

# Proverbs 23:1-3

Sunday 4/8/2018

SEC: Introduction to Proverbs 23 and the Landmark Series Recap

If you have your Bibles, turn over to Proverbs 23. You will remember last week we put a really good ending on our study on the Landmarks. It was a great little series that we had. You remember the first week I focused on the ancient Landmarks out of Proverbs, and we saw how that was the nation of Israel. The second week we looked at the old Landmark, and that was the New Testament Church and the New Testament. I told you how that you follow all history, and everything in life is built around that.

Then the third week, or last week, we took time and I gave you an example, or I should say examples, of how to use the Landmark in history. We kind of went through all the different denominations and all the different churches. A question that I am asked all the time is, "Why are there so many different churches who believe so many different things?" What that little mini-study did was really put New Testament Christianity into perspective for you. Now you have a pretty good understanding where everything came from and how to follow it through history and better understand where you are at in relationship to it.

The key to anything in life, and it is certainly true of the Bible, but it is true of anything in life, the key is learning to apply what you know. That is so vital in everything that we do and in breaking down things that seemingly look very complex. When you use the Bible, in reality, it becomes a very easy thing and a simple thing. Whether it be the complexity of life, life seems to be so complex in so many people's lives. We deal with people all the time. I think that most of you that work with me in the people ministry would agree that when we have to deal with people sometimes, not all the time, but sometimes, their life is very, very complex. They have all kinds of problems. As you look at it, you think to yourself, and I know I have many times, "Where do you start with this? How do you even approach this? How do you work through this?"

But the truth of the matter is, even though life looks complex and the problems people have, when it comes to the Bible, life and the complexity become pretty simple. There is always an easy, simple answer. The problem is that people do not want to follow it. It is also true of history. History, as I said in our study, is an incredibly complex subject. But when you use the landmarks, as I showed you, it becomes pretty easy to follow and pretty easy to break down. We see it in everything, and Christianity is no different. Christianity, as we saw last week, can look very complex. It can be a very hard thing to understand. But when you put the Bible to it and use the Word of God and apply what you do know, then things that seem to be complex become pretty easy.

SEC: Christ as the Chief Cornerstone

We talked about landmarks. In the Bible, Christ is referred to as the chief cornerstone. You will find it in Matthew 21:42, and other places too, but He is portrayed as the chief cornerstone. When you build a building, you start with a corner, a cornerstone. That cornerstone will be the point from which all the other parts of the building come from and tie back into. When you lay

that cornerstone on the foundation, everything else you build in that building will tie back to that cornerstone.

Christ in your life and my life, your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. 2 Corinthians 5 talks about our body being the building of God. When you build your life with Christ, with the landmarks, everything has to tie back to the chief cornerstone. In your life and my life, that will be the Christ. This is where the Jews got into trouble, and unfortunately, a lot of God's people get in trouble too. God in Christ was the chief cornerstone for the nation of Israel. He built everything around who He was. The Bible says that the nation of Israel rejected that cornerstone, which was Christ. When Christ came down to them at the first coming of Christ, He was the cornerstone for the nation of Israel. He was the missing piece that Israel needed as their Messiah. The Bible says they rejected Him.

Once they rejected Him, the Bible says in the book of Matthew that the chief cornerstone that they rejected, and you will find this in Romans 9, the chief cornerstone that they rejected now became a stumbling stone. They tripped over Christ. The stone that God decided to give them that would make them the greatest nation this world has ever seen became a stumbling stone that they broke their neck over. Inspirationally, that is the same thing that happens to you and me. Christ is the chief cornerstone. He wants you and me to build everything in our life from that foundational cornerstone. When we do not, it becomes our stumbling block, and we stumble over it the rest of our lives, and that is why our lives get into such a complex deal.

Back in the day, I do not think they do this much anymore, but I remember when they built the addition to the Canton Baptist Temple that was right across from my house before they moved out on Whipple. They had the original building, and then they got so large they had to build another building. They built it in 1953. I was three years old. But I remember while they were building it, it was cold, it was a winter day. My dad walked up to check on it, and I had seen, and it is still there today, the cornerstone of that church with a date on it. Back in the day when they did a cornerstone, they do not do this anymore, but back in the day in all kinds of buildings when they built them, they put a Bible in that cornerstone. It was like a time capsule, because back in the day, they understood that the chief cornerstone was Christ and the Word of God. So you find when they are building banks, or they are building libraries, or they are building schools, they put that cornerstone in that little hollow area, in place of a brick, and they put a Bible in it with the date that the building was built on. Things have changed, and we do not do that anymore.

But your life and my life has to be tied back to that chief cornerstone. Your relationship with Christ, the cornerstone, will be the anchor that holds you, that wherever you go in life, when you use the landmarks, when you look at everything in life, it will be the anchor that will hold you where you need to be.

SEC: The Principle of Seeing vs. Observing

This is why I do with you what I do with the Bible. You hear me talk about this all the time, and I know that probably many of God's people do not understand the concept in its entirety. It sounds like an easy thing to grasp, but in reality it probably is not. But this is what I do with you in the Bible. I am trying to get you to the place in your Christian life where you have a, listen to me, a

working knowledge of the Word of God. What does that mean? It means making the Bible work for you. Making the Bible simplify everything in life for you. Making the Bible do the work for you in every aspect of your life so you do not have to do it, that the Word of God will do it for you. I use this all the time in trying to teach you.

There is another verse that I want to give you that goes along with everything last week. Even though we are in Proverbs 23 today, you are going to see the similarities tying back to the last three weeks. Luke 16:15 is a great verse that I use all the time. It is one of those principles that when you have it down and you use it, it makes the Bible work for you.

*Luke 16:15*

*And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.*

How true that is. That is a principle that will work in everything in life. You never look for the truth in something on how glamorous it is, or how big it is, or how beautiful it is. You always look for the truth in something that is real. That principle is such a great principle. That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. If the world thinks it is great, it stinks. In Christianity, if all of Christianity thinks it is wonderful and great, there is something wrong with it.

That verse ties into a great principle that everything that God has ever done down through the history of man, the world, or certainly the Bible, it has always been done with a remnant. It has never been done with the majority. When God wanted to restart and jumpstart earth back in Genesis 6 and He brought a flood upon the earth, He wiped out the total population, probably 8 billion people, and He started over with a remnant, Noah and his family. When He goes down, takes in Exodus 1, when He takes the nation of Israel down into Egypt, they go down as a remnant. In the book of Judges, after they are in the land, when Gideon is up against the Midianites and there are thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands of them, God defeats them with 300, just a remnant. In the Tribulation period, you are going to find that when it is all said and done and the Lord comes back out of the whole nation of Israel and out of the whole world, only a remnant gets saved. God always does what He does through a remnant, through a very small pocket of people, and then He expands it from there. That is why the Bible says that which is highly esteemed among men. If everybody thinks it is wonderful, it is not. I say that is true of Christianity today. This is why I say what I say to you sometimes, and I know some of you look at me like I am nuts about the fact that in Christianity today, all you have got is a remnant, because God always does what He does through a remnant. You have got thousands of churches, humongous churches, beautiful churches, churches filled with thousands of people. That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. The only great thing in Christianity that we have is the book that God gave us. Everything has to flow back to that and from that.

Now today, we are going to move into Proverbs 23. Again, we will look at a passage from a doctrinal inspiration, an inspirational installation, and again, a historical perspective, which

pretty much takes care of itself. I want to read three verses in Proverbs 23, and then we are going to look at those three verses.

*Proverbs 23:1-3*

*When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee:*

*And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.*

*Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat.*

Caleb, would you stand up and ask God's blessing on the message today? We are going to take up two offerings today. We did not get enough in the first one, so we are going to run it by again. No, I am just kidding. Go ahead. Amen.

Now, the verse says, we are going to look at these one at a time, and we are going to kind of open them up a little bit. It says, "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee." The verse is one that when you see it and understand it, it will give you the ability to really develop some discernment in your life, be able to see things in a special way. He is saying, "consider what is before you diligently." He is not talking about food. I know at face value we look at that, and we get the idea that, and I know how we would look at it. We all like to eat. I like to eat. I know how we would just take that verse. It is like we are invited off to eat with somebody or over to their house, and it says, "consider diligently what is before you." Wow! Look at that steak. Wow! Look at that lobster. Wow! Look at that chicken. Wow! Look at that pizza. Not what it is talking about.

No, he is talking about looking beyond the layout of food. Sometimes something that is laid out in front of you can be a diversion of something else that is a hidden agenda. He says, "look beyond the laying out of food and don't look at the appearance, but see what is behind this particular feast." This brings up a great principle that I use in the Bible, and I try to teach it to you, and that is the difference between seeing and observing. You can use this principle in verse 1, really all three verses, in everything that we do. When we see something, we just see what is before you. To observe something is a process. It is a lot like, I was with a guy one time and something happened, and he got kind of, somebody said something to him that he did not, kind of tricked him a little bit, and he said to himself, and he was just speaking to himself, but I was there. But I never forgot it, and it really opened up some things to me. He says, "Oh, okay. So that is how the snow drifts." I thought to myself, that is exactly what I am talking about today. You can see a snowfall, but after the snowfall, you observe how the snow fell and you see the drifts. You can look at things in life in a capsule shot and not seeing it, but observing it is a process.

Most of you do not remember this, but back in the 50s, they made the Sherlock Holmes movies. The guy that played Sherlock Holmes was a guy by the name of Basil Rathbone. He was an English guy. Tremendous actor. You know who Sherlock Holmes was. I was just a little kid back then, and they were on television, and I would watch it every Saturday afternoon. He was the early form of Columbo. Everybody can identify with who Columbo was. Columbo was a detective that was a klutz, and yet he dressed shabby. He looked like a bum, but he could figure

out a crime scene like nobody's business. Well, Sherlock Holmes was not a bum. He was a very sophisticated guy, but he could walk into a crime scene, and when all the Scotland Yard was scratching their head and trying to figure out what was going on, he would just look around, and he would put the whole crime scene together, and he would do what nobody else could do. I have often thought that is what real Christianity is about. That is what a real Christian does when they work with people or they deal with their own personal life, and the decisions and the situations we allow ourselves to get into.

He said one time, and I remember it, it is so many things that I heard as a kid on television that I just found myself into the Bible. I remember it. It was called "The Scandal in Bohemia." That was the episode. They were working on his crime, and his partner in his detective business was a guy by the name of Dr. Watson, Sherlock Holmes, and Watson. Watson is not as fast as Holmes is. It is almost like he is always trying to learn, and Sherlock Holmes is always trying to explain to him, and he just never gets it. In the movies, they would use it as a counterplay, where Dr. Watson would do something or say something that was dumb and stupid. Holmes would correct him on it, and everybody would see the contrast between a guy who does not see what is going on and a guy who does. He said to Watson one time, and I never forgot this. They are looking at a crime scene that nobody can figure out. Sherlock Holmes is looking all around the place, and Watson is saying a bunch of stuff. He looks to him and he says, "You see, Watson, you see, Dr. Watson, but you must learn to observe, for the two are not the same." I thought to myself when he said that, "Wow, that is as good a Bible as you are going to get," because that is what we need to do. We need to learn to observe.

To learn to observe is to look beyond what you have right in front of you, because you can see something, and that is just a snapshot, but to observe something is a process. It is like the snow drifting. "Oh, that is how the snow drifts." In other words, you do not always see how it is going to drift when you are seeing it fall, but once it falls, you will be able to see how it drifted. The key is, before it gets to that point, to see the drift and see how it is going to fall.

In the people ministry, my number one goal in everything that we do, we had the people ministry yesterday and we had a tremendous time in it, and you begin to see how I just, that is what I try to do. I try to teach you this invaluable lesson. It is so true in dealing with people. We want to help people. We want people who come in who have all kinds of problems in their life, but you have to get to the place where you really understand what you really got, not what you see. It is a tremendous ability. Somebody says, "Well, that is a spiritual gift." No, no, no, no, you are wrong. That is just a natural ability that comes from learning to observe instead of just seeing.

Somebody said, "Well, winning people to Christ is a spiritual gift." No, it is not. Winning people to Christ is the natural thing that happens through an intimacy that you have with the Lord Jesus Christ. It will just take place in its own time in a natural way. Learning to observe is not a spiritual gift. It is not something that God gave this person and did not give you, not at all. Learning to observe comes from you understanding how to let the Bible work for you, how to let the Bible become in your life and not just save your soul, not just get your verse for the day, but actually allow it to work for you to show you the process of observing something. Observing any situation you are dealing with through the principles and the flow of the Word of God.

I know you know this for you. Some of you have been in the people ministry with me now and beyond that for 10, 15, 20 years and we have worked together. So I know that many of you know this is true. Many of you are learning this truth that when you start to deal with people, things that appear in their life are not always a reality. People will project one thing and in reality be something else. It is a thing where I have seen people come through my ministry, men and women, who on the outside they gave an absolute incredible appearance of what a Christian is. They talked the right way. They had all the lingo down. You would look at them and you would think that, "Wow, they are one of the greatest Christians you ever met in your life." But through the process of observing in time, you find out that is not true. There are people that come into any ministry that are just a textbook case that you just want to take them, love them, give them the Bible and they just grow and off they go. But you find that is not always true. In dealing with people, you are going to find some people who as you look at them and see them, they look like one thing but when you observe them, there is a dark side there that does not come out when you just first meet them.

The backbone of our people ministry in dealing with people, the backbone of that that we base everything on is what we call in the people ministry the Solomon principle. That is found over there in 1 Kings 3. I use it all the time and I have told you about it before. Most of you probably understand it or at least if you forgot it, you will pick it up as I start to tell the story. But Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived. I remember reading this story years ago before I ever really got into the Bible to the depth that I am into it now. I remember, the Bible says that two harlots come, two women come to Solomon and they are harlots. Both of these women had a baby. One of the babies died. Now Solomon does not know these women at all. He does not know them. He does not know anything about them. He does not know who is telling the truth. So they come into him and the one woman says, "We both had babies. And the other night she rolled over on her baby and smothered it. And while I was sleeping, she came and took my baby. And now she has my baby and she put the dead baby in my bed." And the other woman says, "Oh, that is not true. That is not true. Absolutely. She is lying to you, King. I am telling you what, it is just the other way around. She rolled over on her baby. She came and took my baby." You see the dilemma?

I am going to tell you something. When you start to deal with people, you are going to find yourself in situations just like that. Not with a baby, then somebody rolling over on them. But with people who say, "This is what really happened. This is what..." And you know what? Solomon did not know who these women were. He did not know who was lying. When people come into any church and they want to present themselves one thing, the Bible says prove all things. There is a proving process. That proving process is observing. Not just seeing what you like, what you want. A lot of people will discard the truth of something just because they want to believe what they want to believe. They need this to be true. They just cast aside all of the principles because of the fact that they want to believe that.

Look, I am one of the greatest believers in people that you have ever met in your life. I believe in people. I want to believe in people. But I have got to be honest, I do not believe any of you this morning. No, I am just kidding. I believe in people. But I have learned that I can hang myself out

there, want to believe in people and give people a chance. Even when I know down the line someplace, some of them are going to come back and hose me simply because I let the Bible do my work for me. The Solomon principle is one of the greatest principles in dealing with people you are ever going to find. It will always show you what is real versus what is not real.

So here is how the story goes. These two ladies get in a cat fight over the kid. And Solomon said, "I know how to solve this problem." So he calls for a sword. He tells the guard there, "Cut that baby in half, give half to her and half to you. You guys can decide which half you want. Cut that baby right in half, give you half and you half." Well immediately the real mother says, "Oh no, no, no, no, no, no, no. If that is what is going to happen, let her take it. I am not killing my baby." The woman whose baby it was not said, "Yeah, cut it in half." Solomon, through an observation, through a process, found the truth. He says, "That is the mother right there."

In that story, the Bible says that he produced a sword and the sword produced the truth. For you and for me, the Bible says in Hebrews 4 that the Word of God is like a sharp two-edged sword. Somebody comes into our church, any church, any ministry, and wants to say, "I am this," when in reality they are this. I do not have to make that determination. I do not have to make a judgment on them. All I have got to do is what Solomon did and put them under the sword and the Word of God, and you are either submitting yourself to it or running from it, it will always produce who you really are. That is observing. Let the book do the work for you. Why am I going to get up to this guy and say, "I think you are a phony?" Why am I going to get up and say, "Hey, I think you are no good. I think you are this. I think you are that." No, that is good and she was an argument. What am I going to say to a girl? "I think you are not telling me the truth. I think you are lying. I do not think you are doing what is right." All that is going to get it into a fight over they are or not. Just like Solomon, the easiest thing is put you under the sword and then watch what you do with the book. End of story. That is the difference between seeing and observing. God is a tremendous principle that I try to teach you and to get you to understand that. It is an incredible thing.

#### SEC: Doctrinal Application: The Antichrist's Deception

Now that being said, doctrinally, this will be a Tribulation context. The ruler here will be the Antichrist. The people at the dinner will be the nation of Israel or at least the leaders of Israel. What you have here is a picture of a trap. The Antichrist makes a false covenant with the Jews for the first three and a half years in the Tribulation period and makes them feel like all is okay. He pretends to be their friend. He pretends that he is spiritual and loves God just like they do. So it says in Proverbs 2:16 and again in Proverbs 7:5 that he uses great words to flatter them. "Oh Bob, you are one of the greatest preachers I ever heard. Oh, this church is just so, so does so much for me." Yet the warning in Proverbs 20:19, Proverbs 28:23, and Proverbs 29:5 says to be careful when somebody wants to constantly flatter you.

He gives them a fake sense of peace and safety. See 1 Thessalonians 5:3. The first three and a half years he makes them feel like they are safe and it is peace and Israel now is finally, finally going to get everything that they have ever wanted. Here he puts on a feast where he can draw them into his trap. Then the Bible says in Daniel 9:27 at the end of that three and a half years

when he has made them feel completely at ease. In Revelation 12 and 13 and Matthew 24 and 25 and 2 Thessalonians 2:4 with the abomination of desolation, he turns on them, the whole thing is a sham and the feast that he set before them was nothing more than a ploy to bring them in and now he wants to destroy them. This deception, this feast, as I said it is a ploy, it is a counterfeit. It is a total deception to gain their confidence and to make them feel at ease and trust him and then he wants to wipe them out.

Now we talked about using the Bible, a working knowledge of the Bible, making the Bible work for you. Now the Jews should have known better. If they would have been using the Bible the way that they should, they would have never got deceived and I want to tell you something. I know I am in a doctrinal application but I am not going to miss this. If you will use the Bible that God has given you, you will not get deceived either. Somebody said, "Well you do not know what she did to me. She just did not, you do not know what he did." He did not do, she and he did not do anything to you that you did not allow because you did not observe. You just jumped right in. You never considered one principle and then we want to complain about what so and so did to me or what this girl did or what this guy did and at the end of the day you put yourself in that situation because you did not follow and observe. You just saw what you wanted to see, you believed what you wanted to hear, you did not use one scripture and when somebody gave them to you, we were the problem. I know how it works.

The Jews should have known better. You say how? Because throughout the Old Testament they were given examples. Just like I give you, they were given examples of exactly where they are at. Back in 2 Samuel 13:28, a man goes to a banquet, a man, one of David's boys and he is murdered. You flip back into 1 Samuel 20:33 and Saul is at dinner with his own, he almost kills his own son. In Esther 7:9 you have Haman who wants to kill Mordecai and they have a feast and a banquet and he comes there with a plan to destroy Mordecai but he winds up getting hung himself. So the Jews, most likely like you and me, were not using the Bible that they had. They were not looking at the stories and the examples that are found in the Word of God and realizing that, you know what, I remember a couple of stories in the Bible where they had a feast and somebody got killed. Maybe I just better not jump into this thing too rashly.

David was great at this. I remember one time and David is completely out of fellowship. He is about as far from God as you could ever get. Somebody comes in to him and he says, "King," says, "they just fought a battle and they got their rear ends kicked in the battle and three or four guys got killed." And somebody comes in and he says, "David," said, "how the battle go?" And he said, "It did not go very good, we lost four guys. What happened? When they got over there against the wall they threw something down from the wall and it killed him." You know what David said? "Did not you read back in the Old Testament where that happened back there? You should have known better." You know what David is doing? He is using the Bible as God. You know what we do not do? We do not use the Bible we have. You want to complain to me about the struggles in your life? Your ups and downs for the last what, 10, 15, 20 years? You are in, you are out, you are up, you are down. You have all kinds of struggles. Do not blame it on anybody other than yourself. You got the book that will do all the work for you. You just do not want to use it.

I am telling you, all three of those guys, just to add insult to injury, all three of these stories here, every one of these three guys is the type of the Antichrist. Eighteen types in the Bible in the Old Testament, every one of these guys. Absalom killed Amnon, Saul tried to kill Jonathan, and Haman tried to kill Mordecai, all three of them are types of Antichrist, who put a feast together to kill somebody who is the type of the nation of Israel. Voila! We have a Bible that is filled with stories that apply to you and to me, just like that, that will keep you from ever making a tragic mistake in your life. We just blow it off. This verse is telling the Jew in Proverbs 23:1, "Watch out, there is more here than just a feast." So he says, "consider diligently what is before you," because there is more than chicken fried steak.

Now, jumping back to the inspirational, this is standard operational procedure, SOP we call it in the Army, in the world today. In the corporation world, they are always doing things for people. They are always taking clients out to eat. The corporation will buy tickets to the Chiefs games or the Royals game, they probably do not buy them to the Chiefs game, but they buy them to the Royals game. I read a story in a newspaper here at the end of the Chiefs season that a guy called up there, he left his Chiefs tickets, season tickets on the seat of his car and went in someplace and forgot and he came out in a panic and the window was broken. He is thinking, "Oh no," and when he got over there he found out that the window was broken and somebody else had to throw two more tickets in on top of his. They are going to take you into the corporate world. They will wine and dine you, they will take you out, they will take you to all these places, the Great Ruth Chris down there in the plaza. They will take you out there and you will sit around and talk and they will buy you dinner and they are not doing it because they like you, they are doing it because they want to make a business deal with you.

Now, I am not saying there is anything wrong with that. That is business, that is modern day corporate America, that is the way we do things, that is the democratic way. Feed them and fleece them. I get that. But you see it in politics. Washington is filled with it. You have the lobbyists, you have the special interest groups and all those are taking out senators and congressmen, they are buying them dinner, they are buying them this, they are giving them that and I get it. It is all a sham. They could care nothing about that. What they want is they want something back from them. "Come to a free dinner." I am going to tell you something. This is not in the Bible but I am going to tell you anyhow, this is Bob's philosophy of 67 years of living on planet Earth. Other side of God's salvation, there is nothing free in this world. There is always a price tag to it somewhere. Somewhere.

It is a thing where politicians do it to make a deal. "Come to a dinner, free dinner." I get apps on my phone all the time. I get flyers in the mail. "Come to a free dinner," but they want to sell you a timeshare down in Arkansas someplace. That is how it works. "Free dinner at the big hotel downtown. Call right now. Reserve your spot. Seats are limited." They want to get you to invest your money in their investment programs. I get a call on the phone and some guy over there, he says, "Is this Bob Alexander?" And I say, "Yes it is." He says, "Your neighbors have recommended you to come to our banquet we are having to hear about our new burglar alarm system." And I said to him, "Right now I know you are lying." He says, "What do you mean?" I

says, "My neighbors hate me. They would never do anything to help me. If anything, they would put up a sign in my front yard, "There is no alarm system here. Stop this house."

Some of you oldies will remember this. Remember back in the day in churches we used to have stewardship banquets? How many remember the stewardship banquets of the old days? Oh, yeah. We had a church of 2,500 people back there, every year around this time of the year. They would be ready for the new budget year, and they had all kinds of projects and programs they wanted to do. So they would have a stewardship banquet. The stewardship banquet would be, and you would get up in your Sunday school class and you promote it, "It is going to be a free dinner. It is going to be a great time. We are going to have special music. We are going to have a great..." The food was the most terrible food on the planet.

Now I want to tell you something. This is a psychological problem that I do have. But it is a good thing for you. All the times that we eat, let me ask you, we had Easter dinner. Was it not good? It was good. And we had, we had, we have a Memorial Day thing. Are not the ribs the best you ever ate in your life? You have all the food you want. Anytime we eat here, we always have food. And we do not charge you nothing. I have been in so many churches where they will charge you \$5 apiece and you get tube steak. You know what tube steak is? It is a hot dog. One. \$5 for one hot dog. Well, we give hot dogs out on the street for nothing. And now I know, I know I charge you a dollar for the Memorial Day picnic, but come on. You think that covers anything? Why do you do that then? Because you are Baptist and I know if Baptists pay a dollar for something, they are going to come to it. That is how cheap Baptists are. When we have something here, you are going to eat like a king. Absolutely. You know why that is? Because that is my psychological disorder. I was raised all my Christian life going to banquets that were put on by a lot that was a morsel of bread. I want you to eat because I know that eating is the way to your heart.

Now you laugh at that, but you know over there in 1 Corinthians 11, when it has the Lord's Supper, before you have the Lord's Supper, you are supposed to get right with everybody what is wrong. There are two aspects of the Lord's Supper. There is the Lord's Supper, which is a legitimate meal, and then there is the actual communion where you take the bread and the grape juice and do that part of it. But the problem they had in 1 Corinthians 11 is that people were not coming to the church and bringing any food and nobody having to eat and it was putting everybody on end. The concept behind it is there are some things that before you go to the Lord to take communion, there are some things that you have got to make right with people. You may not want to do it, but you know how you get in a bad mood before you eat? Am I the only one who is confessing this today? You get irritable, touchy, things bother you. And then you go and sit down and they bring out this whole cow on a plate with onion rings and salad and you sit down there and after you eat, all the world is right. "Bob, Bob, your house just burned down." "Do you have any more of them, rolls? Can I have some more ketchup for my steak?" You know why he does that? Because he knows that once we are, there are some things we have got to get right with each other. He knows that, not me, but when you sit down and you eat and now you are full, then you are thinking, you are happy. I am going to think, "Oh, what the heck? Let me just tell you, I want you to forgive me. I am the one that poisoned your dog. I am sorry." That is

the mindset because the way, the way, how many times have you women heard the way to a man's heart is through his what? Stomach. How many times have you heard the old adage, "An army marches on its stomach?" You feed them. You feed people good, you can get them to do whatever you want to do. This is why most Baptist churches, nobody does anything. You get tube steak all the time. Team hot dogs, one, one, one. It looks like it is shriveled. It has been there.

They had a stewardship banquet back there. So we would have this banquet. People would come to it and they would feed you, have nice music, and then the pastor would get up and it was a great time and a free meal right till the commitment card got passed out. Then you are supposed to write down what you are going to give. They know that if they just had a big meeting, preached the word of God, and then passed out the card, they would get squat. But if they feed you good, the weight of your checkbook is through your stomach. You get feeling good. You think, "Oh, this was a good meal. Well, I am happy. Yeah, where before I was only going to give \$5, now I am giving \$6. I am really going to do it." I know how it works. Most churches want everything from you and will give you nothing back. They exist only for what you can do for them. A true church will give you everything and ask for nothing back other than what you have given to the Lord. They exist to give to you, not you to give to them. But food will always be the key. They always will.

#### SEC: The Danger of Lust and Deceitful Meats

This was the nation of Israel's problem. We do not think about the word lust. We think about sex. We think about adultery. We think about fornication. We think about all those things. Most of the time, we do not think about the word lust in relationship to food. But you know that when God dealt with the nation of Israel and their problems, He never talked about the other stuff. He always dealt with the fact that they were lusting after food and drink. That was their lust.

#### *1 Corinthians 10:6-7*

*Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.*

*Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.*

He says in Psalms 78 that the nation of Israel was tempting God in their heart asking God for meat to satisfy their lust. In the Roman Empire, a Gentile nation, they had food orgies. They had all kinds of orgies. But they had food orgies. They had these big banquet halls. They would come in there, and this is going to get gross now. They would come in there, and they would have all the food that they could want. They would stuff themselves and stuff themselves that they could not eat anymore. Then adjacent to that, they had what they called a vomitorium. Yes. This is where... Didn't know I knew sign language, did you? You have got to see me when somebody pulls out in front of me on the freeway. No, I am just kidding. Anyway, vomitorium. They ate till they were going to bust, and then they went in and threw up. So they could go back and eat some more. You say, "I would not do that." No, we just eat all we can, walk around the block, and

come back and eat some more. We are not going to give up what we just ate. But it is a lust in the Bible.

He says in Numbers 11:4-5 that their children in Israel fell a lusting after flesh. They got hanging out with a mixed multitude, and they said they got lusting after wanting flesh to eat. They said, "All we got is this old dry manna to eat." They fell a lusting. So we find that that is a natural process, and that is something that... This is why America has an epidemic today of obesity. It is unbelievable. It is a thing where we think of adultery. We think of drunkenness, sins, but we do not think of overeating and gluttony. Yet the Bible puts us squarely right on that concept. So food is the passion by which we all want to exist. How do you think that they have these restaurants coming up all over the place? They know how to get to you. They put those... Even we go to that goofy little place after the mission. What is it called out there? Culver's. You notice how that they put food out there on the plate to show you what it is, to entice you? That stuff has been sitting there for a week. If you do not have much money, you could probably buy that and eat it. But it is there, and they want you to see what it looks like. Did you ever see the marquees as you are going through the drive-through of McDonald's with what a Big Mac looks like? And then when you open it up, do you see what it looks like then? You are coming through that line, and you are hungry, and you look over there, and there is the biggest plumpest burger, sesame seed buns, cheese, special sauce, dripping out the side, stacked that high. And you are saying to yourself, "I want a Big Mac." It comes, you pull over, anticipation. You saw, you should have observed, you saw. And you pull aside, and nobody is looking, and you are going to get both hands on it and put it in your face. You open it up. I know.

*Look at Proverbs 23:2.*

*And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.*

I like when it says things like this, because this is where a lot of our quote-unquote shames come from. That is because in this case, doctrinally, in many cases, inspirationally, to use a popular phrase that is built on this verse here, if you accept and eat this meal, you are basically cutting your own throat. See? That is where that comes from. If you accept and eat this meal, you are basically committing suicide. This brings up a great principle for us in life in general. Many times, most of the times, if not all of the time, we, because we do not use the Bible, we do not have a working knowledge of the Scriptures, we find ourselves in situations where we allow people to create a situation or a circumstance and then shove us into it. Many times, we just run into it. We make the terrible mistake that there are some people out there, some men and some women, who will use you for their own personal gain. When you allow them to use you, we wound up getting hurt in it. Then we want to blame them. We want to blame this girl or this guy or this circumstance or this situation. Hey, if you are saved, God gave you a Bible that would do all of that work for you. You do not have to make a decision based on what you see. You can step back and observe and use the Solomon principle and find out if the light side really has a dark side. By deceiving us through the deception of what appears to be that not really is true, when we allow it, then we get clobbered. It affects us spiritually. Ultimately, those things always come back to the place you ought to go to get what you need is the last place you go where you replace

God's church, God's Bible, and the Holy Spirit of God with everything else in your life, which only adds to your issues.

Now you cannot miss the doctrinal application here of putting a knife to your throat, because in the Tribulation, that is where all this feasting and this false stuff and this ploy and this deception leads to. Revelation 20:4 says that the Jew in the Tribulation actually gets his head cut off. They actually take a knife and cut his head off. It says they are beheaded for the witness of Christ in Revelation 20:4. So you can see where all this fits right into that. Have you ever noticed how exact the Bible is with everything it says? Is there anything that it says that you cannot find a paper trail going right back to some great principle?

Now look at Proverbs 23:3.

*Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat.*

Now there is what you need to observe. Most people just looking at the thief. Most people just looking at the guy. Most people just looking at the girl. They are hearing the story and they are being deceived. As I said, doctrinally all this will be the Antichrist and the Jews and the Tribulation, the devil preparing a feast, a false banquet, seemingly to give you food but in truth to deceive you and destroy you. The Bible says "deceitful meat." I love every, pay attention to every word in the Bible. I like that phrase "deceitful meat" because that opens up another whole study. Inspirationally I just have got to say this and show you this. But anyway, the text says sitting down to eat and feast with a ruler and not diligently considering that the meat that is put before you is deceitful.

SEC: The Bible as Food and Working Smarter

In the Bible, meat is always a picture of Bible doctrine. It is. In the Bible, meat is a picture of Bible doctrine. Look at Hebrews 5:14.

*Hebrews 5:14*

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

When you get to a mature place in your life where you really can do something for God it is because of the meat that you have, the doctrine that you know. Yet the Bible tells us in Psalms 109:10 that there is somebody that is getting their bread, type of the word of God, out of desolate places. It is somebody sitting down to eat at the table with a word of God and fellowshiping expecting to get a feast and yet instead they get stale old moldy crumbs that mean nothing to your life. The deceitful meat in an inspirational sense that people are dining at thinking they are going to get a feast from God, in reality eating out of a garbage can, will be your NIV, your ASV and your RSV and all the other translations out there.

*Revelation 3:20*

*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

"Sup, sup, sup, sup, sup," that is supper, eating with him. In that place in Revelation 3:20 that is the church of the closed door. Christ cannot even get in his own church to have supper with them but boy if you put your ear to the door they are sure munching on something in there. It is deceitful meat. It is not the word of God.

In the Old Testament tabernacle, what a picture that is. When the Bible talks about that all scriptures given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished, not finished, furnished like furniture. That is because when you go back to the tabernacle you have a picture of your life with Christ and in that are seven pieces of furniture that when you get the meat of the word of God in your life these are the furnishings you get. You know what one of them is? Table of the showbread. Over there on the side of the tabernacle was a table overlaid with gold and on that they baked fresh bread every day, every morning that bread had to be baked fresh and they laid it out in an interesting way. There were twelve loaves of bread and so they put one, two, three, four, five, six, one, two, three, four, five, six, twelve, one for each tribe and a nation of Israel because salvation of the Jews and Romans 3 says the oracles are dotted with the Jews so there are twelve. Now it is just a wild coincidence I guess that Wonder Bread used to tell you that they would build your body, eat their bread twelve ways. See, back to the Bible. So salvation of the Jews, oracles of God come from the Jews so there are twelve but he lays it out one, two, three, four, five, six, one, two, three, four, five, six showing you that the bread of life is going to be in six, six, sixty-six books. You got your Bible. And it is on a table. That table is a table of the fellowship that you every day of your life can come and eat at that table and fellowship with the bread of God's Word and learn the Bible and get meat, doctrine that is not deceitful.

The Bible, the Word of God is likened to food and when you come down through it you will find as I have already said in Hebrews 5:12 the Bible is likened to meat. That in 1 Peter 2:2 it is likened to milk. That in Luke 4:4 it is likened to bread. Then over there in Proverbs 7:2 it is likened to apples. You know why I will stay here until Jesus comes back and I am not interested in buying a big pavilion someplace or a big building. You know why? Because we are right where God wanted us to be. If you do not know that is because not only you are not observing but you are not even seeing. Every time you drive into this place and out of this place there is a sign right there that says the apple center. I am staying where the apple is. Amen and right ma'am. Sister. John 4 slides into water. Psalms 119:103 it is likened to honey. And in Psalms 78:24 it is likened to vegetables.

Let us put it to the test. You know how satisfied you feel after you go to Ruth Chris? After you go down to On the Border, Taco Bell, Arby's. Those great places where you sit down when you walk in there you are hungry, you are weak, you are despondent and when you walk out you feel like a six million dollar man because you have fulfilled one of your lusts. You ate. The satisfaction that comes from eating a good meal, I am going to tell you something. Spiritually speaking the only satisfaction you will ever really have in your life that is worth anything is having a good meal at the table of the fellowship eating these seven things.

Let me show you how they work.

- Meat: There is your doctrine.
- Milk: There is your discipleship one and two. Basic Bible that we give you.
- Bread: You know what bread is? Bread is a staple in life. Those are the principles of the Word of God that will stabilize your life.
- Apples and Honey: Those are the sweet things of the Bible. Those are the things that you just enjoy the Bible sitting down there and eating apples, sitting down there with honey, the sweet things of the Word of God, sitting down there and just enjoy and the fruit of it. There are times that you do not want to go after doctrine. There are times that you do not want to even go through your basic Bible. There are times you want to sit down and just enjoy the apples and the honey.
- Water: You know what water does? Water does something that nothing else on planet Earth can do. I mean I know we have a lot of substitutes for water but there is no substitute for water. I know they have Coca-Cola and they call it the real thing but it is not the real thing. It is a syrupy old thing that you drink down there that just makes you more thirsty. I know some of you people like to drink iced tea. I have never had a glass of iced tea in my life. Do not plan on it. Iced tea is a phony. It is not really going to quench your thirst. You will drink it and drink it and drink it and I know we got all kinds of things. You guys walk around drinking those power drinks. I do not have a problem with that. I bought stock in it. Drink all you want. I want to make all the money. You walk around and you think that that is going to, those things do not quench your thirst. They do not even give you any power. If they do give you power, where do you come down off of it? I mean it is just like they do not work for you. There is only one thing on this planet that will quench your thirst and it is water. I am going to tell you, God's people go through everything in life and God's people in a spiritual sense, they go through everything in life. They want to have everything that they, instead of the Word of God. They think that they are going to quench their thirst for life with apple juice or grape juice or a coke or a Sprite or this or that or a cup of coffee. Forget what I said about coffee or tea or whatever. All these substitute drinks that everybody takes and drinks do not really leave you satisfied. There is only one thing that satisfies you, not only in the physical world but also in the spiritual world and that is the water, the Word of God.
- Vegetables: You know what vegetables are good for? Your eyesight. Vegetables, eat a lot of vegetables. It improves your eyesight. It keeps eye disease down.

So all of these things that the Bible is in these seven things are things that will really add to you and you can feast anytime. I was talking to John Christensen back here and the Christensen kids, they go on these cruises which I never do because I am afraid of sharks. You would think there are not sharks big enough to eat that cruise ship. You do not know what is down in the bottom of those things. But they told me, John told me, you can eat anytime you want. You get up two o'clock in the night and go down in there and you can eat whatever you want. This thing is filled. You do not have to call somebody and bring something up. You just put on your jammies and walk down there and there is everything you could ever want. Two o'clock in the morning, right? One o'clock in the morning. You think you just eat during the morning? No, no. Anytime you want, you can go down there and eat and you can eat as much as you want 24 hours. You can do the same thing with the word of God. There is no ding ding dinner dong bell for what you can eat with God. You can have all you want. There are no ding dongs that keep you from reading it.

There are a lot of ding dongs that will not read it. "Come and dine, the master call of come and dine." You can feast at Jesus' table anytime.

These deceitful meats in Proverbs 23:3 all showed up around the turn of the century. I have told you before about the neo-Orthodox movement and the neo-Evangelical movement. This is where all the new translations have their roots from. In neo-Evangelism, they wanted to take the Bible from the common man and put it back in scholarship and they accomplished that. The neo-Orthodox movement was one that they wanted to take the Bible and as the world changed and got worse, they wanted the Bible to change with the world. In other words, they did not want an absolute standard and the world believes in evolution so the world is evolving. Here is the science behind it. Neo-Orthodoxy is an evolving religion where as society gets worse, you have to change your message to fit society. Where a hundred years ago, homosexuality and lesbian and gay marriage was wrong, now it is right. So you change your sermon and you change everything to go along with it. That is how it works. It is evolving with the society so you have got to have an evolving Bible. You have got to have a Bible that evolves every three or four years to keep up with the evolving church.

Our constitution is, I will show you an example of it. Our constitution is called a living document and by that it means that when the founding fathers wrote it, they wrote it with the intent that as you wanted to add laws to it or take laws from it, that there was a process by which you could do that. And you did not take away from what was the standard but as things had to add to it, the things as the world got bigger and whatever, you could do that. But then they come in now and they want to take that same phrase, the constitution is a living document and now here is how they interpret that and here is what the liberals do with it. They do not want to just take and add to the laws and take away from it in a legal way. They want to now go back now to the founding fathers and they want to determine that the founding fathers did not mean what they said when they said it, that if they were alive today they would not say what they said. Your greatest example of that is the Second Amendment where in the constitution it says you have a right to a militia to keep them well and bear arms. They are saying now the founding fathers knew that. The founding fathers knew that every man and woman in this country ought to have a gun because that was their greatest determinant to a government like England coming in and taking your home. Now they are saying that that is not really that. That means the National Guard will come and protect you, right? What they are doing, they are looking at the constitution and saying it is a living document. We now have a right to decide what they really meant. No you do not. It says what it says.

They do the same thing with the Bible, Christianity, scholarship. They want to take the Bible that has been set that is going to be the standard for all time and they want to change it as society changes. The Bible is the only anchor point that a society changes. You know it is a mess to stay away from it because you have got a fixed absolute truth. But they want to change that. That is how it works. It is deceitful meat. A couple of Thursday nights ago somebody asked a question, "Can you get saved with one of the new Bibles?" And of course, we talked about that and I told you. My position on it, and I do not really care one way or the other, but my position on it basically for my own self is that I know that you have the Devil's Church out there and you may

not be able to get saved by the Devil's Church but people get saved in spite of the Devil's Church. I think it probably follows the same line with the Bibles. At the end of the day when the Bible and your salvation it has to do with your attitude or where you are at with God. But that is a tough question. It really is. But whether I am sure of that or not, here is what I am sure of when it comes to the new translations. You may be able to get saved or maybe not. That is immaterial. But I will tell you one thing I will guarantee you, you will not be able to do. You will not be able to grow. The proof of that is, is all the people out there that claim to be saved, it was 5, 10, 15, 20 years, they do not know anymore about the Bible now than the day they got saved. You see, when it comes to knowing the Bible and dealing with deceitful meat, you sat down and you ate that crap every Sunday and you got deceived. You never diligently considered what was before you.

We have junk food Christians. We have junk food people in the world. All they eat is junk. Their whole life is Hostess Twinkies, and Ho-Hos, and cupcakes. That is all they eat. Their pockets are just filled with candy bars. That is all they eat. They eat junk all of their life and they become a food junkie. Yet God's people do the same thing. There is no real meat, no real doctrine, no real feasting on the strong things of the Bible. It all goes back that they got deceived. They did not diligently consider what was before them. It is a terrible thing. Now last week, you got a Bible that did not come from God and now you got a church that God is not showing up at, so now you are forced to get your bread out of desolate places. That is what happens today. It is no wonder God's people's lives are a mess today. Listen, before I pick up a piece of godless trash like that, I would cut my own throat.

The Bible says, "be not desirous of his dainties." What does that mean? His education, his degrees, his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. Hey, I have been associated with churches for almost 50 years. When they look for a pastor, they bring somebody in. They do not ask him how many souls he has won to Christ. They do not ask him how many times he has read through the Bible. They do not ask him to give him an excerpt of breaking down the books of the Bible. They want to know how much education he has got. You know what you get when you get that? Deceitful meat. That is what you get. That is exactly what you get. Those things are absolutely worse when it comes to God's Word.

SEC: The Bible as a Tool for Working Smarter, Not Harder

Now this proverb is a great illustration of how, as I said when we started, you use the Bible. I talk about a working knowledge of the Scripture, making the Bible work for you. He will give you a verse like Proverbs 23:1-3. Then throughout the Bible he will show you examples of that proverb that when you look at those examples it makes the proverb come to life and you make the application to what you have got to be part of based on what you see. I showed you 2 Samuel 13. I showed you 1 Samuel 20 and Esther 7. Those are three places that told the Jew they better consider what is before them when they go to dinner. Israel failed to use the Bible and so did God's people today.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10:6 and 11 that the things in the Old Testament that happen to Israel for example and in samples, we are to learn from them. The examples in the Bible are

given to us so we can take the Bible and use the Bible instead of having to make a blind decision that we can observe something through the principles without just seeing it. When you go through life using the principles that are taught throughout the Bible and base your decisions and your actions on those things then the Bible is working for you.

In the world we have a saying, we all know the saying and it is a very good saying that we ought to work smarter and not harder. That is a good concept. Using the things that you have to do the work for you. Man used to walk everywhere he went. Then one day he looked at a horse and he said, "I wonder if I could ride that horse." So he saddled up the horse and galloped off. Then after he rode the horse for a while he said, "You know what, somebody invented something called a combustion engine. I wonder if we put that in something with wheels on it and powered it if we could ride that." So he went from walking to a horse to a car. You know what he did? He was working smarter not harder.

Man used to plow his garden and plow his fields with a mattock and with all the hand tools. Then he got the idea, "You know what instead of plowing this field by hand which has taken me all day I think I will hook a plow to my horse." See what he can do with it. Then somebody said, "You know that combustion engine that they put in cars? Yeah let us put it in a tractor." You see people are using the things that they have. They are working smarter not harder. I do not know if you know this or not but you are driving down the road and you see those big combines out on the field. They are hotel rooms. They do not just get in there and plow. They have GPS's now but did you guys just sit there and listen to his headphones? He watches TV and that thing just goes off the GPS and it is air conditioned. He has got satellite TV in there. He has got a telephone in there. He has got everything he needs. He just sits there and watches it. The GPS drives the combine. It just goes down there keeps the road straight for the satellite where he would have to keep it on there. He can do it 24/7. He would crawl in there and go to sleep. Just push the button. That is working smarter not harder. That is a long way from hooking it up to a horse.

Everything in life the world works 24/7 to make life easier for us. You know that and I know we take it for granted. I remember when I was a kid growing up my mom used to wash the dishes by hand. She did not have a dishwasher. She used to sit there and my dad would help her and I learned a lot. My mom never said men always dry plates the wrong way. I never understood that but they would dry the plates. They would wash them in the sink there and then somebody made a dishwasher. Now instead of having a stack of dishes that you go up there and you are tired and you look at it you just put it in the dishwasher, put some soap in, push a couple buttons, go on your way. Some of us complain about that. "Well I have got to load the dishwasher." No you do not. Wash them by hand.

I remember when my mom got a new washing machine. It was two big tubs with a roller. After you washed the clothes you put them in that roller and you cranked it through and just squeezed the water out. Then somebody said let us just make a washing machine. Put it in there, close the door, put the soap in, check twice if your youngest kid is not in there and then push the button. You go do what you want to do. My mom used to have a clothes line. You kids do not even know what a clothes line is. On Monday afternoon Tuesday it was like flag day at our house in the backyard. You had the clothes popped and mom hung all the clothes off to dry. You do not do

that anymore. You take them out of one, the washing machine, put them in the dryer, push the button, off they go. I mean all life. Everybody sits around trying to figure out how you can work smarter and not harder.

I remember when, I have told you this before, I remember when McDonald's started. McDonald's was the first of what we called a fast food restaurant. I remember clearly we went. Hamburgers were 15 cents apiece. That is where 10 cents. Back then on the sign it said only 20 sold. Now there are 20 zillions sold. We have been out there and that was called fast food. For those that did not want to, they wanted to make it easier. Mom works all day. Dad works all day. She does not want to have to slave over a hot stove, get in her car, drive to the fast food place. Go in there and order your food and come out. Then somebody thought that fast food is not fast enough. Then they put a fast food drive through lane in the fast food restaurant place to make it easier for you. Now you do not even have to get out of your car. You just drive through the fast food lane, go to a little speaker and they will talk to you. You tell it what you want and you drive on up there and there is a nice guy or gal give you the food and you just drive on home. Then somebody said, not even fast enough. You want to make it easier. "Why do not you have an Uber driver bring it to you?" It is called Uber. I am just telling you on a Big Mac, the one that is pictured, he will bring it over to you. You do not have to leave.

Our whole world, everything around us. Look at your car. If you hit something and back into something now, you have got to be an idiot. You have got 20 signals back there. Beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, bang! Then suddenly you have got them on the front. They have got cars now that if somebody slams on a brake in front of you, there are sensors in the front of it that pick it up and it puts the brakes on for you. You know why? Somebody wanted to make all that easier for you. We just love that, do not we? Well, we buy it. We just buy all that stuff. Everything that we want, we want to buy that way. But when it comes to the real issues of life and the book that God provided for us to do the work for us, we will never take it. We simply will not use it. We will not let the Bible do what it was designed to do and that is to do the work for us. We simply will not use it. In our Christian life, we will continue to work harder and not smarter and the more complicated our life becomes, the more problem we have.

My job is simply showing you how to use the Bible to do the work for you and let the Bible do what it does for you. You are learning and I know you do not get this and it is okay. I do not expect you to. But I have spent 45, 46 years of my life learning that Bible. On one Thursday night, and I would never, I am not saying this for any reason, I do not make my point. On one Thursday night, in an hour and a half to two hours, you will get laid out for you what probably took me six or seven years to get. You know why? Because my job is to make it easier for you, not harder for you. Now, if you went to most churches and you had Bible questions, yet I would have to tell you you have to spend 75 years studying Greek and Hebrew or you have to go to this Bible college, this Bible college, and you go away, defeated or empty. I just tell you if the answers are in the book and I have already got a lot of the answers so I make it easier on you, just like the guy that developed the dishwasher and the washing machine so you do not have to

do all the work anymore, it is there and then you take it and then you let it work for you. I mean, that is how it works.

I do not mean this in a wrong way, but you ought to appreciate that. It ought to mean something to you that somebody did the work that you do not have to do it. I tell you, there may not always be somebody in your life that is going to do the work. Dr. Ruckman used to preach a message and it was one of the most powerful messages that he ever preached. It was called "The Empty Chair" and it was a message about that someday the chair in your life that is giving you everything that you need is going to be empty. I never forgot that at his funeral when he did the video, we saw the video, most of you probably did not pick it up because you did not, it started, it ended by going filming in his office and his chair being empty. As the camera pulled back, his chair was now empty and the door closed. We are referring to that message that someday the person in your life that is giving you and spent all the time giving you the Bible like he did to us, that chair was empty. I wonder how many people that was associated with him all of their life that got to have the opportunity to get all that he learned, never did a thing with it and they are still struggling with their issues today and now the chair is empty. And someday this chair will be empty. Someday this chair too will be empty. What you have to get and what you can get and what you do not get is going to determine where you go with it and what you do with it.

I think one of the greatest stories about this found in 2 Samuel 9 and I preached this to you a couple of weeks ago but I did not talk about this particular aspect of it but it is the story of Mephibosheth. You know the story of Mephibosheth, it is a picture of the day when you and I got saved. It is a picture of Mephibosheth who was Saul's son through Jonathan was the enemy of David much like the two families, "you are of your father the devil." By every right David, a type of Christ, should have killed him but David did, David went out and fetched him and used Ziba, a type of the Holy Spirit of God to bring him in and the Bible says that he brings him in and he makes him one of his sons and he is lame on his feet and he is a filthy beggar just like you and I were before we got saved. You know what the Bible says? The Bible says that the rest of his life he sits at David's table, a picture you and me feasting at the table and he says all of my servants are going to do the work for you. You just stay at the table feasting with the king and let all of the servants, the Holy Spirit of God do all the work for you. It does not get any easier than that. It does not get any easier than that. God has given you a Bible that will make your life harder, make your life easier. We make it harder because we do not use it smarter and God has given you a Bible that will do everything for you that it needs to be done. It will lay out, it will give you a working knowledge. In other words it will show you and work for you in every aspect of your life that you never have to get caught up in all that you need to learn not just to see but to observe the process of defining and discerning what is of God and what is not of God in your life. He says you stay at the table eating and fellowshiping with the king and all the servants will do the work for you. That is a great picture of sitting down with a seven course meal that God has put together for you.

I am driving over here this morning for church and on Nolan Road I got right past that little blue church there that is right there and they had on the marquee something that I thought about and I thought to myself, "Boy that is so true." It said on the marquee, "Bibles that are falling apart are

usually owned by people who are not," and that is so true. Bibles that are falling apart are usually owned by people who are not because they have learned through the word of God to let it do the work for them. This is what I mean when I tell you about a working knowledge of the word of God. It doing the work for you and making your life easier just like all the appliances that you have in your home. We take all of them and enjoy them and could not live without them. If you had to go home without your iron, without your washing machine, without your air conditioning, without all of those things you would have a fit. But you go through life as a Christian not needing this until you get in a jam and then you just pick and choose what you want to do with it. Do not tell me Christianity is not in a mess. Proverbs 23 only gets better from here. That is our word prayer and we will be dismissed.

Father we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus and we do love you. Thank you for these great principles found in this great book. We ask you now Father to open up our hearts to allow us to receive and let us use the Bible for its intended purpose. Not just to save us, not just to give us the encouragement that we need, but to literally do the work for us, showing us how to observe and not just to see and taking the principles to keep us from making bad choices and bad decisions because we observe things, not just see them. We will thank you and praise you in Jesus name for the sake we ask it. Amen. God bless you, you are dismissed.