

# Proverbs 23:23

Sunday 5/27/2018

If you have your Bibles, I want you to turn to Proverbs chapter 23. I want to welcome all of our folks that are tuning in on YouTube this morning, especially Gustavo in Mexico, who is on this morning. We want to welcome him and thank him for being part of our church service this morning.

## I. Building a True Relationship with Christ

In Proverbs chapter 23, we have been talking over the last couple of weeks about building a true relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. That really should be the number one goal of everything in our lives. We all have relationships, and some of those relationships are very close, but there should be no relationship closer than your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the last couple of weeks, we have looked at and examined two crucial lessons on what it takes to build a true biblical relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. I told you a number of things that I think are keys to understanding how God operates and how Christ operates, at least they were for me.

The models in the Bible are simple. If you want to learn how God works and what God does, then study His relationship to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, because He is the primary caretaker for Israel in the Old Testament. If you want to find out for the New Testament how to have the right relationship and find out about the Lord Jesus Christ, then study His dealings with the church. Those two—God with the nation of Israel in the Old Testament and Christ with the church—will give you the balance of understanding how the whole thing comes together.

I told you last week my goal for you, my goal for everyone in this church, is that you receive a full reward, that you get the judgment sheet of Christ and you have everything that you should have because of all that God has done for us. Helping you to get to the place where you really understand that trying to have a relationship with Christ, any relationship really, but trying to get you to see that having a relationship with Christ without truth is worthless.

In any relationship, if it is not based on the element of truth, then you really do not have anything. In a relationship with Christ, it will need to be built, as we saw last week, on doctrine, the truth of the Word of God. Otherwise, you will build it on your feelings, you will build it on your emotions, and go through life judging things spiritually by how you feel about them. That is the most dangerous thing that you could ever do. Your emotions will be a self-deception every time in your life.

This is why the Bible says in Proverbs 25:28:

*Proverbs 25:28*

*He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.*

If you do not have something to keep our emotions in check, we are in trouble. Of course, that has to be God's truth through God's doctrine and the principles in the Word of God.

## II. The Lack of Foundation in Modern Christianity

Today in Christianity, as we talked about the last couple of weeks, without a solid foundation in the Bible, which it does not have, we see God's people making some of the most horrendous mistakes and decisions that you are ever going to see in life. In many cases, these will end any real chance of having a relationship. They will get so bogged down, so burdened down, so many problems in their lives that they can never get through them to get where they really need to be.

Last week, I gave you three fundamental doctrines of where a life with Christ will start. I went all the way back to the beginning, talking about the day you and I got saved. I told you that the doctrine of salvation is one of the most crucial doctrines in the Bible. It is a place where you trust the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior. But that doctrine alone will not save you.

Along with the doctrine of salvation, we talked about the doctrine of repentance: you coming to the place in your life, at the moment you get saved, understanding that your new life in Christ is going to take you in a new direction. All things are passed away; all things become new.

What we find in Christianity today is a lack of knowledge of the third great doctrine. Not only does it not understand the doctrine of repentance, which leads to the doctrine of salvation, but it does not understand the doctrine of sanctification. Once you get saved, you are now separated from the world. You do not do the same things you used to do. You go in a new direction in life based on your repentance, based on your understanding of God saving you.

Anything from that point on has to be based on the Bible. It can no longer be based on your feelings or your emotions. Our feelings change; they are the most unstable part of us. The truth of the Word of God stands no matter what you and I feel or think about it. That is the key. Your life and my life are going to be a roller coaster many, many times. Things are going to come into your life, circumstances are going to arise, problems are going to come in with your family, with your kids. In your own relationship, there has to be something that is absolutely rock solid that does not waver. Your emotions will waver.

In the Bible, it talks about that when a person really gets saved and there is a changed life, there is evidence of that. What we do not see today in Christianity, in most cases, is people claim to be saved. You are not saved because you say you are. Now, I know that is probably not popular and people do not want to hear that, but I am just telling you, you are not saved. Everybody in America, if you would ask them if they are saved, they are saved. You are not saved because you say you are saved. You are saved because there is an evidence of your salvation. You can prove it.

*Romans 12:2*

*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

When you get saved, you have the evidence. Back in Jeremiah, I think it is in Jeremiah chapter 32, it is a great passage back there. It talks about somebody purchasing a field and buying that field, and they are keeping the record, the evidence of that purchase, so that somebody could not come back later and say, "That is not your field, that is my field." And they would produce the evidence that said, "Uh-uh, that is my field. There is the evidence of my purchase."

Now, I know doctrinally, when you are back there, that is a reference to Israel getting the title deed to planet Earth. We do not have time to get into that this morning, but I want to tell you something. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 20:

*1 Corinthians 6:20*

*For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

I ask you today, if that is really true, if you have really truly been born again, tell me, what is the evidence that you were purchased, that you were bought with a price? What is the evidence today in your life that the salvation that you claim to have really made a difference in your life? It really was real. Tell me, where is the evidence of the purchase? That is the key.

Based on the Word of God, the evidence of the doctrine of salvation in your life and my life will simply be the doctrine of repentance, a changed life. We do not think the way we used to. We do not still do the same things we used to. We do not go to the same places. We do not hang out with the same people we used to. Old things are passed away, and all things now have become new. You have separated yourself through the doctrine of sanctification. You are now separated because when it comes to truly trusting Christ as your own personal Savior, you have to keep your feelings and your emotions out of it.

You know, when people get saved, they all react differently. Some people cry when they get saved. Some guys just get up and say, "Well, boy, it feels like the weight of the world is off my shoulder." Some people get up and they say, "Are we ready to eat now?" People look at their response and they think that if a person did not have the right response when they got saved, did not cry, weep, throw things around, that they really did not get saved. Let me tell you something. Salvation is not based on your emotional outburst or experience. Salvation is based on, did you do what Romans chapter 10, verses 9 and 10 says?

*Romans 10:9-10*

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

He says in Titus chapter 1, verse 2:

*Titus 1:2*

*In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;*

Did you claim the promise? Somebody said, "Well, I cried." Somebody said, "I didn't cry." So we think that one got saved and one didn't. No, no, the evidence of your salvation is not how you react when you get up off your knees. The evidence of your salvation is, were you purchased? And does your life display the evidence of that? That is where a relationship with Christ starts. It has to start right there.

Years ago, there was a little song that everybody was singing, kind of one of those catchy little songs, and it kind of went like this: "God said it, I believe it, that settles it for me." It was a cute little song. "God said it, I believe it, that settles it for me." You know what? That is a nice little song, but it is not very biblical. The truth of the matter is, God said it, that settles it. It does not make any difference if you believe it or not. But that is where we are at today.

The absolute perfect, complete Word of God, doctrine, will do for you what nothing else will do. It will take away the emotions out of everything. You will not have to worry about what you have to feel about this. There will be circumstances that come into your life that you will get a soft spot, and that soft spot to yield is the most dangerous thing that you could do. Something has to hold you between the white lines that keeps our emotions in check.

Yesterday in Bible Institute, we started the second section, and the second section now is the doctrinal section. My, my, my. We are going to get some things done in this particular section. We are to align our feelings, our thoughts, our desires, our passions, our emotions to what God says. How we feel about it never really enters into it.

We have a Christianity today, in many cases, if not most cases, that has no anchor. It just goes with the flow. As the Bible says in Ephesians 4:14:

*Ephesians 4:14*

*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

They have no defenses. They do not know anything about the Bible. When something comes into life, they just simply do not know how to deal with it.

### III. Lessons from History and the Church's Role

Great lessons from history. History is one of the greatest teachers for you and for me as a child of God that you will ever find. Most people do not care about history. Most people do not like history. I can honestly say what I know about the Bible is not very much, but what I do know about the Bible, I can tell you the enhancement of whatever I know is based on what I learned about history. Learning from history. Every time you find something from the past, it will give more meaning to the present. If you can remember that truth, it is a great truth, but lessons from history.

We are like the book of Judges, Judges 21:25, where it says:

*Judges 21:25*

*In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*

That is Christianity today. There is no authority. There is no king. There is no law laid down that we have to follow. We as Christians, we do whatever seems to be right. We just follow the flow. If we go to a church and that church is going this way, we just assume this is God's church. Why? He is a pastor. He is this. They are right. Look at all the nice people. And we just follow. We are not ever searching it out for ourselves.

I will tell you something. The job of every real church and the job of every real pastor is simply to be the anchor for all truth. To hold the line for that truth so those who want it can find it. In this world of total chaos, in this world of complete and utter confusion and disillusionment, God intended the church, His church, this church, the church. God intended the church to be a safe place of truth. A bastion of truth. A bulwark of truth that gave people what they wanted and what they needed. That they could go there and know safely that what they were getting is what God had for them. Not some under the circus big top with the head pastor being the head clown.

It is a place where you can come. A place that you can run to. A place that you can get the protection that you need. A place where you can just rest and catch your breath if the world where Christianity has beat you up. A place to get what you need so you will not lose your kids to the world, or lose your marriage. A place where the world cannot get to you. A place to get truth. A place to get doctrine. And a place that you get what God has for you to survive the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Once upon a time, in this old world of sin, there were the two safest places on Earth, honestly. There was a time when the two safest places on Earth were a baby in its mother's womb and a Bible-believing, Bible-teaching, preaching church that always had your back. But today, it is all changed, is it not? Babies are ripped from mother's womb through the sinful act of abortion so they could go on and continue their sinful lifestyle. There is no safety there anymore.

I want to tell you something. Most churches today have become spiritual abortion clinics. They will take a young Christian, and because they have no truth, they have no doctrine, they are not giving him anything, they abort that young baby's spiritual growth. Oh no, and we are great. I get calls every month, "Will you bring some of your people out? We are going to picket at an abortion clinic." No, I will not go there. But if you get me to picket together to go to a spiritual abortion clinic, I will be there. That is what some churches do. We just think it is a terrible thing, but we think it is okay. I am just telling you.

## IV. Colossians and the Laodicean Church Age

The book of Colossians has always been to me a very important book in my life. I understand that in the book of Revelation, John writes to seven churches, and those seven churches match up to the seven periods of church history. I get that. But when you start to lay it out, you find that when Paul wrote to his churches, he also wrote to seven churches. When you take the time to do it, you will find that the seven churches that Paul writes to and the seven churches that John writes to, they will match and they will line up. It enhances the ability to really understand what is going on down through church history when you make that matchup.

The book of Colossians. We know that the last period of church history, the one that we are now living in, is the Laodicean church period. Laodicea means "rights of the people." As the last church period starts around 1900, runs up to the rapture of the church, it is the last church period where the church completely loses everything that has any relevance to God. They move into that gray area of mush where the church is now all pulled together with the world.

The book of Colossians really explains for me, and anybody I guess that wants to make the connection and follow it and break it down, why things are the way they are today. In the book of Colossians, you will find a reference to Laodicea five times. When you study the geography, you had Colossae, which was a major city. South about 10 or 11 miles was Laodicea, that is a city. They would be a lot like Kansas City and then Raytown or Independence. They are in proximity of each other, but they are two separate cities. You and I know that we are now in Independence, but if you just get on 40 highway here and go about a couple hundred yards east, now you are in Kansas City. It is hard to tell sometimes, that is why they put those signs up, "You are leaving here, you are going into here." It is hard to tell sometime when you cross that line from one city to the other. I promise you, in that day, it was hard to tell exactly when you crossed the line from Colossae and went into Laodicea.

In Christianity, that is the problem, because there is no doctrine. Churches have strayed across the boundary lines from the true Church of Jesus Christ, and now we are in Laodicea, and we do not even know it. We do not even understand it.

Colossians goes hand in hand with the book of Ephesians. Both books are incredible. Where Ephesians is past truth for the body of Christ, and in Ephesians he reveals truth about the Church, in Colossians it is present truth for the body of Christ, and he shows how and why we got in the mess that we are in today.

Every book in the Bible has Christ presented in a way. I gave them to you one time, a long time ago. We went through them. In the book of Colossians, the theme of Christ, or Christ as portrayed, is Christ our fullness. It is a book that shows you that in the last part of the 20th century, in the 21st, the attack on the Word of God and its destructive force to the Church brought us from the mainline of Christianity. We stepped over that boundary and now, without even knowing it, we are in Laodicea.

I have a little note by the book of Colossians so I will never forget what the book is for me. It simply says, "The book of Colossians, my insight into insanity." That is exactly what it does. It puts a rhyme and a reason to this insanity that we have that we call Christianity today. You will see this before I am done, I hope.

In chapter one, I want to give you the quick breakdown here because it is relevant to where your relationship is with Christ. In chapter one, he starts to talk about who Christ is all over again.

*Colossians 1:13-16*

*13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

*14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

*15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

*16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:*

He says in verse 13, "Who has delivered us?" because somebody forgot who that "who" is. In verse 14, he says, "In whom we have redemption." He does that because the Church today has forgot who He is and in whom He is. Verse 15, "Who is the image of the invisible God?" They have forgotten that. Verse 16 says, "For by him were all things created." They have forgotten that. The Church today has lost every understanding of who Christ is. What they have is their own book of Judges mindset. "This is who Christ is."

When the world thinks of God as the big grandfather up in a rocking chair with a long beard that rocks back and forth and checks it out every once in a while, God's people have the same concept that God is just some marshmallow in the sky, that He is okay with everything, that you can live your life any way you want to once you become a Christian. He does not care that there will be drinking up in heaven, there will be smoking up in heaven, there will be drugs up in heaven. There will be legalized marijuana wherever you go in the Golden City.

He says in verse 26 that they have forgotten the dispensation of God and now that great dispensation of God is now a mystery.

*Colossians 1:26*

*Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:*

He says the dispensation of God is the mystery given to the Gentiles. You could not find 20 Gentiles in this city who understand what that mystery is because the book of Colossians says they have lost who Christ is.

It goes along with the book of Deuteronomy. Your first five books of the Bible run like this: Genesis, which is the book of the beginning, and then God puts them down in Egypt at the end of Genesis. He brings them out in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The last book of the first five books of the Bible, called the books of Moses, is Deuteronomy. You know why it is called Deuteronomy? Deutero, second. You know why? Because the nation of Israel had done exactly what we have done. They had gone so far, and by the time they got to the book of Deuteronomy, they had completely forgot everything that God told them. So in Deuteronomy, Deutero, second giving of the law, God has to give them all over again what He once gave them. That is where we are at today.

You say, "Well, I am a Christian." What is the evidence? Do not tell me that. I am not saying you are not. I am just saying, what is the evidence? You come onto my property and you try to dig a hole in the back to put a well, I am going to come out and say, "That is my property." You are going to say, "Well, how do I know what is your property?" "Well, here is my deed. I purchased

this. I have got the document. I have got the document of the purchase. I have got the evidence that this land is mine." "Oh, I am sorry. I am digging on your land. I am digging on your evidence."

Do not give me this Laodicean gas. "Well, everybody is a Christian." Hugh Hefner was a Christian. Everybody is a Christian. That is because everybody has got their own idea of what Christianity is. Barack Obama was a Christian. Trump is a Christian. Everybody is a Christian. In fact, I have been in the ministry for almost 50 years, and I have got to be honest, the last five, six years, I cannot find a sinner anywhere. Come out, come out wherever you are. Everybody is a Christian. That is because we, in our minds, with our emotions, we decide what Christianity is. No, you do not. I am telling you, this is where we are at. We have lost the whole concept. We have lost the whole idea that now God in Colossians chapter one is going over it all again.

Now in chapter two, chapter two is a real killer. Chapter two, once you see in chapter one that the Laodicean church has forsaken God, they do not even know who He is anymore. Chapter two shows us when God was forsaken and the church dumped the truth and the doctrine of the Word of God, it shows now what replaces it. This is vital.

He says in chapter two, verse eight:

*Colossians 2:8*

*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

Beware lest any man spoil you. There are people out there in Christianity that want to spoil what you have with God. Did you hear what I just said? There are people out there that want to spoil your relationship with Christ.

Now these are the four things that have replaced it:

1. Philosophy. That is the first one. Modern-day psychology coming into Christianity. I have had my share of Christian psychologists, Christian therapists. I have had my share of them. I have talked to them all my life over the years, and they all basically say the same thing. They claim to be Christian. I am not saying they are not. They claim to be Christian, but their stand on the Word of God is this. Here is what they have told me: "Well, I believe the Bible is truth, but I do not believe the Bible contains all truth. But psychology adds the truth that God forgot to put in the Bible." Now I do not know where you are at with that, but I would like to tell you where I am at, but I am a godly gentleman Christian, and I cannot do that today. But I have a long way to go. I may get there before we get done with this message.
2. Through vain deceit. Look what we are doing. "Oh, look at this great monument we are building to man. Oh, look at this gigantic church building that we have got. Oh, you all need to put your money into this. We are going to build a church that rivals Solomon's Temple. Oh, come and make an investment in this great building." Let me tell you something. You do not build buildings. You build people.
3. Rudiments of the world. Bringing the world system into Christianity. I have a friend of mine that goes to the same gym that I do, and he caught me one day this week. I forget what it was.

He says, "I have been waiting for you all week." He says, "You have got to see this video." He pulls up this video on his iPhone. You all saw the halftime show at the Super Bowl? You know, I mean, they are a big deal. Fire coming up out of the stage, smoke, lights flashing, sparks going everywhere, people up on the stage, you know, all those things. I am watching this. I am watching this. I just tell you, this was better than any Super Bowl I ever saw. You have got fire coming up, smoke, lights rolling, sparks shooting everywhere. You had four or five people on the stage, and they were, the guy in the middle was actually doing a little break dances. He was spinning on his head and on other parts of his body, and he was going around with a circle and kicking his legs out, and these people over here were, they know they are going to go like this, and a lady over here, the lady over here had a cat suit on. A cat suit. No, no, no, a cat suit. A little hat with little ears, maybe they were natural, I do not know, but she had a cat suit on. Tail. And she, and I am thinking to myself, "Why are you showing me this? What is this all about?" And he said, "You know where that is?" And I said, "No." "One of the largest churches in Lee's Summit, Missouri." That is their worship service. That is the way they do it. He kept, you know how you can leave the comments? He just typed in, "Interesting." One of the pastors typed back and was defending that this is how we worship God. Really? Really. Like they do with the Super Bowl?

4. The tradition of men. The philosophy, the vain deceit, and the rudiments, making the church just like the world so you will come to church. One time, just give me one time, where Jesus ever violated one of His principles so you would follow Him. You have got the truth right in front of you. You decide. So it should be.

I learned a long time ago there are only two things, two things, two things worth investing your life in because they are the only two things that are going to last for all of eternity. One of them is the souls of men, and the other one is the Word of God. Everything else does not matter. You like our bomb shelter? We had a funeral a while back, and some of the big old-time people came down to see the church, and they walked through and they sneered when they saw this place. "Yeah, when your place gets blown away when the tornado comes, we will all be safe down here." Oh, I had the fight with Jamie Chuthaneo, and she won. But when we had to have this place, I wanted to keep the Civil Defense warning things for atomic attack on the wall. She said they had to go.

Building monuments to man's vain assessment that, "Wow, look what God does." God does not do anything in buildings. I want you to understand that. God does not do anything in building buildings. God builds people. I was out at the gym the other day, and there was this big guy out there, weightlifter. He had a T-shirt on. Guess he was a Christian. I was going to ask him about the evidence, but he was a lot bigger than I was, and I did not want to get planted where I stood. But I would have got him. He had a T-shirt that says, "Jesus is a bodybuilder." No, I get that. I know you want to, that is a cute little thing. But here is the deal. He is over there, and he has got, you know how it is at a gym? They have got mirrors everywhere. And he is sitting there watching himself. Then he is up like this. I am thinking to myself, "Jesus, that is how I crack myself up. Jesus, Jesus is a bodybuilder, but He ain't building your physical flesh." But that is where we are at today.

Hey, you know why they have got to have fire coming out of the platform? Smoke, lights flashing. You know why they have got to do that and they get out there and they do all those things? You know why it has got to come? I will tell you why. Because there is no fire, power coming out of that pulpit anymore. So you fake it. You hire it. You bring it in. You make it choreography. Whatever that means. You put it all together. And it is a show. But there is no power in the preaching. There is no power in the Word of God because there is no truth. So what do you do? You bring the world in. Church runs three or four thousand people. Who would not go to a Christianity that you can go to church and still live like the world?

Somebody said, "Well, we have got a real church." Really? Give me six weeks in there, and I will take it down to two hundred. I will not do anything. I will just squump them down the aisle. "Hi, Bob Alexander is my name. Can I see your proof of the purchase? What is the evidence?" Oh, Jack Hyles, he is dead now. He was something else. He had people that would come to church on Sunday school, but then they would leave after Sunday school and not stay for his preaching. So he did not like that. Jack Hyles, he was a tough guy. 82nd Airborne paratrooper D-Day, World War II. So he dressed one of his deacons up in a devil outfit. And he walked up and down in the parking lot. When the people left the early church service and did not stay for his, the devil guy would walk up and say, "I am really glad you did not stay for church today."

It says in verse 4 that men in this church age are going to beguile you with enticing words. Verse 18 says they are going to beguile you out of your reward. You know, "beguiled" is a really good word to study in the Bible.

*2 Corinthians 11:3*

*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

Paul, speaking to the church at Corinth, he says, "But I am afraid for you. I am worried about you as a church." He says, "But I fear lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your mind, the church, should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." There is nothing complicated about the Bible, nothing complicated about a relationship with the Lord. It is just built on three basic doctrines: the doctrine of salvation based on the doctrine of repentance, and then those two, the doctrine of sanctification. Did you really change the day you got saved? I want to hear an amen. I want to see the proof of your purchase. I want to see the evidence.

Why, if you went to court before a judge and you were defending somebody, and that person was up for murder, and you just said, "He did not do it," and he said, "Your Honor, he did not do it," and the Honor said, "Well, how do you know he did not do it?" "He is a nice guy. He goes to church. He teaches Sunday school." And the judge said, "Well, I do not care about that. I know a guy who was a pastor who killed a guy one time. I do not, that does not mean anything to me. What evidence did you have he did not do it?" "Well, I do not have any evidence, but he is really a nice guy." "Well, I do not care how nice a guy is. What evidence do you have that he did not commit the crime?" "Well, I do not have any evidence, but you ought to hear him sing." You have got my shoes on. Thank you. Nobody knows the trouble I have seen. Thank you. Oh, that is

a Star Wars tie, is not it? Absolutely. Yeah, that is why Luke has to have them, because he is a Skywalker.

God's people today, the churches, have been beguiled. You know, that is a great story that he is worried about. He says, "As the serpent beguiled Eve." Do you ever look at that story, Adam and Eve, in Genesis chapter 3? Eve is the type of the church, Adam is the type of Christ. They had fellowship with God all day long. When the devil attacked Eve, who is the type of the church, he attacked her when Adam was not at home, a picture of the church age. When he did beguile her, and he attacked her, and he beguiled her, how did he beguile her? He beguiled her by saying, "Yea, hath God said?" "I am a Christian too." And then he changed what God said. The beguiling has been going on ever since. I am just telling you.

## V. The Christian's Response in the Laodicean Age

Chapter 3 and 4, my response to it. As a Christian, what is my response to chapter 1 and chapter 2? I am living in this world in the middle of the Laodicean church. We are here. You are here. What should our response be? As a Bible-believing Christian in the Laodicean church age, chapter 3, verse 1:

*Colossians 3:1*

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

Seek those things which are above. Verse 2:

*Colossians 3:2*

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

Set your affections on things above. You see, that is evidence. That is evidence of the purchase. Now how do you deal with all this? Verse 16:

*Colossians 3:16*

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. Go back to the book. Get back to the anchor. Get back to the place that is solid for your Christian life, that you do not have to wonder about what it says or think about this. You have the clear direction of the doctrine of the principles of the Word of God, which you anchored your soul to at the time of salvation. Why can't you anchor your life every day to it? The answer to that is, where is the proof? Where is the evidence? Maybe you cannot anchor your life to it every day, because you never anchored to it to begin with.

Verse 17:

*Colossians 3:17*

*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

Oh, wow. There is one for you. "And giving thanks to God and the Father." I thought God was the Father. "And giving thanks to God and the Father." I will let you chew on that one for a while. I will let you think that one through, when the greatest principles found anywhere in the Bible, on a relationship with Christ.

Now, the Book of Colossians is one of the greatest books that show you and I the insanity of our time, the issues of our time. It is a sad state of affairs. I must confess to you, and I have told you this before, Lord, how I hate the 20th and the 21st century. I tell you what, I get it. I understand it, but I must tell you, if I had my own choice in this, and we never get our own choice, and I get it, I am fine with it, but if I had my druthers, I would have not been born in the 20th and 21st century in this putrid Christianity.

I hate the phoniness. I hate the passiveness. I hate the weak, cowardly mindset of what Christianity is today. All my life, all my life, I have heard them. I have heard them whine about everything. I have had them whine about this. I have had parents, all of my ministry, whine about, "My kids are not doing what is right, and it is the church's fault. If the church would have not failed my kids, you know what, my kids would be better." And they whine, they whine. They never take responsibility for anything. Your kids are the mess they are in because of no church. Your kids, listen to me, your kids are the mess they are because of your bad parenting. It is not going to do with it. Somebody else has. If you gave your personal responsibility for that child over to somebody else and they messed up your kid, that is your fault. Do not whine about it.

I am sick of whiners. In fact, I told Rose, "We are carrying a cooler back there with five pounds of cheese in it, 24/7, Rose. You are going to have a little cheese with your whine." Oh, you will be using that all day tomorrow. What are you talking about? I am sick of the whining. I am sick of God's people whining about everything. "Well, I am not happy about this." I mean, you can invest your life into somebody, give them the Bible that they never have, pour yourself into them, and one little thing does not go right, and they are a whiner. They whine about this. They whine about that. That did not happen in the 1600s, 1700s, or the 1800s. Back then, you had men who had courage. Today, nobody has any courage. Nobody has any real commitment. It does not go your way one time, and you throw everything else that God has done for you and focus on that one time. You are a whiner. You whine about everything. You complain about everything. You know what? If we all got what we really deserved, we would be screaming our lungs out in the lake of fire this morning, begging for water. And you are going to whine. You are going to be a whiner about your family, about the church, about this, about that, about, "Well, I was not treated fairly," or this, that. What in life is fair? We are supposed to live above the circumstances. We are supposed to have the victory in Christ Jesus. Amen.

I hate whiners. I may be a lot of things than I am, but I will tell you what I am not. I am not a whiner. I do not whine about anything. I just kill you. Just kidding. There is no courage today. There is no commitment today. There is no passion today. There is no conviction today. They are weak. They are wishy-washy. They are always whining about something. If I had my way, I

would have been born when Christianity was really tearing it up, someplace between 1600 and 1900.

Oh, man, what I would have loved to have been Robert Moffat's partner. 51 years in Africa, buried his wife and his kids on a mission field. 51 years. He endured such hardness. There were times that he had to wrap his stomach with rope because of the fact that he was so sick from no water and no eating. He persevered. He went on and never whined one time. That is my man. 51 years. 51 years in the outback of Africa, suffering unbelievably, all to give somebody the gospel. And you get one little thing. Your nose bent at a joint and whine about it all. That is not my world, man. I am sorry. Stay away from me.

I would rather be with old Peter Cartwright. Oh, Peter Cartwright was a frontier preacher in the 1800s. Big old burly guy. Got like Josh. Big, strong, good-looking guy. Big, strong, good-looking, intelligent. Man among men. Who! Who his only ambition is to be like me. He would go out there and he would call the roughest guys you ever saw in your life. Call them over to a campfire or go into their camps. He would take his Bible and he would say, "I want to tell you about the Lord Jesus Christ." And four or five of them would say, "Go ahead." He would start to preach to them. You know how it is. There would be a crowd of ruffians that were making fun of him or cutting into his message. He would just put his Bible down, pulled him by the neck, took him behind a tree, beat the fire out of him, come back and finish the message. Now that is my kind of guy. Whiner? I hate whiners. "Well, you do not know what..." Oh, shut up.

You know where I would want to be? I would love to have been on the Titanic. No, I would have. Because on the Titanic was one of the greatest preachers you ever heard and saw in your life. John Harper was coming over to America to preach in one of Moody's Bible conferences. The Titanic hit an iceberg. Somebody testified to this, that they were fresh around in the water that was like 29 degrees, lived time was about four minutes. They are saying, "What am I going to do? Somebody help me. What am I going to do? What am I going to do?" And out of the cold darkness, they heard this Scotch-brogue voice saying, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The whole boy was preaching, going down. Now, you know what we would do if we were on the Titanic today? Hit an iceberg and we are sinking? "Ahhh! You would whine. Why, God? Why me? Well, I did this and I did that. Well, why me? Because you do not show it so that she is a lot worse than I am." Whiners! I cannot stand them. You did not have whiners in 1600. You had wineries, but you did not have whiners. That is where I wanted to be.

I will tell you what. Oh, David Livingstone. David Livingstone left everything and went into the deepest part of Africa as a missionary. He had been gone for 20 years. Nobody ever heard from him. Nobody knew what happened to him. A New York reporter by the name of Stanley went out to find Dr. Livingstone. I read the story many, many times. He is going through the jungle, and they are hacking down these bushes, and he says, "We come around after days, we come around this little trail in the jungle, and there is a little camp, and there is a bunch of natives sitting around with Dr. Livingstone teaching them the Bible." And he comes up to him, which is the famous quote, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume." That was smart. The only white guy in 600 miles. Yeah, Alex, if you would have been there, it would have been real confusing. "I do not know sure where you are at."

You know what? He made such an impact on the African continent. He is buried in Westminster Abbey in London. He died a disease on the mission field. The natives put his body in a box and carried it all the way to the shore and put it on a ship that went back to Africa. But before they put him in that box, you know what they did? They cut out his heart and they buried it in Africa. I wonder if you and I would die today, where would they bury our heart?

Wrong time for me. I want a time when God's men had steel in their backbone, and they would have booted a pastor out of the pulpit in the church so fast that dumped the Bible, his head would swim. I want to be around men and women who take a stand. All their sinners, they have got their failures, but they will take responsibility for their own failures. They will not go through life whining about somebody else. I hate it.

But I am a soldier. A good soldier never questioned his orders. I am a soldier who endures, a good soldier who endures hardness for the Lord Jesus Christ. My orders were made clear to me. My mission started in 1950 and will go to whenever God is finished with me. So I do the job that God has called me to do in spite of the fact that I hate it here. I know what my job is. I know what my job is till the Lord comes back. That is to train and equip young men and young ladies for anybody that wants the truth, to give them the facts, the truth of the Word of God. I am not looking to retire. I am not looking to take a sabbatical.

I believe what the Bible says in Ecclesiastes chapter 8, verse 8:

*Ecclesiastes 8:8*

*There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.*

There is no discharge from this war. I will hold the line and let God send me every young man, every woman, every mom, every dad, every grandma, and every grandpa who has the courage and the passion and the commitment in this God-forsaken, disease-ridden Christianity to take their stand. Honestly, I hate it, but the saving grace for me, I am just going to tell you the truth. The ultimate blessing of the ministry today to me will be the hard-cored, hard-lined men and women who pick up their weapon in this church and stand their post on the wall and hold the line.

We are bonded together through the battles that we have faced. We have our fun times. We are always looking for a party. I mean, tomorrow is going to be a classic example. This is my favorite weekend. I love just hanging out with everybody. I do not have any pastor friends. I do not go to pastors' conferences. I do not go preach to other churches. Not that anybody would have me, but I do not go. I have been asked, and I say, "No thanks." I have had my fun in this song. I have got one thing I want to do: the people God gave me. Now shoot, the last time I went there, went to New York, half of you went with me. You know, our time together, it is a joke. I mean, it is a funny joke. You ever been to one of our events when you try to leave? It takes you 45 minutes to say goodbye to everybody. Just like the Waltons. "Good night, grandpa. Good night, Billy Bob. Good night, Susie. Good night, Jamie. Good night, Tom. Good night, Ralph.

Good night. Good night, grandpa. Good night." Oh, the whole thing all over again. It takes forever to say goodbye. You know why? Because we do not want to leave.

I am telling you, we look for every opportunity to spend time together. Every pastor who has come in here marvels at the spirit that this church has and says, "Man, I have never seen anything like this anywhere." I will tell you why. Have you figured it out yet? I will tell you why that is. I will tell you what it is. The bond that pulls us together. Because each other is all we have. That book and me and you is all we have to survive. You put your life in my hands, I will put my life in yours. We are together. We work together. We fight together. We play together. We work together. We do things together.

I do not want to get philosophical here, but allow me to quote Shakespeare for a moment. From the play on Henry V: "From this day forward to the ending of the world, but we in it shall be remembered. We few, we happy few, we band of brothers. For he who sheds his blood with me this day shall be my brother."

*Jeremiah 48:10*

*Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.*

We have all been bloody together. We fought the fight. We band of brothers. We pull together.

In Philippians 2:25, Paul said what I feel about you all of my life:

*Philippians 2:25*

*Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my necessities.*

That is where we are at. They back in the day took care of each other. They walked each other's back. I am old school. There is no question about that. I make no apology for it. My whole life, my whole ministry is built out on the Word of God, but in three hallowed words: loyalty, courage, and compassion. Those three hallowed words are the foundation of a Christian's life when he walks or she walks with God.

- Loyalty to the Word of God first and in loyalty to each other second.
- Courage to band together, to stand together, no matter what happens. We hold the line. We make this place a safe place for you to be able to come and get what you need.
- Compassion. Looking at those who have needs and reaching out to them.

Most churches, if you can even get any help, you are down at the bottom, struggling through the mire of life. The pastor, it is almost said white suit, but I am not going to say that. The pastor in his standing at the top of the stairs yelling for you to get up where everybody else is. That is not how it works. As a pastor, as you, me, who minister with my fellow soldiers, my companion, my fellow laborers, we know that we walk down those steps and put our arm around them and walk them up those steps one at a time. Whatever their needs are, whatever their issues are, whatever their struggles are. Realizing that we were once there and God gave us what we needed. We are

part of the church militant. We have loyalty. We have trust. We have camaraderie. We have fellowship. It makes us strong.

We have our fun times. We enjoy each other. We laugh at each other. We make fun of each other. We say stupid things to each other. We laugh and, you know, and we just talk about everything and laugh about it, and I will be saying something and Alex will say something or Willow will say something or somebody else. We just laugh. But I am not under any illusion. Any night at 3 a.m. in the morning when the flares go up and they are coming over the wire on all four points of the perimeter, we will stand together and we will hold the line. That is where we are at.

## VI. The Ministry's Mandate: Buy the Truth, Sell It Not

I said all that so far because I want to preach just one verse today. That was my introduction. I am telling you right now, this verse is going to shut me off. I mean, you may have watched that video someplace with the fire smoke, but you watched the fire smoke come out of this in just a few moments. I want to preach a verse today that is going to really put me over the top.

There are many things that I hate about the Laodicean church age. I preach on them. I get accused of being negative all the time. I do. There are people that came to church here and they said, "Well, I do not like it. He is too negative." I get it. I get it. It is not my fault. I have told you before my blood type is B negative. I do not know what else to tell you. I had a lady one time, she said, "Well, I kind of like the church, but your preaching just leads me flat." I said, "Why is that, ma'am?" She says, "Because it is just so negative." I said, "Well, you have got to understand where I come from. I only can, in my makeup, I can only please one person a day. And today was not your day. Tomorrow is not looking good either."

I am sure if you know your Bible, you would see that the prophets in the Old Testament, they always had negative messages. They are preaching to God's people right before God's judgment comes down and falls on them. There is not one positive thing in anything they preach. In fact, of course, I am sure you know this, being the positive person that you are. Out of 66 books in the Bible, 25 of them are absolutely completely negative. There is not one positive thing in them. Of course, I know you know that. They are preaching the covenant judgment of God to a people who have replaced the very word that God had given them. The people hated them for it, just like some of God's people do today.

See Matthew chapter 21, verse 33. See Hebrews chapter 11, verse 36 through 40. See it for yourself because in this phony, plastic, effeminate, passive, worthless Christianity, they hate and reject truth.

So here we go. Proverbs chapter 23, verse 23:

*Proverbs 23:23*

*Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.*

Let us pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. Thank you for the truth of the Word of God. Thank you for these good people who stand with me shoulder to shoulder

every day, for their lives are not only spent taking care of their families but taking care of the others in this church, discipling them and working with them and giving them what they need. I thank you, Father, for a church that is free from whiners, men and women who, when they stop and think about it, would probably rather be with the guys that I were talking about than the ones we have to put up with today. I thank you for them, for this band of brothers, these men and women who love you, love the truth, love the book, and will stand no matter what in the face of all adversity. So help me preach this verse today and let them see and understand where I am at, where this church is at, and where the Bible is at on this great truth. We will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name and sake, we ask it. Amen.

Now, Christianity today has become a big business. The pastor is no longer called a pastor in most big mega churches. He is now a CEO. He is a manager. He is in an executive position. Not tons of the guys over the last 20, 30 years like the Pat Robertsons, the Jim Bakers, and the Jimmy Swaggarts, and Joe Osteens who, for all practical purposes, made millions and millions and millions of dollars, lived in palatial palaces on big acreages. I mean, everybody, common man was out there trying to get through life. They were living like kings and queens. That is where it all started. They invested in buildings that are 60 to 80 million dollars, putting that under the bondage of the people. Well, you know what? When you could have bought a Butler building for four or five million dollars, it would have done everything you wanted to do. But it would not have the flash. It would not have the show.

When Westcott and Hort came out with their theory on manuscripts to destroy the Word of God, they took the theory and put it forth that the older manuscripts were better. That was not true. The Laodicean church, when it comes to churches, have put forth another theory, which is just infallible, and that is that the bigger it is, the better it is. That is simply not true. The Bible says, "That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God." If everybody thinks they are great, it probably stinks.

In this Laodicean mindset today, when you have a problem, a spiritual issue, you do not get to see the pastor, unless you have got a lot of bucks. You will get the on-staff psychologist or Christian therapist. You will get some second-string staff member who is going to, you know, listen to you, who really is not going to want to. You go to that church and you want to give that church. You tithe to that church. You support that church. And then your daughter gets married and you want to have their wedding in the church. You find that it is going to cost you \$600 to rent the church. Your church. Your church. Your church. Your church. Your church.

You need help with your kids. You need help with your marriage or some other personal issue. "Yeah, we will help you. We will help you. We will help you. But it is going to cost you something." You will go see their staff person or their professional counselor or whatever. It will cost you 50 bucks an hour. You will want to learn the Bible. "Come to our Bible Institute. Learn everything you can." You will want to be a disciple. You will want to be more than \$1,500 a year tuition. You will want to be a disciple. "We have a discipleship program, \$75." "You are in a class on Christian living. That is also \$75." They charge you for everything. And you get nothing back. Some places even charge you to get in admission to come to the church service.

Now we offer special classes here on different subjects. Here is my problem. We have here Bible study on Thursday night. We have Bible Institute yesterday. The people ministry that the next week we are off for the summer now. We have the scholarship one, the scholarship two. We have special classes going on all the time. We have an extensive counseling ministry that I have 60, 70 people working with me that people come into. And you know what I found? I found that the mindset today is that if it does not cost something, it really is not any good. I have had several people call me about the counseling ministry, and we talk about their issues, and this next question they asked, "How much is it? How much does it cost?" And I said, "It does not cost anything." They cannot believe that it does not cost a lot of money, that it is, "This is no good." So I have come up with the little thing, you know, that I tell him. I said, "Well, it is already paid for." They said, "Well, what do you mean?" I said, "Well, the people in my church paid to run the counseling ministry, and we pay your fee to come in." So you can come. That is true. Just tithes, offerings, everything comes in, and I just turn around a little bit and pump it over and give it to them. I do not believe it.

Now I have got my little Leland family here all the way up from Harrisonville. He called me on the phone one day and just asked me about our camp because you wanted your kids to come to our camp. The moment you called me, God told me what was going on here, that you were going to be here, that you were looking for more than that. We began to talk, and then I had a couple of my ladies call you and get it all set up for camp. You told me yourself that you could not believe that you talked to me on Friday, I think it was, and somebody always called you on Saturday. You thought it would be months, years, that your kids would be grown before I would get back to you. Now you are being disciplined, both of you, are not you? You come to Bible studies. You were in Bible Institute yesterday too, were not you? Did it cost you anything? Anybody charge you? Not a dime. You get disciplined free, both of you. Come to the Institute. Nobody was checking your pay stub to make sure that you put your money in. No, no, that is because we will bill you at the end of the month.

Here is my problem. Here it comes. I am going to get this out of my system. I am going to throw up all over everybody. You people in the front row are going to be blessed. How in the world do I charge you for something that somebody else paid the price for? How do I charge you for what God paid the price for me to have freely? How do I charge you for something that if I did put a price on it, there was not anybody on this planet who has turned up enough money to pay for it?

When Jesus sent out the 12 in Matthew chapter 10, in verse 8, he says:

*Matthew 10:8*

*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils. The verse that every charismatic quotes up one side and down the other, and then they leave out the next of that verse: "Freely you have received, freely give." When as a pastor or as a church you start to put a price tag on wisdom and instruction and understanding, you have reached a new level of your corruption. You are a crook. You are so crooked, I bet you have got to screw your socks on in the morning. I

mean, I bet you could fall through a barrel of fish hooks and never get stuck one time. I mean, at least John Dillinger, Ma Barker, Baby Face Nelson, Alvin Karpis, Bonnie and Clyde, they were honest about robbing people and what they did. You will suck millions of dollars off the people in your church, make them pay for everything, and then when they have a need, you have got the audacity to charge them for what God gave you freely. You are a crook.

Now this verse is the masterpiece of truth on how the ministry, we should minister to others. How we give instruction. It is our instruction for the ministry. He says, "Buy the truth." Here is how it works. I want you to get this. Here is how it works. Christ paid the price for me to have His word. When I recognize what He has done for me through a personal relationship, and I love Him, and it means everything to me, and it is the world to me, then I am going to pay whatever price I have got to pay so you can have it. For almost 50 years of my life, I have bought the books, the tapes. I have done everything I could do to learn the Bible, and I do not know much. But I did it so I could give it freely to anybody that wanted it. I paid the price to learn the book so you could have it free.

In 1972, I just got right with God about a year. Mel Shabaka and a bunch of us boys went down to Xenia, Ohio, to a guy about it down there, Greg Eastup. You know who Greg Eastup is, Chris? Anyway, he ran a bookstore outside of Columbus. This is 1972. We went down there because we heard that he had all of Ruckman's material. Now, keep in mind at this point, Ruckman only had two or three books, nothing on tape. I walked down there and saw that this guy had every book of the Bible that Pete had done, verse by verse, and taught either in a Sunday school or in his college, in his Institute down there. I could not believe it. I came home, mortgaged my house, \$1,800 in 1972, that was a lot of money, a lot of money today. I mortgaged my house, went back down there and bought every one of those tapes, and for the next 20 years of my life, four or five hours a day, I went through every one of those books. I put every note, every passage, every chapter, every verse, and every word. I did the work. I paid the price. Why? So I could give it to you for free. That is how it works. He paid the price so I could have it. Now it is my job to pay the price for you to have it. Now here it comes. It is your job to pay the price so somebody else can have it. "Buy the truth, sell it not."

It will not cost you a dime here. We have a bookstore. I call it the little red bookstore. Not because there is a lot to read, but because it runs in the red 24/7. You do not have a wide margin Bible, I will give you one. There is a book in there, and you say, "Bob, I really want this, but I do not have it." You take the book. I am not putting a price on anything God gave me. Now I know, I know, I hear some of you skeptics, "Well, that boy, you could get taken advantage of there. People just come up and tell you whatever so they can have it." That may be. But when we get to heaven, I will know who you are, and I will be over in a corner just looking at you. There is no price to the Word of God. There is no charging somebody for what God gave me freely. "Freely receive, freely give." You can have as much as you want whenever you want.

We walk around in churches like we get so full of pride and vanity. We think that the truth that we are selling is our truth. "Well, it is, I will sell it because I am the pastor and I preach it, and then your truth." It is God's truth. Why, when He wrote the King James Bible and put it out there? It is the only Bible in the history of the world that has no copyright on it. You take an NIV

or RSV or any other Bible? You cannot print it because it has got a copyright. What God put His word out, He put no copyright on it. You can print that in your basement. You know why? It is free to you.

Back in Exodus chapter 16, one of my favorite passages in all the Bible. The children of Israel were in the wilderness of sin. There is no water. There is no food. There is nothing to sustain them. Let me translate that for you to your life or my life. We are living in the wilderness of sin, and whether you know it or not, there ain't nothing in this wilderness of sin that is going to sustain you. They are hungry. Just like so many of God's people are hungry. They are starving to death, and God supernaturally, supernaturally brought down the manna from heaven, a picture of the Word of God. While they slept at night, it rained down the camp, and when they opened up their tent flap in the morning, there it was, God's supernatural food. Supernaturally brought right to where the people were. It was not found in a Dead Sea Scroll someplace. It was not found in a dusty, dead library someplace in the Vatican. It was not found in the British Museum or in some scholar's locked away in his closet. No, no, God rained down the supernatural Word of God right to where you and I were living. When they opened up that tent flap in the morning, there it was.

The availability of the Word of God brought on a decision, and the availability of this church and the Word of God brings on a decision in your life. They had to open that tent flap and scoop it up and put it in their pile, or they just trampled it under their feet and went on about their daily work. It is the same way with you and me. The Bible says about the children of Israel, oh, they were no different than you and I are. It says that when God brought that supernatural food down, a type of the Word of God, and gave it to them, the Bible says in verse 17 of chapter 16:

*Exodus 16:17*

*And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less.*

Some gathered more and some less. When it comes to the Word of God, folks, I am going to tell you something freely now, you can have all you want. You can have everything you want here. There is no hold on it. There is no price tag that will stop you. There is no income level where you are at that you cannot have what you need to get what God wants. I would rather stay in this building for the rest of my life and have the money to give you things that you cannot afford to help you learn about God than building some Taj Mahal monument to some man someplace and then having to make you pay for everything that God gave us freely.

At the ballgames, every ballgame, I always wanted that job of a guy that runs up and down the steps with a hot dog. You get the little white hat, a little white uniform. I am ready to go. He will go up there to have a big tray of hot dogs. I love hot dogs. Tomorrow, while you are all eating ribs, hot dog man, 200 of them. That is for just me. You figure it out for yourself. But he walks up and down those and he says, "Hot dog, hot dogs! Get it while it is hot!" I will walk up and down this thing and I tell you, "Truth, truth, truth! Get it while it is hot!" Because there will be a day coming when I will be as cold as a day-old hot dog, and you will get nothing more from me.

Every day of my life, I lost my father in the Lord some five, six years ago. Every day in my life, I think of a thousand things I wish I would have asked him before he went home to be with the

Lord. You better get it while you can. You better recognize what you have, and you can have all what you want, and you better get your head out of wherever it is at, and you better realize that there is only a window for you to get your truth and the people, the guys, the gals that you allow to come in that will take the edge off of you so that you want that relationship more than you want the relationship with a book. You better get it while it is hot.

Our job is to pay for it. I paid for it. Give it to you. Sell it not. Some of you will pick it up. You will see the value of it. You will pay the price for it, and then you will give it out, and the ongoing line of succession of giving out truth, going all the way back to Calvary where He paid the price initially, and then you and me continually paid a price for somebody else to have what He paid for us to have. The ministry is simply you and I paying the price to get God's Word and giving it freely to whosoever will, that in time they will pay the price and give it to others, all based on their understanding and the wisdom and instructions they get in the price for their salvation that was paid, the price of their learning about that, and the price of getting wisdom, instruction, and understanding, and being willing to count the cost and then pay it so you can give it freely to somebody else. Because somebody else bought and paid for it for me so I could give it to you. And now somebody bought and paid it for you that you can give it to somebody else.

The Bible says in Isaiah chapter 55, verses 1 and 2:

*Isaiah 55:1-2*

*1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*

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

"Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye to the waters and ye buy and eat. Yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price." And then he says, "Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread?" The investment of our lives, the investment of people, the investment of investing in the Word of God, and then taking, calling to those who were thirsty, who have no money, who have nothing to eat, and then giving out of the abundance of what God is. And yet some of God's people will go through their whole life and never give anything. You know why? That is because they do not have anything to give because they have no personal relationship with Christ. They have never built anything. They whine all the time. They have been in the Bible now four or five, six years, and they have not come any farther. If they are in the Bible another five or ten years, they will not be any farther than they are at now. The reason is because they have got so many mistakes that they have made in their life, so many bad choices that they are not willing to deal with, but all they do is complain about it. The truth of the matter is, there is no evidence of the purchase place.

All of our lives, people that try to deceive others with a phony Christianity, I have seen it all of my life. They will blame everybody else for their problems. They will whine about everything,

and they will put forth this fake, phony, plastic Christianity to try to deceive that they really love God and have a relationship with God. But at the end of their life, the only one they wind up deceiving is themselves.

Paying the price and counting the cost. Listen to me. Christianity is not complicated. Christianity is simply God taking ordinary men and women, ordinary men and women, and then empowering them through the Word of God to do extraordinary things. There is no special, real strong Christian. Every Christian comes the same way, from the same spot, from the same cross. God wants to take ordinary people and empower them to do extraordinary things. That is you. That is what He wants for you.

## VII. Qualities of a True Christian and Ministry

You know, my favorite sermon that I preached is out of 2 Samuel chapter 23, where it talks about David's mighty men of valor. It has always been a great, great, great inspiration to me. I have always looked at it as what God has given me here: men and women who are bonded together to battle. And the battles that we face, and there are four great qualities found in that chapter that I think are just the key to a real successful ministry and building people.

They wanted to be with David, and there is a great parallel. David had his mighty men of valor. They were standing in line to be part of his elite group. Saul had his mighty men of valor. He had to force them to be in his group. They did not want to be part of him. When you look at David's relationship with them and their relationship in that great chapter, and what a great chapter it is, you find the four things, the four qualities that make any ministry, any Christian, anything work in a church today.

5. Loyalty. David was loyal to them, and they were loyal to David. The Word of God and loyalty to each other, a dual loyalty.
6. Courage. They took their stand. One of those guys all by himself took on 800 men. 800 to one. It is not a scribal error. It is 800 men against one, and he defeated them. Sometimes in Christianity, the odds will be that much against you, but you could still have the victory. There is one guy in there, we always like to pick the big battles, there is one guy there that fought all day long for a bean field, which shows me that every piece of God's land is worth fighting for. So you find the loyalty and the courage.
7. Honor. They had a relationship with each other. They honored. They knew who they were. They knew who they served. It was an honor to serve together, to serve the Lord.
8. Determination. They never quit. One guy in there fought with a sword in his hand, wiped out so many guys that when he was done, the muscles of his arm had wrapped around his hand, and he could not even drop the sword. What I love about so many of you is the determination that you have got here, and you are not quitting. You will go to the duration. You understand as I do that there is no discharge in this war, and we, we band of brothers, we will stand together to do the work that God has called us to do in these last days in spite of the odds, in spite of the time that we all disdained, and I hate it. But you know what? I am a soldier, and I have got my orders, and a soldier never questioned his orders. He carries them out. And we

have our orders. That order goes back to you, every one of you, getting everything here you can freely to build the right kind of relationship with Christ.

Every head bowed and every eye closed. Father, we thank you now and praise you for the Lord Jesus, and we love you very much. We ask you to take today and take this message and these great people on this Memorial Day weekend, with all the fun things that we are going to do and have together, and all the fun things that we will do for you. Lord, let us know that we band together and hold the line with truth, that people here can have whatever they want from the Bible. This is a safe place, a resting place. It is a place where they can get water, get food, get everything that they need. Nobody will ever hurt them here. They may hurt themselves, but no one will hurt them here. And help us, Father, to always be that compassion. But always, Father, always to have us have that courage. And Lord, always help us to have that loyalty to the Word of God first and then to each other second. We will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.