

Proverbs 16:8

Sunday 5/22/2016

Last week, if you will remember, we had probably one of the most practical lessons that you would ever hope to have as we looked at Proverbs 16:6-7. We focused the lesson around two great words: mercy and truth. We talked about how the depth of our relationship with God is clearly and simply based on our understanding of what God did for us. It is so simple; it is so easy. We love to make the Christian life so complicated, but it really is not. We do or do not do for God simply based on our understanding of what He did for us.

The folks in this church, as in any church, who really commit themselves to the work of the Lord will be those who really grasp the depth of what God has done for them. It is just that simple. It is so easy. How many times over the years have I talked about 1 Corinthians chapter 3, that great chapter that basically deals with the judgment seat of Christ where it says that we all shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ? I told you how many times I have laid out for you how the Bible says that when you get saved, you lay a foundation. That foundation is Jesus Christ.

Then it talks about the three things that we build on that foundation. You probably know them by heart. The first thing it says is gold. The next thing it says is silver. Then the third thing is precious stones. How many times have I told you what they really represent? Gold in the Bible represents the deity of Christ. Silver in the Bible represents the price of redemption. Precious stones in the Bible will always represent people. The format is so clear, so simple, right along with the study on mercy and truth.

Gold on that foundation: the more you learn about the Lord Jesus Christ, the more you are going to want to tell people about Him. Silver: the more you understand what He did for you, you are going to want to tell more people about that. In time, it results in the precious stones. Knowing who God is (gold), knowing what He did for you (the silver), and then telling other folks about it. Everything we do is based on our understanding of what God has done for us. The gold standard of our life as a Christian is understanding the price that was paid for our salvation.

You remember I showed you the importance of how God will put two words together like mercy and truth. I gave you a number of them last week, and how important that is to show us how those two words have to work together.

I. The Importance of Discernment

Then we looked at Proverbs 16:7, and I gave you what I believe is another incredibly important concept: the importance of knowing what is of God and what is not of God. So much confusion exists today. I never presume to speak for you when I preach or when I make a statement. Many times, I am speaking to myself. For me, I know it is so true. I have wasted enough time in my life. We all have, but I know for me, I have wasted enough time in my life.

The Bible says in Ephesians 5:16 that God, in His goodness and mercy, allows us to redeem the time that we have lost. What an incredible concept. Most of God's people do not even know the process to be able to do that. But it is true. We waste time in our lives, and there comes a point in

our life when we realize what we have done. God gives us the ability to redeem the things that we lost. But I do not redeem them by getting involved in things that God is not involved in.

I have one goal in life. I am saved. I am on my way to heaven. I have no doubts, no fears about that whatsoever. I have one goal in my life, and that is for the rest of my life to make as few stupid mistakes as possible.

Then we looked at the incredible concept of making your enemies be at peace with you. What a great concept that is, based on the importance of you understanding and knowing sound doctrine, having a sound faith, and understanding the depth of the Bible. When you see something, or somebody brings something to you, or gives you a piece of information, you immediately know whether it is of God or whether it is not. Because of your understanding of the Scriptures and your ability to use the Bible, they have nothing to say. They have to hold their peace because there is nothing to say alongside the Bible when you are in error.

I gave you, if you remember, two great examples of this. I used them because they were very easy to illustrate. One was in a Christian context, the other one was in a non-Christian context. The first one I showed you is the way to biblically start a church or to build a church. The second one was dealing with false religions and cults. When you are faced with these things, because of the depth that you have in sound doctrine, people who are wrong, people who are in cults, people who are not doing the things of God the way that God says they need to be done, have really nothing to say.

II. The Pattern of God

The fact that God has a book of patterns, the Word of God, is so crucially important. In the Bible, the book of patterns will be the way that we should do all things. I showed you last week a great verse out of Hebrews 8:5, how that when Moses made the tabernacle, God had a pattern that He gave him. That tabernacle represented something for the nation of Israel that was unprecedented. That tabernacle was the closest thing they ever got to Jesus Christ and God. When God wanted them to have that instrument called the tabernacle, He wanted it done a certain way.

Anybody who has read Arthur Pink's book on Exodus or some of the other great books that are out there knows what an intricate thing that tabernacle was. The Bible goes into such absolute essential detail about the knobs and the flowers and the carvings and the ornamentation all around it. It is incredible. Everything it talks about represents something with Christ and God in our relationship. It is incredible.

Yet the Bible says that when God wanted the nation of Israel to have that tabernacle, the Bible says in Hebrews 8:5, God was clear to tell Moses, "Moses, you make that after the pattern I gave you." There is a pattern for everything in our Christian lives.

Psalms 19:1

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

The Bible says in Hebrews 9:23 that when God created those heavens, He had a pattern that He used. He does everything by a pattern. Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:16, "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." He said, "Look, Timothy, the struggles that I have gone through, the tribulation and the trials that I have been through in my life are a pattern for you." I am telling you something, as you and I read the Bible 1,900 years later, the things that Paul went through are a pattern for you and for me, of what ought to be in our faith.

Titus 2:7

In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

Paul told young Titus, "Young men," which Titus was, "young men are to have a pattern of good works in their life based on good doctrine." Everything is a pattern. Everything is a pattern.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 2:15, "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." A lot of people talk about the fact that you should not judge me. They will pull up the verse out of Matthew, which has nothing to do with the church age, and they will say, "Judge not, lest ye be judged." Well, the Bible says he that is spiritual judgeth all things. Now, notice it did not say people; it said things. I do not have a right to judge you for what you do or what you do not do because you are going to stand before God just like I am, and you can find as much wrong with me as I can find wrong with you. So, I do not have a right to judge you in what you do or not. You will stand before God.

But let me tell you something, I do have a right to judge what you are doing if it is going to come into my life and impact me or not. You can do whatever you want to do, but what you do, I make a judgment call on: is it of God or is it not of God? If it is of God, I will allow it in, but if it is not of God according to the pattern, I do not want anything to do with it. It is just that simple. Being able to have the discernment to be able to discern when God is in something or when He is not.

We live in absolutely crazy times. We live in times when Christians are just like the world, and they justify everything they do in the world from the Bible, and it is so easy for someone like yourself that is young and learning and growing to get caught up. What a marvelous thing, what an incredible tool to have, what an absolute essential aspect of the Christian life to be able to look at something and say, "That is of God, that is not." Boy, would that solve some problems for us.

Never coming to the place in our lives, in anything, where we think or convince ourselves that in anything that we do, you and I are an exception to the clear patterns of God. That all the patterns exist for everybody else, but when I want to do what I want to do, they do not apply to me.

2 Timothy 2:5

And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

The Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:5 that the Christian life is likened to a race that we run, and it says a young man will strive for the masteries. But then it says, but he is not crowned, and he is not crowned because in his run, in his race, in his race for life through life, he did not run lawfully. You have got to do it by the book. I think that is one of the reasons that many times military men, when they get their life turned around for the Lord, have an easier time accepting some of these things than maybe just the ordinary young man or young lady growing up today. Not that there are not young men and young ladies that do, but military men have grown up in a regimented system that goes by the book. They understand the concept.

Wednesday night in our men's meeting, Bill Tillman got up and talked about the turkey hunt. I want to tell you, the place was packed with young couples, and we have got several of them coming to the picnic, and some of them are coming over to Steve to help cook. Some of you couples are now actually infusing yourselves. He spent two or three days with them, and I will tell you what, you are beginning to see how they are paying attention that there is something different here, and it is an incredible concept. But the ability to be able to look at things in life and be able to say, "You know what, this is of God and this is not," it all comes down to a regimented Christian lifestyle that follows the patterns, as they say in the military, "by the book." You do it the way the Bible says it needs to be done.

III. The Laodicean Church Age

Today we are going to look at Proverbs 16:8. We are only going to get one verse done today, but I think it is a great verse, worthy of our attention, worthy of our complete time today. I know that most of you who have been around here for any length of time know and understand that we are in the Laodicean church period. We know that the Bible lays out in Revelation chapter 3 the transition from the greatest period in church history, which we know as the Philadelphia church history, as we moved around the turn of the 1900s and into the 1900s. We began to move into what we commonly now understand would be the Laodicean church period.

Undoubtedly unprecedented, the most worthless, the most unbelievably carnal aspect that the church has ever experienced in 2,000 years of church history. It is the last church before Jesus Christ comes back. It is the church that Laodicea means "rights of the people." It is a church where they do not care about God's rights anymore. It is a church that cares nothing about the things of God. In fact, the great contrast between the two churches: one is called the church of the open door (that would be Philadelphia), the other one is called the church of the closed door, completely closed to everything.

Yet, that church, Laodicea, is functioning unbelievably. If you walked into the average Laodicean church today, if you did not understand your Bible, you would not realize and recognize the apostasy that you are standing in the midst of. It comes back to what I said: your ability to discern what is of God and what is not of God by the principles of the Word of God.

When I was growing up in the 70s as a young Christian, I must confess that our concept of the Laodicean church has changed. Back in the 70s, we all thought that the Laodicean church was the churches that came out of the Reformation, churches like the Methodist church and the

Presbyterian church, who honestly and fundamentally back in the 20s and the 1800s were pretty fundamentally strong. You realize some of the greatest soul-winning preachers that ever preached across this planet were Methodists. They were incredible preachers.

When we, back in the 70s, me being a young man, when we looked because of our limited view, we had no idea. I had no idea if somebody would have told me back in 1971 that the church of Jesus Christ that once stood on the Word of God would now embrace lesbianism, homosexuality, would now bring social drinking into their churches, that the great Baptist churches that once stood for the truth of the Word of God now have gone by the wayside and are bringing in wine-tasting contests. They see celebrity poker on television and they bring it into the church because you give your winnings to the church as an offering. I never would have believed it. My whole thinking has changed in the last 30 or 40 years.

We have actually experienced where the church of Laodicea was not the Methodists and the Presbyterians. It was the once-founded Baptist churches that believed the Bible, preached the Bible, who have gone into the falling away of apostasy, that now where pastors once stood and preached the Word of God, their churches now have become the mega-church concept of an elusive object that just does nothing. It has a form of godliness but denies the very power thereof.

IV. The Truth of Proverbs 16:8

Today we are going to look at Proverbs 16:8. We are going to look at a verse, that one little verse, one little verse destroys and goes against everything you see portrayed as Christianity today. We will see some really good practical material.

Proverbs 16:8

Better is little with righteousness than great revenues without right.

Thank you, Bill. "Better is little with righteousness than great revenues without right." Now here is one verse that has an incredible practical impact, and we want to take this verse and we want to break it down first, and then we want to develop it. We saw this concept early on in Proverbs 15, I think it was Proverbs 15:6 and again in Proverbs 16, and I think Proverbs 15:27, about the investment of your life, the revenue of your life. We talked about how the more that you have, the more complex life becomes. This is one of those incredible universal truths that would be found all down through history and all through the Bible.

It is true in the history of our own country. The verse is so true. We were much better off morally and righteously in the 1700s and 1800s without electricity, electronics, cell phones, computers, emails, Facebook, MySpace, in-your-face, the stock markets, swimming pools, big houses with two and three-car garages, and all the other material things that we are told make our lives easier, but in reality instead have put us into a state of apathy. Made our lives more comfortable but put us asleep.

Once upon a time, America had a real desire for a sense of truth. There was a time in America when she had a sense of a moral compass in righteousness. But now that is all gone, and do you know why? Because it is simply true in your life and my life. You know what our problem is in

our relationship with God? God has too much competition with the things of this world. We face as God's people today tremendous competition. Too many illusions that the devil has portrayed that we think are real, and life has become so complicated.

Where once our families talked and fellowshiped around the dinner table and spent quality time talking together, now it is off to all the events that in time will take the place of all the good quality time of a family. It gives the illusion of a family being together. There is nothing that pulls the family together more than that family spending time together. God has a pattern for the family. Look around you, our society, we have been duped into it. We have all fallen for it. I hate it, but there is nothing that I can do about it.

Our society has gotten farther and farther away from human contact. Nobody talks face to face anymore. "I will text you." "I will get your voicemail." "I will send you an email." You call someplace on the phone, you get an endless series of prompts. "If you are calling about something that means nothing, press one. If you are calling about something that means something, press two. If you are calling to leave us a message but we will not call you back, press three." It goes on and on and on. If you do not believe me, just wait until you need to call your cable company. I hope in the quietness and the serenity of my basement those calls are not recorded anywhere. They drive me nuts.

We see in our world today the elimination of human contact. We see it in everything. Where once in a church, when you wanted to trust Christ as your own personal Savior and you stepped out and came down that aisle, you were met by a man or a woman with an open Bible that sat down and opened up the Scriptures and showed you how to come to Jesus. Today, "Just raise your hand and I will give you the prayer in your hand." We do not take into consideration the confusion that might be in that person's life, the confusion about God, the deity of Christ, the idea of no concept of repentance. It is okay.

We live in a Christianity today where we just want to get it done quickly and then we can brag about the results. Or, "Come down and here, go in a corner and read this card." America has long since lost the desire for holiness and a real relationship with God. We have fake and phony conversations amongst ourselves, which only produces in a society like ours a fake and phony conversation with God. A long winding road down to the city of disaster has been a downhill spiral of replacing the value system of God's values with the one from the world.

Every time we go to restart the week, before I go to Walmart and buy all the water and the underwear and the socks and the things that we need. I was in line. I always try to stay right around 19 items so I get through that express thing. But then there are always two or three people who pay no attention to this. I know how 40 items. My basement, I am glad that I am alone when I have these conversations. I was in it last week for the time we went. Twelve water, two packs of underwear, extra large, some socks, batteries, stuff we passed out.

A woman in front of me had bought a television set. Not a huge one, about a 24, 20, 30 inch. I do not know. It was one of those plasma type ones. I do not follow up on it. When a woman rang it up, it came to \$1.99. The woman was ecstatic. She thought she got some great sale. Only to find out that somebody, whoever that may have been, spent a nice fun time in Walmart taking the

stickers with the barcodes off the expensive stuff, putting it on the cheap stuff, and vice versa. You should have seen her eyes when it rang up \$1.99. I did not see them because I was running to the aisle to get one myself. I am going to get 9 or 10 of them. They are going to be for sale in a bookstore back there for \$2.99.

You should have seen the disappointment on her face when she realized that that was not the real price, that somebody had duped her into changing the real price of what she wanted to buy, that she thought she was going to get such a deal on, that now was going to cost her full price. In our society today, what the devil has done is he has changed the value systems on things. In your life and my life, you think you are getting a deal when you cheap shot the value system to do what you want to do. I want you to know something, in the great Walmart of the sky, God has not changed His value system. The value system that He once had in the 1800s and the 1700s and the 1600s and the 1900s is the same value system He has today.

The verse says, "Better is little with righteousness than great revenue without right." Last week I used a very simple practical example of starting and building a New Testament church and how impossible that will be without the right pattern. The verse will go right along with why churches fail today. I know that many of you, because maybe from your line of work or you do not get into it to the depth that maybe some of the others do, I want you to realize that Christianity has pretty much fallen on its face today. In every aspect, it has failed.

Most of God's people, especially young people like yourself, this is why I try so hard to give you the way that you see yourself. I want you to realize that this is why I try so hard to give you the way it used to be. I know some of you probably do not like it. Some of you probably think you wish I would move on to something else, but I want to tell you something. One of the problems that they had with the nation of Israel, and the great prophet Haggai mentioned this in Haggai 2:3, one of the things that got Israel into the mess that they got into, and Haggai says this, "You have no contrast, you have no understanding of the way it was when it was right to see how phony it is today."

I feel sorry for most of you young men and young ladies here today. I really do. I will do my best, but even I understand that that is a failed attempt with the magnitude of what I am up against. Most of you today have never seen a real church other than maybe this one. Most of you have never been part of a real revival. Most of you have never seen the Holy Spirit of God working in a way that is unprecedented. You have nothing to compare what you see around you today, and you actually grow up and think, "This is Christianity." No, it is not.

Missions have failed today miserably. Missions have failed because missions have lost the pattern by which the New Testament lays out missions. The family today, Christian families, they have failed miserably. There is more trouble and heartache and problems in Christian homes, and it is because the pattern has failed. Marriages are unprecedented in divorce and end on the rocks with some of the most unbelievable, goofiest stuff you have ever seen in your life. They fail because people have forgotten the pattern by which God gave for marriage.

You see it in the Christian's walk with God. They have no concept of what holiness is. They think God drinks. They think God smokes. They think God, as long as you do not get drunk, it is okay

to social drink with God. You can do whatever you want to do. God loves gays. God loves this. God loves everybody. God just is a nice big marshmallow up there in the sky. He accepts everybody, so we ought to accept everybody. That is not the pattern of God.

The mindset of building a church today, and I do not really care, I just want you to know today Christianity has fallen into the same trap that the world has fallen in. That verse says, "Better is little with righteousness than great revenues without right." Christianity today has fallen into the same trap that the world is in. Bigger is better. Shinier is newer. The illusion of an \$80 million church building is better than a log cabin church down in the mountain hills of North and South Carolina. What we would laugh at and make fun of compared to our Taj Mahals, we see a little log cabin down there in the hills, and we think because we have all this and they have a log cabin that God certainly would be with us.

"Better is little with righteousness than great revenue with right." We have fallen for the illusion that a hundred-voice choir is better than 40 people in a congregation screaming at the top of their lungs, out of their heart, "How Great Thou Art," and all of them out of tune, someplace down in Dickson Creek, Alabama. Today in churches, the idea of a 2,000, 3,000 seat auditorium filled to capacity is a surefire mark of success.

Years ago in the 70s, when this all kind of got started in Akron, Ohio, there was a guy by the name of Rex Humbard. He was a charismatic. He had built one of the largest churches in Akron called the Cathedral of Tomorrow. It was an incredible complex. He had a prayer tower that went up 120 feet in the air. It was a restaurant at the top of it. Get closer to God while you eat. All of the Baptist churches at that time were envious of Rex Humbard. Here is a guy who was a heretic, believed in tongues and everything else, had healing services. Here he is, has got the Cathedral of Tomorrow that was incredible in its day. A prayer tower, who needs that? But he had all of these great things, and all these other Baptist churches around were so envious.

Back then, the last of the old Philadelphia boys, and I cannot even remember who it was that I was standing there in a crowd when they were talking, and he made a statement that I never forgot when they were talking about this. He said this, "You know what, men, just because you have got a big crowd does not mean you are a church." Oh boy, there is some wisdom in that statement.

V. The Pattern of a Church

Now let me just for a moment of time, and I have never done this, I probably need to go on record for this. Let me explain to you my pattern of what a church should be based on the patterns in the Bible. You have heard me say many, many times that the model for the New Testament church, certainly the model that I built this one after, is found in Acts chapter 13 at the church of Antioch. The Bible says they were first called Christians at Antioch in Acts 11. That is the first time you find the word Christian in the Bible, and that church in Antioch serves as the model, and I wish I had time this morning to go through all of those things.

In the Old Testament, I find another great pattern for what I believe should be a pattern for the church. It is a picture of one of the greatest men who pastored Israel all through the history of

Israel. His name was David, and it is found in 1 Samuel 22:1-4. David is running from Saul, and he runs down to a cave, and the Bible calls it the cave of Adullam. When word passes around that David is down there, the Bible tells you that all kinds of people flock down to that cave. The Bible says it was people who were distressed, people that were in debt, people that had heartache, people that had problems, and they all came down to that cave, and David ministered to them. The Bible makes it very clear that there were about 400 people there.

Now I believe the Bible, I use the Bible for patterns and try to in everything I do, I believe that that is a pattern that a church should never get past 400 or 500 people. It is hard to build a church of 400 or 500 people today. You have mega churches out there that have 2 or 3,000 people in them. Somebody says, "What do you do with that?" Well, that is an easy solution. "You want to get it down to 400? Give me a month in the pulpit. I will have it down from 2,000 to 400 so fast you will wonder what hit you." Then you can get something done, maybe.

Now I get this, and I explained this to the singles yesterday. We were talking about this, and Sean asked a great question. At some point in time, we will have to start another church. But we will do it in God's timetable and not your timetable or not mine, because there is a process, there is a pattern that you have to follow. I do not know where we get the idea that when you start a church, the first thing you do is when you get moving to start another church. I was a goofy pastor that somebody said, "Get up to his congregation when he started his church and said, 'You know what, in 2 or 3 years, all of you should be out starting churches.'" That is the stupidest thing I ever heard anybody say. But then he was one of the most stupidest people I ever heard.

A church has to mature. A church has to stabilize. A church has to foundationalize itself. We are in the process of doing that. I understand that. Now this year our church was 13 years old. That sounds like a lot of time, does it not? But how many of you here, if you had a 13-year-old boy or a 13-year-old daughter, would send them out to get a full-time job at a factory at Ford or GM or some full-time job and let them be on their own? Nobody would. You know why? Because they may have been in your family for 13 years, and they may have grown up and are not a baby anymore, but they have not matured and stabilized to the point where they need to. Just like you would not send your daughter out, it is ludicrous to think that a church that has been around 13 years is stable enough and in depth enough.

Now we see men and women in this church that are well along that process, but I want to say something to you. I am not going to belabor this point. This church has never really had the faith to be in this church. It has never really. This church has never really had to face any real issues. You know why you have never had to really face any catastrophic issues? Because I faced them and never told you about them. Because I knew you were young enough and tender enough that the devil would get into the details, and I wanted to protect you just as any parent protects their kid.

But I want you to know, I am beginning to see young men and young ladies take the role of leadership in this church that when something is done wrong and it is not done right, you do not mince any words of letting it be known. It is moving out of my realm into your realm. This church has to face as a church the mark of its stability, and the mark of its maturity will be when

this church can face an onslaught that is going to hit any church someday, and where we all stand with it. We have not faced that yet.

You learn through experience of someone else who has done it. Before I started to pastor, and I was just learning the Bible, I had a thousand questions about God and the Bible. Once I got into the ministry and I started to pastor, I had a thousand more questions about what in the world was going on. I learned rule number one, write it down, rule number one: do not ever forsake the man or the woman that God puts in your life to bring you to the Bible and get you established in the Word of God. That is the stupidest thing you could ever do. You are not that smart. You are distinct, you are. You have to mature. People have to be trained up as men and women. You build a solid support base. You take people one at a time as God chooses and build small works when you get to that point. But the mother church has to be the strong support and well established to be able to do that.

When God ever reaches down and gets a hold of one of you guys in time and sends you out, and it is clear to the body, you know what, this church will support your salary for the first year or so. You should not have to worry about things like that. That is what a church is for when it is done through the church pattern. You have a team built around you. When I have sent guys out years ago and they went out to start a church, I would go out and hold revivals for them. I would take teams out. We would canvas the neighborhood. We would get people coming. I would preach every night for that kid for a week. That is what a mother church is supposed to do. That is the pattern found in the Word of God.

VI. Righteousness and Right

Now there are two key words in this verse, Proverbs 16:8. To go along with what I am talking to you about, I want you to follow with me here. The two key words are righteousness, and the second word is right. These two words go together. In all we do, the two words should be key. We live our lives and do everything by the righteousness of God. That is Jesus Christ. In all we do, we do it the right way. Righteousness and right.

Bob Jones Senior used to say, "It is never right to do wrong just so you can get the chance to do right." Boy, there is so much truth to that. The patterns, the principles. Now the verse says, "Better is little with righteousness than great revenues without right." Simply, a church of 300 with the book would be better than a church of 5,000 without the book. A church of 300 with the Bible and the right patterns will get more done than a church of 5,000 who just sit around and play church.

You will notice here that we do not have a Sunday night church service. We do not have a Wednesday night church service. I have people call me on the phone. I do not know where they get our name from, and they say, "We would like to come to your church to visit tonight. What time does your Sunday evening service start?" I say, "10:30 in the morning." "We do not have a Sunday evening service." You would think that I just said the strippers get here at 6:30, we pass out the beer at 7, and then we party till about 12. I mean, they think like it is an apostasy that you do not have a Sunday night service.

Some guy said, "Why do you have service? Why do you have a Bible study on Thursday night instead of Wednesday night like everybody else?" I said, "Oh, that is easy, because they all go to your church on Wednesday night. If they come to mine on Thursday night when they do not have church of yours, they will not be back at yours." That is why. It works like Sunday night and Wednesday night are in the Bible. I do not even try to explain to them. So many churches today, all they do is teach you, teach you, teach you. I am not interested in teaching you on Sunday morning so you can come back and I can teach you some more on Sunday night. I am interested in teaching you on Thursday night and Sunday morning, and then we get our behinds out there Sunday afternoon and Sunday evening doing something with what God gave us. If the word "behind" offended you, that is better than the word I was thinking; it just slipped out the wrong way. I am sorry.

You hear me say this, I say it all the time, I say it without any apology. I put some of you against any pastor in this country of understanding the Scriptures and in truth, I think the ratio is probably closer to 10 to 1. Ten of them up against one of some of you. I have absolute confidence and no fear at all that many of you guys and gals could be thrown into a mix of Laodicean, lukewarm, milk-toast Christians or pastors, and you would handle it and defend that book and stand for truth to the ratio of 10 to 1.

Somebody says, "Where did you get that ratio?" It is a pattern, read Daniel chapter 1. Daniel and the boys wanted to stay with the Bible. Nebuchadnezzar wanted to eat the filth of his Christianity. Daniel said, "Hey, look, you let us digest the Bible, you let your guys do what they want to do. At the end of 10 days, bring us together, we will see who is smarter." At the end of 10 days, he did, and you know what the Bible says? Daniel and the boys were 10 times better than all the kings had, all his magicians. You know what you have got in Christianity for the most part? A bunch of magicians.

You know, there is really no magic. David Copperfield did not make that 747 disappear. He did not have that elephant just up and disappear. It is all an illusion. The hand is quicker than the eye. They will do things, distract your attention, and bring an illusion. That is exactly what the devil does. The only thing that keeps the illusion from continuing to be the illusion is something that cuts right through the illusion. You know what it is? "Better is little with righteousness than great revenue without right." The Bible.

Some of the biggest churches in this country that so many people say, "Look at us, look at us," they ought to be saying, "Look at Christ." Pastors today, I was reading a book the last couple of weeks on the Tower of London. English history. I cannot get enough of it. English history to me is just a magnet. A lot of it has to do with the fact that England is the history and the birthplace of our Bible. But there are so many things in England that just have so much history connected with them.

I was reading a book on the Tower of London, and it was talking about how it was originally built by William the Conqueror way back in 1000. It has been around for almost 1,500 years. Incredible. It goes on there and it talks about all the kings and the queens. I can just spend all day watching how God down through English history manipulated the kings and the queens in that

country to give you the Bible. We all know about Henry VIII. He was one of the most lousiest kings as far as a personal thing that England ever had, and how he was married to Catherine of Spain. He fell out of favor with her, and he fell in love with a woman by the name of Anne Boleyn. He went to the Pope and asked the Pope to give him a decree of divorce because the Pope was the only one who could do that. The Pope refused.

Then Henry VIII came up with the idea, "I will break with the Roman Catholic Church. I will start my own church." He started the Church of England. Got rid of Catherine, married Anne. How would you like to go to a church they are going to start because a guy wanted to divorce his wife? That would be the Episcopal Church, Anglican Church, Church of England. You know that does not seem to bother anybody. I do not even go to that church, and it bothers me. See, you get a choice. You can either belong to the church of Jesus Christ or any other one that Henry VIII started because he fell out of love with Catherine of Spain and wanted to marry his love Anne.

But forget that. Oh, God gets in the mix. Catherine of Spain had a daughter whose name was Mary, who after Henry VIII died, his son Edward I took over the throne. After he died, Mary came to the throne, Bloody Mary, and she brought them back to the Roman Catholic Church. Anne Boleyn had a daughter whose name was Elizabeth, and after Mary was off the throne, Elizabeth came on the throne and brought about a stabilization of England back to the Bible, which paved the way for James I, which gave you your King James Bible. Oh boy, I can get into that stuff all day.

But you know, when I was reading that, I was reading about the kings and the queens of the olden days and then looking at the king and the queen of England today. You know, the king and queen of England today have absolutely no function whatsoever. They do not make any decisions. Parliament, they have a prime minister who runs the country. Parliament makes the decisions with him. They are just a figurehead. They have absolutely no governing power whatsoever. If the queen would come out on her little balcony and say, "I want to do this," everybody would say, "Thank you, Queen," and go and do what they want to do. She has no power whatsoever. When they get a king, they have no power whatsoever. They are just a figurehead of what a great nation once was.

I got thinking about that. You know what? Baptist churches are the same way today. The pastor is just a king who sits on the throne in his little office someplace that you cannot go and see. He has those little guards around him that keep you from getting access to him. He is just a figurehead of what the church used to be. He does not see anybody. He does not lead anything. He does not disciple anybody. He does not counsel anybody. He is just a king. It is nice to be the king. He is just a king who sits at the top and dominates all things and all people and gets them to do whatever his bidding is. He gives out favors to the rich and lops off the heads of the poor.

Mel Brooks, renegade Jew personified. I do not care much for his movies. But one thing he did do that I think is hilarious is "The History of the World, Part One." My favorite part is when Louis XIV is on the throne, and they are standing, this sums it up. That one little skit not only talks about politics but lays every Baptist church with the wrong concept exactly where it is. Louis XIV is out there with his prime minister, and they are on a ski range, and Louis XIV, who

is the king of France, has a shotgun, and he is right there waiting, and one of his guys runs up and says, "Your Majesty, the peasants are revolting." He looks at him and he says, "Why?" Pull, and a peasant goes flying across his couch. That is Baptist churches today, man. They will use you for cannon fodder. They will shoot you when you are hurting and you are down and you cannot function and your marriage is a mess and your kids are a mess. The easiest way for them is just to put you out of misery with a bullet.

Christianity, with the devil's Bible and music and a cheap plastic sermon, has fallen for the illusion. The illusion that bigger and louder and brighter the church is, the more successful with God you must be. In reality, it may be the greatest show on earth, but it is just another big three-ring circus with everybody in the middle clowns. But the Bible says, what a great verse, what a great reality check verse for every pastor. For the Bible says, you know, the B.I.B.L.E., that is the book for me. I stand on the Word of God, the B.I.B.L.E. Bible. What a verse, "Better is little with righteousness than great revenue without right." I mean, incredible.

VII. Revenue of Right vs. Wrong

Now here is another key word in our verse that we need to look at: the word "revenues." "Revenues without right." There is an old saying going back to the 1920s. They did not have television at that point. There was a radio broadcast show called "Buck Rogers." Buck Rogers was a futuristic space guy that had all the best and latest equipment to fight evil. In fact, when you look at it back in the day, it is a perfect picture of Christ and the devil. He was the righteous Christ, and a guy by the name of Ming, who dressed in black, was the evil guy that he was always fighting. It is incredible stuff. The guy back there who played Buck Rogers was a guy by the name of Buster Crabbe, long dead.

When it comes to the 20th, 21st century and the mega-church concept, it is so true, this saying. The saying that got popular back there was, "No bucks, no Buck Rogers." That is so true today. Because in the mega-church concept, you have to have an incredible revenue come in to keep your fantasy world of illusion going, to keep the Disneyland of Christianity operating. You know how the worlds are fun? You know what keeps the people coming out there? Because let us face it. I know some of you have season passes. I will not tell you how foolish you are for doing that. No, I am just kidding you.

But you know why they keep... I mean, honestly, you have been out there once. I mean, you pay a hundred dollars to get in. Half the rides are not working. You will stand there after you paid a hundred dollars to get in. Put your money in those little fuzz balls things you knock down, and you will spend what, 60 more dollars to get a thing you could buy down at US Toy for 20 cents. Genius. Genius. So you pay a hundred dollars to get in, then you pay 60 dollars to get your little cupid doll. Then you take your family to eat over there, and that is another \$647. Twenty dollars for a cheeseburger. Four dollars for a bottle of water, which you can get two cases for that at Walmart. I know, I buy them every other week.

You know how they keep you coming back? They add a new attraction every year. You know how churches keep you coming back? They have got to keep adding new gimmicks, new

attractions. They do not have a Bible. Your success is not based on hardcore results but rather new gimmicks. "We have a restaurant. We have a rock-a-ball court. We have a fountain out front. We have three different services. You can take your pick. We have Starbucks coffee. We have McDonald's. We have a fitness center." Anything to keep the illusion alive that, "Wow, look at what God is doing." God is at Starbucks. You are going to a McDonald's at 350 Highway or down in a plaza. There is a statue around a McDonald's sitting there. You go in these churches, and Jesus is there with Ronald trying to win him to Christ.

The services are not built around the Word of God. They are built around raising money. You know in Nehemiah chapter 8, when Nehemiah wanted to preach to the people, traditionally, Baptists down through history have always had the pulpit right in the middle. You go to a Methodist church or Presbyterian church or a Catholic church or whatever, Episcopalian. The pulpit will always be off to the side. Baptist churches traditionally always have it right in the middle. In Nehemiah 8, the Bible says that when Ezra wanted to get up and preach to the people, he made a pulpit of wood, and he set it right there. You know why Baptist churches always put the pulpit in the center? Because they wanted to make sure that the center of attention in any church was the Word of God, the preaching the Word of God, and the reading of the Word of God.

I talked to a guy one time, and he was so excited. The church he was just preaching somewhere, and he was attended, and he says, "I go to so-and-so First Baptist Church or the Waterloo over here or something like that." He says, "We had a great service this morning. We are going to build a new building, a \$40 million complex." He said, "We just had our first offering this morning, and boy, is our church excited. We raised \$500,000." I looked at him and I said, "That is incredible. You know what? Now you only have to do that 80 more times." See the illusion versus the reality. The illusion is a \$40 million building. "Wow, we raised \$500,000." The reality is you have got to do that 80 more times. I would like to have that pressure on your back as a pastor.

Now as I stated, I believe God has a pattern for building a church, and I believe that God has a pattern for sustaining a church once it is started. In 13 years here, I have never preached one sermon on giving. I never passed out pledge cards. I never held a stewardship banquet to trick you into giving. In fact, I have told you there are seven stewards that are found in the Bible, and not one of them has to end with money.

Here is the difference between a revenue of right and a revenue of wrong. This is a great verse. The revenue of right of any church, the key to a successful ministry, is not about the things we have, the tools of the illusionist, the professional Christian con artist. The real mark of God's church will never be a building but rather be the spiritual quality of the people. You do not in ministry build buildings. You build people.

I once heard two or three pastors talking about comparing their church's net worth. One guy said, "Well, all we have, we are probably close to \$100 million." Guy said, "Well, that is really good. We are probably close to 150 on our campus." Campus. I thought it was church. Not even churches anymore, the campuses. Some other guy said, "Well, that is good. I suspect you get all

our stuff together, we are around 200 million." They talked like that really meant something. Like God is up there going, "Mmm, mmm, mmm." They had invested all of their lives in building buildings and never spent one hour investing in people.

I walked away smiling to myself, adding up our church net worth. I am kidding you. 250 people worth \$1 billion apiece. That is a net worth of \$250 billion. Then add to it the insurable riches of the Word of God that you could not put a price tag on. Man, we make them look like a bum on skid row. Homeless homie. You say that right? No. It is the difference between net worth in man's eyes, which is a revenue of wrong, and net worth in God's eyes, which is a revenue of right. When you build the illusion of a church, a mega-church, you will beg for money all of your life. You know why? It is simple. If God did not order it, He is not going to pay for it, so you are going to have to do it.

So you build people. One on one, one person at a time. One family at a time. One couple at a time. Proverbs 31:16 says, "She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard." And by the labor of love, you win them one at a time. You invest in them. You give them what they need first. You do not sit around and wait for them to do something for you. You invest yourself totally into whatever their needs are. When you invest in them, when you invest in teaching, training, and invest in them, they will invest in you, and in time they will invest in what God is doing because they will see God in it.

The greatest asset of this church will never be what we have, other than maybe the camo packs. That is what I would always say. God walked me through His big mega-church one time, showed me this, showed me that, showed me the restaurants. Took me into this huge bookstore. Not one Bible in it. He said, "What do you think?" I said, "Where do you keep the camouflage packs?" He did not have any. The greatest asset of this church will never be what we have. It will be each one of you. A peculiar treasure. Pearl of great price.

Men and women who started out in your life as just an old piece of lump of coal. Useless to anybody but to burn. Through the pressures of your life, once you gave your life to God, you know what He did? The same thing He does with a lump of coal. He molds it through pressure and time. Every diamond you ever saw, and every diamond you ever have in your ring, started out as a piece of worthless, lumpless coal that through the pressure of time, it came into being a diamond. God takes you and me as a lump of coal, and through the pressures of life, when you give your life to Him, He has molded you into a diamond fit for the Master's use. That is what you have got. That is where the real value is in churches. It is not people who play church. It is people who are the church. It is people who understand what God is doing.

VIII. God's Job vs. Man's Job

I have told you many times in the Christian life, and particularly a church, we have designated responsibilities, and God has His designated responsibilities. I think the greatest single thing I ever learned, outside the fact that I did have a Bible that I could trust with everything, was the day I understood what my job was as a Christian, and later on as a pastor, and then what God's

job was. My responsibility is not to do God's job. Too many of God's people get into the ability of trying to do God's job, and you just mess it up.

A lot of pastors try to get into doing God's job. I have seen pastors get up there and preach a sermon, a good sermon, give an invitation, and preach a hundred stanzas for somebody to come forward. You know why? Because they are trying to do God's job. But I tell myself, I do not look at it that way. We do not sing any stanzas. We do not beg anybody to get saved. I figure if the preaching of the unadulterated Word of God is not going to move your heart for you to get saved, anything I say after that is not going to do it. The playing of some song is not going to do it.

I believe that when the Word of God is preached, God will do His work of His office, and that work is to move in your heart to get saved. That is not my job. My job is to preach the Word of God straight, hot, and true, right on the money, right down the line, right across the plate, waist-high, where you can swing at it, and after that, it is God's job to do in your heart the decision you have got to make. My responsibility is not to do God's job, but to stay focused on my job. I find and search out through the Scriptures. I get the patterns of everything that God wants me to do, and then I do them right. He will be my support, you know, get me all that I need when I need it, so I do not have to spend time on those things. I do not have to spend time worrying about things that are God's responsibility.

So many of God's people waste their whole day worrying about things that you cannot change, that only God can change, and if you would just learn to let Him do His job and you do your job, you would be a lot better off. I am free to do what God has called me to do. Let us build people. I do that better than anything else in life. That is my job, and He takes care of the rest. Me getting into doing God's job just complicates my whole process, because now I am up against things I cannot control. Now I have to worry, I have to fret, I have to get heartburn, I have to get anxiety, high blood pressure. Now I have to take Prozac. Now I have to go see my therapist. It is just a lot easier to look at it and say, "Hey Lord, you know what? Yeah, that is a mess. Boy, I am sure glad that is your job, not mine. Get to it." It is just so uncomplicated when you recognize that there are some things that you are responsible for and there are some things that are His responsibility. Quit trying to do His job. It does not matter if it is building a church, pastoring a church, or in your own personal life. You do your job, let Him do His. Just the way it has to work.

The verse that stands in Proverbs 16:8 is one of the clearest and most profound truths ever found in the Bible. Just talk the way there. One little verse that just unhinges 99% of what Christianity is today. If that one little verse that takes its stand against the concept of the mindset of churches today of the Laodicean Church Age, the church of the closed door, and it is totally rejected today, like the rest of God's Word. It is rejected so a man, a pastor, can build a legacy unto himself, a monument to him and his passion to be like a king, a passion. Remember, the biggest problem the devil had was he wanted to be like the Most High. The scribes and the Pharisees, the Bible says, they love the upper rooms and the seats in the high places. "Better is little with righteousness than great revenue without right."

Let us pray. Father, we...