a little devotion or do something, I have given you two great illustrations to be able to do that. In the Bible, a tower will be a picture of a couple of different things.

In Isaiah 3:16, in a worldly sense, the tower represents the neck of man and the will of man. In Song of Solomon 4:4, it will represent a man or a Christian or a woman whose head is bowed in the will of God. I saw the lesson that you did for this morning, and you asked the question why people bow their heads and close their eyes when they pray, what do you think about that? That is a great question. As I thought about that, I thought to myself, the answer to that is probably as many as anybody wants to give it, because everybody has their own opinion on it. It is a great question.

I thought to myself, to me personally, I know you do not have to close your eyes and bow your head to pray. The Bible says, "Pray without ceasing." You can pray while you are driving your car, but it would not exist that you close your eyes and bow your head. It may be the last thing you see or do. But I know that everybody has their own thing that they want to say on that and why they do that. But for me personally, I have to look at the world all the time and see everything in the world out there 24/7. When I talk to God, I just like to have a time when I close my eyes and I shut out the world and I do not see anything but Him. It helps me.

I know that people say, "Well, you bow your head for reverence, you bow your head out of respect." I get all that. But for me personally, my neck, based on the Bible, is my pride, stiff neck. For me, when I bow my head and I lower my head, I am bowing my will to God that I am not looking at anything but Him, and my pride and my will is in anything but what He wants me to be. That is what a tower represents. Stiff neck. Somebody proud, their head is up like that.

Do you know why guys hunt in deer stands? A couple of reasons. Animals, for whatever reason, when they go through the woods, they never look up. They always look straight or they look down. If you are sitting on the ground, a deer will see you, but if you are in a deer stand, unless you are up there dancing or something and have your headset on with a loud boom box, he will never see you. He will walk right underneath the deer stand, and he will never look up and say, "Well, that is a strange looking squirrel." He never will. Only man lifts his head in defiance to God. The animals never do.

The strong tower. So it is likened to the will of man or the will of God.

Psalms 18:1-2

I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.

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

Psalms 61:3-5 calls it a strong tower. One of the greatest studies in the Bible is the tower of God in your life. Song of Solomon 4:4 is called the Tower of David, and that is called David because the key to David's life and him being a tall, strong guy with God was his relationship with the Word of God.

Three things God's tower represents and will do for you and for me based on this passage here:

➤ 1.) It protects you. It gets you to the high ground where the enemy cannot get to you. In combat, you are taught if you have to fight a battle and you have to defend a position and you have to decide where you are going to fight, you have to have two things going for you to be successful. It does not necessarily mean you have to have more men than they have, but you have to have these two things.

➤ 2.) It allows me to live above the circumstances that I am going through. I get an elevated position by what I see from all the angles of what is out there coming my way. Again, it is the deer stand concept. If you are just going to sit under a tree or sit in the woods someplace, you only have a one-dimensional view of things. That is straight out. But when you get into a deer stand and elevate it up 10, 15 feet, your dimensions change. Now you have a perspective. Now you can see distance. You can see left. You can see right. You have all of the perspectives that you need to be in an elevated position that being on the ground does not give you. That is why I use deer stands.

➤ 3.) I have already made a reference to this, that man's neck is likened to a tower. Isaiah 3:16 talked about somebody walking around with stretched forth necks. That is his will, stiff neck. Where my tower is a strong tower, I am talking about a guy who puts his will over God's will. The breaking of my will over God's will will always be a picture of my bowing my head and my neck coming down in reverence to God.

VI. The Foolishness of Trusting in Riches

Proverbs 18:11 says, "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit." Proverbs 18:12 says, "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility." These two verses are great verses.

Proverbs 18:11 says the foolish man will trust in his riches. Of course, if you look at Luke 12:21 and 1 Timothy 6:10, it makes it very clear that somebody is loving money, and the root of all evil is money, and somebody that lays up treasure for himself is not rich toward God. So you have all of that.

But to this man, you see what he is talking about here, the wisdom of the world which is found in 1 Corinthians 2, a single tower, just a tower out there, the Tower of David, a strong tower, the Tower of the Lord. To that man, a single tower looks completely vulnerable to the enemy's attack. He feels much safer and secure inside his man-made, man-built, man-sanctioned fortress with all its high walls. In his pride, he thinks that what he has accomplished and amassed is better than what God has to offer. He thinks because he has built his riches or his strong city and what he is trusting in, "How foolish it is for me to put all my trust in one tower." Yet he does not understand because he has no wisdom, "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty and before honour is humility."

Let me tell you something, in his strong, built, man-made fortifications, when the enemy comes, they will come over those walls like ants in a picnic, and he will not stop them. The proud man will not humble himself to run to the tower of God. Proverbs 18:10 says, "The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." The proud man will do that. His neck is stiff, he is haughty, he is following his own will instead of God. He will not run to the tower of God. He will not flee to that tower from the wrath to come. In a day of judgment, he will find out that that was the only tower above all the impregnable things that man could make. That tower, that strong tower, the Tower of David. A strong tower whose foundation was on solid rock, not on sinking sand. A tower whose stones that make up its structure are like granite, stones cut without hands in Daniel chapter 2. A tower that no devil, Satan himself, no power, no principality, no rulers of darkness could ever breach. Ephesians chapter 6. A tower so high that you can see the enemy coming long before he gets to you. A tower so strong that no weapon ever forged by man could ever bring it down.

Isaiah 54:17

No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.

No weapon. A tower so safe your whole family can live in comfort and peace without ever having to fear what is on the outside of that tower. The tower, the high tower, the Tower of David in your life. You say, "How high is it? How high is this tower? How can it be that high that nobody could ever scale the walls, climb up it? How high is this high tower?"

Colossians 3:1-3

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Ephesians 2:6 says, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." That is how high it is. The top of the tower reaches all the way up to heaven to the throne of God, and you are seated up there with Him, and nobody can get you. Some tower you have.

VII. Building Your Strong Tower of Truth

Let me talk to you for just a second about the process of building a strong tower in your life. I would be greatly remiss if I gave you all of this and did not tell you how to do it.

The first thing you have to do is have a good foundation. We know in 1 Corinthians 3 that that is salvation. The Bible says that you get saved, the day you get saved, you laid a foundation in your life. That foundation is the day you trusted Christ.

The second thing, once you have that foundation, you are told to be a wise master builder. In other words, there are some things that you want on that foundation and there are some things that you do not. As you grow, come to church, get into your Bible, you find out what those things are.

The second thing is the building material. The blocks of stone which will be individual Bible principles, Bible doctrines you place wisely on that foundation.

Isaiah 28:9-10

Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

Somebody that is a young Christian. Now here is your process. You build on that foundation one course at a time, one block at a time, and those blocks are precepts, they are principles, they are Bible doctrines. The more Bible doctrine you learn, you put them on that foundation, and it builds itself into a tower. The reason why they cannot get through you is not because the wall bricks are so strong, though they are, we are talking spiritually now, the reason why nobody can penetrate those walls to get to you is because those walls are truth. Those walls are biblical principles that are truth. Because they are truth, untruth can never penetrate them.

So you build your life on truth, you build your relationships on truth, you build everything you do on truth, and you realize that truth is the only fundamental concept in this world that everything has to rise and fall on. If you do not have it, you have nothing. So when you do not have a Bible, you have nothing.

In our church, and I understand our churches are like any other church, it is far from perfect, it has its problems like every other church does, I get it, I understand that. But there is one major difference: everything we do here, whether it is Sunday morning, Thursday night, the people ministry, single ministry, the one-on-one with me or the people that you work with and here in this church that help you, the classes, the special classes we have, everything, everything has one goal. That is to give you the principles, the precepts, and the doctrines to build your own strong tower for you and your family.

When times come, and they will come, when the slanderers come, and they will come, when all the forces of hell come down around you, and they will, when that phone call comes in and you get that sick feeling in your stomach, when you think that something went one way and it actually went somewhere else and somebody lied about you and slandered you, you found out somebody that you loved so deeply and was close to you betrayed you, and all of those things that go along with it and that comes down, it is the strong tower that is always going to get you through. It is just that simple.

Sitting here today, you have two towers to choose from. You have the Tower of Babel or you have the Tower of David. There is never a third one. That is all you have. But the Tower of David is enough. It is enough. We will hold up there today.