

I. The Contrast of the Fool and the Wise Man

Last week, we finished Proverbs 24:7-9. We examined the eight characteristics of a foolish man laid out in the book of Proverbs. Then we talked about the nine characteristics of a wise man. We did that through one of the greatest ways in the Bible for you to study: by contrast. This involves laying out what is good alongside what is not good, a positive thing against a negative thing, and then making the contrast between the two. In this case, it was a fool contrasted to a wise man.

I showed you two key words about a fool: the word "deviseth" and the word "thought." This shows us how all sin starts within the imagination, as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. It then manifests itself, as I showed you in Ezekiel 8, which was going on with the nation of Israel at that time.

A fool lives his life in a world of imagination, a world that is not real, not reality. It is the hallmark of a fool. A fool is someone who does not understand the circumstances around them. They live their life in a world that just does not exist. He surrounds himself with all the things of life and the world, and he shuts out the reality of life and all that it truly is. That is what they do.

A wise man, on the other hand, or by contrast, will see and, more importantly, understand life. He will understand it from a biblical perspective and see the reality of it. He will understand what is real versus what is not real. I remember one time reading in Daniel, and it really struck me; I never forgot it. Daniel went before King Nebuchadnezzar and did all these great things that astounded the king. The king thought to himself, "That's not a big deal," so he brought in all his magicians. The magicians counterfeited what Daniel did, but the end result was they couldn't do everything Daniel did because all they had was an illusion of truth. That was not real. There is no such thing as magic. There is no such thing as someone who can make this disappear or levitate a person off the ground; that is all an illusion. In Nebuchadnezzar's day, when he went up against Daniel, who was operating under the Bible and biblical principles, the best the world could offer was an illusion. Something that looked like it was true, but contrasting it to what Daniel had, it was not true.

A wise man will see that the world, for a Christian, is very hostile. It is very unforgiving. The world will destroy you in every way. A wise man or a wise woman who understands the Bible will know that there is absolutely no value in it. A wise man will be under no illusion that there is any value in a life without the blessings of God, the favor of God, and the hand of God in your life. Through God's wisdom, through his time in the Word of God or her time studying, they have an understanding now. They understand what is going on all around them. They see it for what it is, not as the illusion the world tries to present it to be. They will use the principles of the Word of God to stay ahead of the world system because, through the Word of God, he now has the understanding to see it.

II. The Wilderness of Sin and God's Provision

There is a great illustration of this found in Numbers 9:15-23. The Bible is filled with stories that illustrate great principles for us. These stories actually happened in history to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, but they are profound in their practical impact on my life. Here is a great example of that.

In Numbers 9, you have the story of the nation of Israel as they traveled through the wilderness of sin. The wilderness of sin was after they came out of Egypt; they went into this desert and wandered there for 40 years, as we know. It was called the wilderness of sin. There was nothing in that desert place, nothing in that wilderness, that sustained them. There was no water, there was no food. God supernaturally brought what they needed. He gave them water out of the rock. He brought the quail and the manna from heaven so they had food to eat.

That is such a beautiful picture of your life and my life. If you are saved this morning, you are living in the wilderness of sin. This world has nothing for you. You may think, through the illusion of it all, that the world will satisfy you. You will think that the things you do, the parties you go to, the topics you associate yourself with, will truly have the answers to make you happy. That is an illusion. What happens is that you are going to find out, if you get God's wisdom and understanding, that the only thing that is going to sustain you and me in this wilderness of sin is what God gives us supernaturally: what God brings and gives us through the Word of God, through the Holy Spirit of God, through this church, through the men and women that you line up with to be partners with and to help each other through life.

In our story back here, they did not know where they were going. They were in a very hostile world, and they had a direction that God wanted them to go, much like you and me. But they did not know where to go. They did not know when to stop, when to start. They had decisions they had to make about their journey in life, just like you and I have decisions about our journeys in life. So what did God do? God gave them a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. That cloud and that pillar were right over the tabernacle. That tabernacle was the source of their relationship with God. That fire and that cloud are a picture of two aspects of God's Word. We talk about the fear of the Lord; that cloud and fire explain what that is. The cloud represents the second coming of Christ because when He comes back, He is coming back in a cloud. The fire represents the judgment of God because God came down and judges through the fire, not only at the judgment seat of Christ but also at the second coming of Christ. So those two elements, the fire and the cloud, represented for them the very essence of what God was. It was right over the tabernacle. Without the tabernacle, they had no relationship with God. Without your Bible in your hand today, you will have no relationship with God. That cloud and that fire are a picture of the Holy Spirit of God leading and guiding you everywhere through life.

When it stayed over the tabernacle and did not move, they stayed put. No one came out and said, "The cloud is still there last night or this morning, and the fire is there. It looks like it is going to be there all day. But I am anxious to get going. Let's just pick up that tabernacle and go." That is not what they did. They waited until God moved, and then they followed the moving of the Holy Spirit of God through the fire and the cloud. Do you know what gets us in trouble? When we do not have a relationship with the Holy Spirit of God for Him to lead us, and when He is telling us

to stay because we do not have the principles, we want to move and do something when God wants us to stay put. When it did finally move, and that cloud and the fire went, they followed it.

For 40 years, they followed that cloud by day and the fire by night, and it led them everywhere that God wanted them to go and finally got them to the promised land. Now, the promised land, many times in most preachers' mindsets because of their limited understanding, they think the promised land is heaven. I understand when we get to heaven, it is going to be grapes the size of basketballs and all that stuff, I guess. But the bottom line is this: the promised land does not represent heaven. The promised land represents the place in your Christian life where you finally cross over Jordan, and now you live by the promises of God. You still have enemies in your life. You still have adversity in your life, but you now live above the circumstances, and you have crossed over from the wilderness of sin into the land of promise where you live now simply by the promises that God gave you.

That cloud led them by day and the fire led them by night. For 40 years, God led them.

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

That cloud and that fire told them when to go. It told them when not to go. It told them where to go, and it told them not where to go. God's leading of your life and my life is through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit of God through our wilderness of sin. There are stories like that throughout the whole Bible. That is a great illustration, a great picture of what we have been talking about: a fool who will follow his conscience, follow his heart, follow his basic instinct, and a wise man who knows now that his heart is desperately wicked and it is against everything that God wants. I have to replace that with God's heart and then follow the leading by the cloud by day and the fire by night, the Word of God.

III. Adversity: A Normal Part of the Christian Life

Today, I want to give you another great principle of life. It will be, in itself, one of the greatest witness tools. You remember last week when I talked about the nine characteristics of a wise man? One of them was that he won souls. "The fruit of the righteous is as a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." That was last week. What I want to talk about today, you probably would not think of it like this, but when you get a little understanding, a little time under your belt as a child of God, you will see that this will be a witness to the world that your life really has changed.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6:19:

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

What I am going to talk about today is probably one of the greatest tools that God can use in your life and my life to actually show the people out there that you are who you say you are. You are really a new creature in Christ Jesus, and truly the old things are passed away.

We want to look today at Proverbs 24:10. It says:

If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

The child of God with the wisdom and understanding of God will never get caught off guard. There are very few times in your life that you will get blindsided by stuff. They will know that adversity, trials, and temptation are just the normal part of the Christian life. There are two great men in the Bible that you can study that illustrate this, and they really go together. If you want to understand your walk with God and your relationship with God, then you want to study the Apostle John. If you want to study the ministry that God has given you and what God has called you to do, then you are going to study the life of Paul. These two men will give you a blending of both aspects of the Christian life. They are the greatest examples of where you and I should be. We will understand that adversity and trials and temptations are part of our walk with God.

I tried to get this across to the kids at camp, and I hope I succeeded, because, as you know, when I said last week when we came back from camp, the devil tried to undo everything that we did. We need to pray for a young lady in St. Louis that came to camp. She overdosed on prescription drugs just last week, and she is in the hospital. We do not know how she is going to come out of it, but we need to pray for her. I am telling you, we think that it is great when you are at camp. You have counselors, you do not go outside, there are guard dogs and rifle towers everywhere that will shoot you if you cross over the white line. You are safe there. But the night you have to come out on Thursday night and go back to this world, I bet there were some kids that went home for 10 minutes, and the phone rang, and somebody wanted them to go out and do this or do that. I bet it was not a day that almost everybody was faced with adversity. A lot of times they are good kids, and they came back, and they really want to serve God. They are not looking to come back and get into the world. They really, in their hearts and their minds, want to make a difference this time. I am telling you right now, kids, and I am telling moms and dads in your own Christian life, adversity coming to you in life is just part of the Christian life.

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

It is not enough that you just believe on Him. After you believe on Him, now you enter into a Christian life that is going to have suffering with it. Adversity will come into all of our lives.

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Oh, we like the power of His resurrection. We like the fact of knowing Him, but we do not care much for the fellowship of His suffering. Yet I want to tell you, it is not just knowing Him and the power that you get when you get saved that conforms you unto His death. It is also being in fellowship with the suffering that He went through. God's people do not want to hear that.

When the Charismatic Movement was born around 1900, you will find that it starts with a woman out in Los Angeles, California, after the Azusa Street Mission. Her name was Aimee Semple McPherson, and she started the Charismatic Movement. Now, if you are a Charismatic and you are listening to this, I am just going to say before we go any farther, you are a fool. You

are a fool to be in an organization or a religion, a cult, that was once started by a woman and did not start until 1900. You see, the problem you have got is you have got 1900 years of church history where nobody ever believed what you believed. Suddenly, a woman who had run off with a song leader, left her husband, she comes up with this idea of the Charismatic Movement today. A little bit later on, it moves into the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. It gets picked up in Charles Parham's Bethel Bible College there in Topeka, Kansas, and voila, what you have.

We talked about a couple of months ago, or maybe a month ago, we talked about the fallacy of the Episcopalian church, how they went through this great pomp and circumstance. But when you peel back the layers, the Episcopal Church, the Church of England, started because Henry VIII wanted a divorced wife who was Catholic, and the Pope would not give it to him, so he left the Catholic Church and started his own church so he could marry the love of his life. That is how your church started. Do you know how my church started? My Savior dying on the cross for me. That is a contrast for you.

Do you know how the Charismatic Movement started? Oh, I know, you are so spiritual. I get it. Do you know how it started? It started because some woman got the vision and understanding, and for 1900 years nobody even remotely believed what you believed, but you are okay with that. It is because you are a fool. I say that with love and grace, in Jesus' name. It is just that simple.

It brought with it the idea when it came into being. It brought in the idea that if something good happens to you, it is of God, and if something bad happens to you, it is of the devil. That is how they live their world. If something bad happens to me, that is of the devil, and if something good happens to you, then that is of God. There was a book out a while back, and I read it, and for what it was worth, it said, in some cases, it is a blessing to read 600 words a minute because you can get through it faster and you do not have to mess with it. But anyway, the book was called *Why Bad Things Happen to Good People*. The guy that wrote it wrote it like he really believed what he was saying. He actually wrote it like he had some kind of authority behind what he was saying. He was passionate about it. The first thing that came to my mind, if you are a wise man, will be Romans 8:28, that says:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

According to the Bible, there are not good things that happen to people that are God, and bad things that happen to the devil. The Bible says all things work together for good. God will allow adversity to come into your life. We are so far removed from the Bible today that we just do not get that. Our verse says here, if we faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.

Now I want to say this: it is the adversity in our lives that God will take and strengthen you. Nobody ever got strong. Nobody ever got healthy. Nobody ever became a big-time wrestler by eating marshmallows, Big Macs, and Ho-Hos, lying on the couch, playing video games, and watching television. Arnold Schwarzenegger, when he was at his peak, was Mr. Universe five times running. You should see this guy's body; it was incredible. Do you know how he got there?

He got there by eating things like wheat germ. He got there by eating stuff that would make a billy goat puke. He got there by eating stuff that, when you go to these oriental shops, who knows what you are getting. You mix this stuff up, and you eat it. It builds muscle and builds protein, and he looked like a million dollars. But he did not get there because he was lying around all day long on the couch watching his favorite soap operas and eating Twinkies and all the things that go along with life. No, no, no. He had to, as the T-shirt says, "no pain, no gain." He had to go through some adversity of building that body the way he had it. I am telling you, the thing that is missing in God's people's lives today is adversity.

You contrast Christianity from 500 to 1500 and the adversity that they went through for the Word of God, and then you contrast it to 1900 to 2018 of what we have today. We have a bunch of marshmallow Christians that could not stand for anything. Our suffering and our adversity and our trials and all that we suffer with, the outcome will simply be based on our relationship with the Word of God. We have today where God's people cannot face adversity. They have been brainwashed that anything that happens, you come home from work, and your wife says, "Oh, you look terrible. What happened?" "Oh, the computers were down, and we all had to think. Oh, what a terrible day it was." That is where we are today.

The adversity, when you go through the Book of Romans and you look at Paul's life, you see the things that he listed: being beaten and whipped and shipwrecked and all the things. He said they were light afflictions. They were compared to the suffering of Christ on the cross. Do you know what is wrong with you and me? We do not have any comparison of our suffering. We do not have any comparison of what He did on the cross when He died and suffered for us. So you get a hang now, and you think you are going through the tribulation period.

IV. God is the God of the Valleys and the Mountain Tops

Let me give you another great principle in the Old Testament. This one is really a good one, found in 1 Kings 20:28. This is something that will help some of you. My father in the Lord, Mel Sabaka, used to have a saying: people get excited about good things, and then they get down in the dumps about bad things. You have the valleys of life and the mountain peaks of life. We have all seen this. They say, "mountain top to mountain top," mountain top being spiritually on top of things, you have to go through the valley to get to the next mountain top. Mel used to say, "I am not up and I am not down. I just stay even. I just stay even." Do you know how he can say that? The passage is like this. Let me read it for you. It is incredible.

And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is the God of the hills, but he is not the God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Do you know what he is saying? He said, "God is God of the valleys, and God is God of the mountain tops. He is the same God." You do not have to think, "Well, I am going through a valley of life. Where is God?" I will tell you, He is right there. You missed Him. The same God that is on the mountain peak when everything is fine is the same God that brings you through the

adversity when everything is not fine. That is an incredible principle. God will be there with you through the mountain tops, the hilltops of life, and the valleys of life.

Over in Egypt, they have a place where all the kings and the pharaohs were buried. It is called the Valley of the Kings. This is where all the tombs are of all the kings that were kings of Egypt. It is a burial place for all of them, and they are all dead. We know that Egypt is a type of the world. You see, when you are an unsaved man, then you have to go through the Valley of the Kings with everybody else who is dead. When you become a child of God and you get God's wisdom and understanding, you realize that our God, who is the King, will take us through the Valley of the shadow of death, and He will never die, and they are never going to die. You do not have to go through the dead Valley of the King because you go through the Valley with the King.

When I build you, and we have talked about this over the last couple of weeks, I do not mass produce Christians. I know most churches do. I know most Bible colleges. We used to have a standard joke that every kid that came out of Bible college, this was back in the 80s and the 90s, every kid that came out of Bible college, they looked the same. They had a three-piece gray suit, white shirt, and a red tie. I actually believe that they had a little assembly line that they dressed them as they went out the last year of their things, spray painted them, and put them out. They used to have singing groups that would go around, and they would want to come to churches. Obviously, the reason that they want to go to churches is they want to recruit young people like you to come to their college. It is a promotional thing, and it is all canned. You will have these nice, sharp, clean-cut men and women, young kids, college kids, really looking good. They get up there and they sing really well, and it is all fake. They will get up there, and they will do probably every week, they will do a church, maybe two churches a week. It is the same format. They will stand up there and they will sing. They will all look up there and hold the mic. They will look up like they are looking at God, like God is looking at them. They will give a little theatrics. They want to change mood. They will change mics, and they will look this way now. When a guy comes up and sings, and he wants to be on the spot, he gets that relaxed look. He steps up, puts his hand in his pocket, and he sings to you, kind of bent over just like Bubba, just like this a little bit. It is incredible. They will have a testimony, and a girl will come up, and she will start to give her testimony, and it will be how she got saved and how she did this or that. Then she will cry. The next week she does it, she cries at the same spot. They have a guy in the back who drives the bus and holds up a sign, "Cry now." It is all canned. They just turn them out on an assembly line. Little guys that know how to dress, how to talk, how to sing, but they could not stand up to adversity if their life depended on it. I am not interested in building Christians that way.

When I build you, I build you like they used to build cars back in the 1950s. You go in and buy a car now; there are what, 500 cars in a lot. You find what you want because they all have the same thing. But back in my day in the 50s, I remember my dad bought his first brand new car, a 1955 Pontiac. My dad was a Pontiac man. He kept that, and then he bought a 1960 Pontiac. I remember when he went in to buy the 1960 Pontiac, you had to wait back then two months to get your car. You told them what you wanted. They sent it off to Detroit or wherever it was, and for the next two months, they built your car to your specification. It was not like you walked in and

just got one fully loaded. Now you can walk in and get one that does not have anything on it. You get one that has everything on it, or you get something that has a few things on it. Back then, you could tell them what you want. "I want white. I want this. I want that." We did not have air conditioning back then; that was unheard of. Then, about eight weeks later, that big old truck, you would get a phone call, "Your car is in." We would all be so excited. We would go get the car. Back then, a 1960 Pontiac looked like the Titanic. It was a boat. We would get in it and wind the windows down. I remember the guy saying, Bill Willis was his name, "Now Frank," that was my dad's name, "Now you drive it, and then you let it sit for a while. It probably will not start for about an hour until the engine kind of, it has got to work its way in." Those were handmade cars. Today, it has already got probably a thousand miles on it when you get it. It has run around all over the place. Nothing wrong with that. But I am saying, back in the day, when you bought a car, it was put together, fitting your needs.

That is the way I build Christians. Every one of you has special needs. Every one of you has special gifts. Every one of you has something special to offer. There is no way that I could, or any church could, ever give you everything that God wanted you to have by just looking at you and mass producing everything for you. You all have special gifts and things that God wants to do with you. Each one of you is different. You have different gifts and different needs. My job is to see what they are and then build the specifications to what God made you to be. I want to build you to be able to stand for adversity. I want to give you a lot of things. I want you to learn the Bible. I want you to be able to understand what is going on in your world. But I will tell you, one of the major things that I want you to do that is missing today in God's people's life is I want you to be able to stand in adversity because it is going to knock you off before you ever get started.

Doctrinally, all this stuff we are reading here, just so you have an understanding, all this stuff that we are reading here is called in the Bible, Jacob's Time of Trouble. It is all about the Jew and the tribulation period. Everything we are talking about today and next week, and last week too. But inspirationally, where doctrinally it may be Jacob's Time of Trouble, inspirationally it is Bob's Time of Trouble. That is what we are going to go through in adversity. I want men and women who are tough. You do not find that much today. I want somebody that is, when the world or Christianity knocks on your door and somebody tries to, when the adversity comes, that you are man enough or woman enough to stand up to them. We have people in this church that are like that. We have some men that are incredibly tough. I want to tell you, we have some ladies here that are like the roughest truck drivers that have been going on the road for about 40 years. You look wonderful, you look beautiful, and you look like the cascading water of a beautiful waterfall. But brother, you can nail somebody if you need to.

Charles called me yesterday. He was someplace that he bumped into a guy who knew me. The guy said, I do not remember his name, even when Charles told me, I did not remember him. But it was years ago, and he was under my ministry, I guess. Now he had gotten to the place where, as he told Charles, that he sat under me and Ruckman and all that stuff. Now he has got the true light of the Word of God and how that we are the true Israel, the true Jews. "Bob was all wrong, and Ruckman was all wrong. Bob is arrogant, Bob is this, Bob is that." Bob can be a little

arrogant at times, but it is part of my charm. Just bear with me. He went on and on and on. Most of God's people, do you know what they would have done? They would have just said, "Well, I do not know." Do what Charles did. Charles said, "Let's get him on the phone. Why do not you tell him how arrogant you think he is? I will tell you what, I guess you have the truth now, him and Ruckman are wrong. I will tell you what, I guess you would be okay with coming on Thursday night in our question and answer and putting it out there and let him defend what he taught you all those years, right?" He says, "No, I do not really want to do that." "No, I guess you do not. Well, I do not want to really fight about those things." "We are not going to fight. We are just going to bury you. We are not going to fight. There is no fight to it. A fight is when it goes for five, 15, 20 minutes, and two people are knocking it out. This will be a one-round knockout, I promise you." People like that, I appreciate that. Not because it was me, but for anything. I appreciate somebody that holds somebody accountable. You do not just put your tail between your legs and say, "Well, I do not like confrontation. I do not like adversity." Well, I do not like confrontation either, and I do not like adversity, but it is part of your life, and you better be able to stand up to it.

I am telling you, I want men and women who are tough. Let me tell you something. If I met somebody and I talked to them, and they said to me, "I do not believe that anymore, and all this stuff, and you are wrong, and you are this, and you are that." And I said, "Why do not you come to Bible study? We have a group of 5,000 people there, 10,000 people there, four people there, 20,000 people. Why do not you come over there, and we will..." I would be there with bells on, baby. I would get an Uber driver, get a tuxedo on, and show up in style. I would be there. Do not give me that opportunity when I know you are teaching heresy. But I want men and women like that. I want you to be able to stand through adversity. People are going to question what you believe. They are going to make fun of you because of the Bible that you believe. The very Bible that saved you. The Bible that puts your family together. That brought your kids back into your family. The very book that God gave you, they are going to make fun of you for having it, and you are just going to put your tail between your legs. Face adversity and take a stand to get the job done.

I want men and women who are running into a burning building when everybody else is running out. When a situation is so volatile, and everybody says, "I cannot deal with this. I am getting out of here." When they are running out, I want my men and women running in with a book. The real heroes of 9/11, to me, were the first responders. I have read story after story after story how hundreds of firemen and policemen lost their lives. Brave heroes. People were trying to get out. They actually said that people were, the only way they could get out was through the stairwells, and people were flooding down the stairwells, and they were in a panic, and they were crying, and they were hurting, and they were trying to get out as fast as they could. While they were trying to run out, the firemen and the policemen were going up. That is the kind of Christians that I want. That is the kind of Christianity we need to be. The real heroes of 9/11 were the first responders. Today, the real heroes of Bible-believing Christianity will be the first responders. The ones that will go in when nobody else will. The ones that will take a stand when nobody else will. The one who will face adversity when everybody else's strength is small.

V. Job: The Ultimate Example of Adversity

Now, nowhere in the Bible is this laid out better than the book of Job. I want you to turn over to the book of Job for a moment here. I want to talk to you for just a few minutes. Our verse says that when adversity comes, we will fail because our strength is small. Now Job stands in stark contrast to every charismatic that ever lived. The problem is, the charismatic do not read the Bible, so they would never know Job. They think it probably means "job," and it is a place you look to get a job. But Job experienced adversity like no other man in the history of the world. The very name Job means "one persecuted."

Job loses in seven days, or goes through in seven days. He loses everything in two days. But he loses in seven days' time what you and I will never lose in a lifetime. In Job chapter 1, you begin to read it, and it says that he had a very great household. The Bible says that he had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 1,000 oxen, 500 she asses. All in one fell swoop, he loses his house. He loses, he has seven sons and three daughters. They are having a party at some place, and a storm comes in and falls down on them and kills all ten of them. He loses his family. He loses his assets. He loses every part of his wealth. They come and take his servants. Everything that he has, physically speaking, is taken away from him just like that. You and I may go through some adversity. You may lose a loved one. You may go through financial ruin. You may go through this or that. Nobody in the history of the world will lose in the time frame that he lost what he lost, all that he lost.

If that was not enough, we get to Job chapter 2. In chapter 2, he gets a terrible disease. Boils break out over his body, the most painful things that you can ever go under. The Bible says that he is sitting in an ash heap. The ash heap is the remnants of his house and everything that he had. Do you know what that is a picture of? That is a picture of you losing everything, getting a terminal disease, and then sitting in the ashes of everything that you have, not only going through what you are going through but looking around and seeing that everything that you knew in the world has now been taken from you. The Bible says he is scraping the pus off of his boils with a piece of pottery from his house, probably from his dishes or whatever. When you begin to look at this story, you begin to see how all of this. Now I can see what a charismatic would do with that. I can see how a charismatic would take that and how a guy could write a book, but you do not understand what you are reading.

All this disaster, Job chapter 1 and chapter 2 and the whole book of Job, it was by design. In Job chapter 1 and chapter 2, it is not just the devil involved here; God is involved here. If you do not have this marked in your Bible, you know about the law of first mention. The first time you find something in the Bible that is significant, it usually sets the theme for it. In Job 1:8, this is the first time you find the word Satan in the Bible. He has been called a lot of things up to now, but he has never been called Satan yet. God waited to put him in here as Satan. He waited until Job 1:8 to put him in and call him Satan because the word Satan means adversary. Job, like you and I, is going to go through an adversity with an adversary.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

What I want you to see is that when your faith and your strength are small and weak, we miss a tremendous opportunity because there will never be an adversity that you go through in your life that will just be the devil doing it. God will always be involved with it.

Now, Job is a good guy here. He is definitely a good guy. The Bible says that he fears God in Job chapter 1, and he eschews evil. "Eschew" is an old English word; it means that he shuns it away. You find that he is offering sacrifices for himself and his kids. Moses is not even born yet. This is Abraham's time. There is no requirement for sacrifices. There is no law yet. He has read in the Bible, and his relationship with God. He has now known what Abel and Adam did about offering sacrifices, and he is smart enough to put it together, and he said, "If it worked for them, it will work for me." Without any law, without any commandment, without any Old Testament structure, he is offering sacrifices. The Bible says that he is perfect and he is upright. He experiences adversity on a scale that is unknown to you and me and unparalleled. Yet, I want to tell you, there is a great principle coming here in just a few minutes, so hang on.

He has no church. You have a church. In the New Testament, God's program was a church. In the Old Testament, after the law, it was the nation of Israel. He does not have either one of those. He has no church. I will tell you something else. He has no pastor. He cannot call his pastor up on the phone and say, "I need your help. I am struggling with this." He does not have a Christian psychologist to go to to help him go through all the trauma of what he has lost. He does not have a Christian therapist that he can go to and sit down and lay on the couch and express his feelings and his moods and what he is going through. He does not have any of that. He does not have any Christian TV. He cannot get Joel Osteen. No radio. He does not have any support team. He does not have a prayer group that he goes to on Sunday morning that he can lay out everything that he is doing. He does not even have a hymnal that he can sing the songs. He does not have a website that he can get on and listen to sermons. Most importantly, he does not have a Bible. He has a wife. What a great helpmeet she was. Her best advice is "curse God and die." Then the only friends that he seems to have are the three amigos that show up here. They come up and they start to falsely accuse him. When you are doing right and you are going through something, the last thing you need is Dr. Fine, Dr. Howard, Dr. Fine. They will come in and start telling you that what you are going through is because you are not right with God when you know you have done everything that God wants you to do, and you are struggling with what you have lost. There is no compassion with these guys. There is no consoling. All it is is sheer unadulterated clobbering him, one thing after the other. It is hard enough to defend yourself sometimes when you are feeling good. Try it when you have really lost everything, and you have this terminal disease that is rocking your body from one end to the other, and then you have to have your sharp focus. It is impossible. Job is going through some things.

He has no church. He has no pastor. He has no Christian TV. He has no support team. No prayer group. He has no Bible. But here it comes. All he has is God and his relationship with God. I want to tell you something: your relationship with God says it all about you. Sometimes we hide behind the Bible. We hide behind the church. We hide behind how loud we sing. I said loud, not lousy. We hide behind that too. We hide behind getting into a prayer group. We hide behind lots of things as God's people. But I will tell you what. Strip all those things away. Take them from

you. At the end of the day, the only thing that is going to get you through the adversity of your life is what you have taken the time to build in your personal relationship with God. Do you know why? Because God is enough. If that book teaches me anything, it teaches me that if I lose it all, if they take my Bible, take my hymn book, throw me into jail someplace, and I never see the light of day, no friend, no nothing, I am going to tell you God is enough. Amen. There are two aspects to Christianity: there is outwardly what we project to everybody, and there is inwardly a real relationship with God, and many times they do not really line up. In your life and in my life, God should be enough for us to stay strong and face adversity.

VI. Self-Examination and the God Test

There are a number of tests in the Bible that you and I can take, should take. The Bible is a great book. The Bible is a textbook on life and everything. It also says in 2 Corinthians 13:5 that we are to examine ourselves. Self-examination is really a good thing for a Christian.

Now let me just say this. If you have been in this church for a year or less, I am not talking to you. I know that many of you come in from places, and you are moving right along, and you are growing, and you are doing well. So what I am about to say, I am not aiming at you. If you are a visitor here today, I am not aiming at you. But if you have been in this church and you have been saved for a long time, say three, four, five, six years, and we all talk about, I have never, I mean very few people when you start to talk to them will tell you, "Yeah, I do not have a relationship with God." If you would ask the average Christian, "How is your relationship with God?" "Oh, it is great, it is great. I am having a good time. Oh, I am saved, I have a great relationship with God." That is an illusion. That is somebody that in most cases has never examined themselves.

There is a test in the Bible that you can give yourself to see how you are growing spiritually. There is a test you can take. It is 100% accurate. It will ask you six questions, and when you answer those six questions one way or the other, you know where you are at in your spiritual growth. Then there is what I call the God test. Somebody says, "Well, I, me and God have a great relationship. Oh, I love God." You get up and you sing this great melodious song, like those people in those Bible colleges, and you sit there and you think, "Wow." Because you can hide behind singing. A great voice does not mean a great relationship with God. Talk to Frank Sinatra. You can use your Bible on these; I would encourage you to. In the Bible, there are seven things that God loves. Do you know what those are? It is not a trick test where you have got to memorize them. The Bible says there are seven things that God hates. The Bible says there are seven things that God rejoices over. The Bible says there are seven things that please God. The Bible says that there are seven things that the Word of God does for you. The Bible says there are seven things that the Holy Spirit of God does for you. The Bible says there are seven things that a Christian has to prove. You are going to tell me you have a relationship with God, but you do not even know what He loves and what He hates. What makes Him happy. How do you know what is making you happy is what makes Him happy? How do you know what you are loving is what He hates, and what He hates is what you are loving? It is all an illusion. "Oh, I have a great relationship with God," based on what?

Do you know why people do not like me? Let us talk about it for a moment. I will just be honest with you. I know that people do not like me, and I understand why. Do you know why they do not like me? Because I will not let them live in that illusion world that they live in. People come to church here; they will last a week. Sometimes they will last half the service. They have the worst case of diarrhea; they have got to go, but they have got to go home to go to the bathroom. I get it. My style of preaching does not placate people. I am not sure what "placate" means, but I heard somebody use it one time as a big-time preacher, and I thought it was pretty powerful. That book is plain. When you get out of fellowship with God, and you do not do what is right, and you need to get right with God, you do not have to flower up the prayer. You do not have to tell God of the flowers and all this stuff. When you have got to get right with God, you just talk real plain to Him. Do you know why? Because it is already plain to Him. My style of preaching goes right to where the heartbeat is. That is all I know to do. I am not the kind of guy that is just going to get up here and just pretend that you can have a great relationship with God and not know anything about God. There are some things. "If any man loved God, the same is known of him." Real love will always identify itself with the object. You young Christians, do not worry about this. That needs to be your goal in life. You are here now. Learn. Get these things. I know most of you have those in your Bible, but I am telling you, people do not want to be away. I am the cold bucket of water in your face. You are in a dream world. "Oh, yeah, I love God. God loves me. Oh, yeah, yeah. Oh, I will go to church with you in the morning. I like churches. Churches are really nice. Oh, yeah, I love God." I would like to sit down there. Danny is done singing. I would get up, pick up my bucket of water. "Whoa. Got to get out of here."

Let me put it into a perspective for you. Let me put it into a context. We go through our little trials and troubles mostly because of our own disobedience to God, not for our stand. But I will give you that. In the face of that little adversity compared to the Bible, we fail. We quit. We get mad. We whine and we complain. I have seen people who have sicknesses and diseases that were ongoing, and they never saw God getting the honor and glory out of it. All they saw was their whining and complaining. I have a guy sitting outside that door today that I love with all my heart who has terminal cancer, and he would not miss a church service. He throws up before he gets here. He throws up when he goes home. He is going through chemo. He is out on the street ministry when it is 100 degrees in the temperature. In the face of adversity. When Job went through what he went through, and we contrasted that to our light affliction, all we could do was whine and complain and make excuses. While we do not serve God, I have very little, I have very little. I have a guy over here that is blind who cannot see, he cannot drive, on foggy nights, he cannot see, he cannot drive, that he is out on that street every time. I have seen people that God gave two good eyes. You had razor sharp vision, and you will not do anything for God. You are always complaining about your light affliction. We are always complaining about your sickness, or your disease, or whatever you have.

Job goes through everything that he goes through, which is a thousand times worse than what you and I will ever go through.

In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Our problem today with adversity, adversity that God could use in somebody else's life, our strength is small, we are weak. It goes back to whatever we want to say, or whatever illusion you want to live in, that verse stands as absolute, infallible truth. We have no relationship with God because God is enough.

After all that he went through, in the middle of sitting on that ash heap with his three friends, just beating him and beating him and beating him, in Job 13:15, he looks up through the tears, he looks up through the tragedy, he looks up through the adversity, and he says:

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:

All he had was God. Look what we have. We have Christ in you, the hope of glory. He did not. You have the perfect and complete Word of God on your lap this morning. He did not. You have a church, a support group, you have a prayer group, you have everything going for you. He did not. You have a pastor you can call. You have people that you can rely on. He did not. With all that we have, we still cannot stand and face adversity. Do you know why? Because that stuff scraped away, that stuff taken away, that stuff all out of our world comes down to one thing: your personal relationship with God this morning. Is He enough?

VII. What Comes Out When You Are Squeezed

Now there are some things you want to remember here. You need to see this. Somebody says, "All the bad things in life are of the devil, and all the good things in life are of God." Really? In Job 1:8, it was God that brought Job's name up. It was not the devil. The devil did not come in and say, "I am going to vex Job today, and you are not going to do anything about it." He came in, and the Lord says, "Where have you been?" The devil says, "Oh, I have been walking up and down and checking things out down there." He says, "Have you? How are things going?" "Oh, pretty good." God said, "Have you considered my servant Job?" I wonder what we will do in a day in heaven when the devil walks in, and God has something He wants to do through you and me. He says, "Have you considered my servant Bob?" Your name is on the short list someplace. The devil said, "Yeah, he is not much." God said, "Well, he loves me, and he does what is right even when he does not have to."

Then we see the next thing. If you just came and got this today and just leave with just getting this, this is worth coming for today. When the devil comes after you and me, I want you to notice Job 1:9: the devil will always attack your motive of why you did what you did. He will not attack what you did. He did not attack Job on doing what was right. He attacked Job on the motive behind what Job did that was right. He said, "Why should not he? You have given him everything. You take away all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." When the devil attacks at the judgment seat, which is a great principle for the judgment seat of Christ, it will not be about what you did or what you did not do. When the devil is going to nail you, and you go through adversity, it is not going to be about what you do or what you do not do. He is going to attack the motive by which you do what you do because motive is everything. Do you know what motive is? Attitude of heart. He said, "Take all of it away, and he will curse you to his face," just like God's people do today. You do not get your way in your health issue. You do not

get your instant healing. You do not get your way in your business or this or that. You get mad at God. "Why, God, why are you putting me through this? Why am I going through this suffering? Why am I going through this?" Why not you? How about a good contrast? All that He went through on the cross, and you cannot bear a light affliction for Him and maybe let Him get the honor and glory out of it for somebody else? Why, you selfish individual, you?

I will tell you another thing. The day of adversity will come to all of us.

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

You will not escape it. You may fail, and you may fall, and you may be weak in your strength, but it is coming your way. What I try to do here, what we try to do here at Thursday night, Sunday morning, and all that we do one on one with everybody else, is try to prepare you for it. I will get you to see it and understand that it is coming.

Now I will tell you the next thing. When adversity comes into your life, and you go through something, there will be people watching you to see if you handle it the way you really think a Christian ought to handle it.

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

There is always somebody watching your life. You claim to be a Christian. You claim to be a child of God, and now you let what you have take you out of what God wants to do in your life. You do not let God use what you have got. You do not let God take the adversity that you are going through, no matter what it may be, and know you may be going through it, and it may be tough. I understand. I get it. But people are going to watch your life. They see the world fold up. They see the world curse God and die. They see the world do all of that stuff, and most of the time, that is what they see in God's people's lives because our strength is small. We do not have any strength. Somebody is always watching our lives.

I will tell you the next thing. The real proof of your life in Christ will not be when you are feeling better. "Oh, I am feeling better today. I am back on top of things." Really? You need to learn how to be on top of things when you do not feel well. But that takes a relationship with God. The real proof of your life in Christ will not be when all is well, when you are doing good, but when your world is falling apart around you.

Most of you do not know who this guy was, and I have told this story before, but I ought to tell it every six months just to never forget it. Years ago, I heard a guy by the name of Manly Beasley. Manly Beasley was a really good preacher. He was not loud. He was not dynamic like you think of preaching. He had four or five terminal diseases at the same time. He is dead now. When he got up to preach in the pulpit, he looked like he was already dead. He was ashen color. He was not in good health. He was very slow moving. When he preached, he had to go back to his room; he did not get to go out to eat. He had to lay back down. He was in bad shape. But he had some of the greatest pearls of wisdom that he had learned going through his adversity. This guy had four terminal diseases that were racking his body, and yet he preached almost two or three times a week. We get somebody that has just some issue in their life, whatever, and it throws you out of

everything that you are doing for God because you just cannot do it. Talk to Manly Beasley when you get to heaven, will you?

He said one time, and I never forgot this. It is so true. He was great at stating the obvious in a way that was right in front of you, but you just never saw it, and then bringing the spiritual application back. He was talking about God meeting your needs. This is different. He was talking about God meeting your needs. He asked a question. He said, "When God created everything, what did He create first? Did He create air or did He create lungs?" Everybody said, "Well, He created air." Then when He made Adam, Adam had lungs. He said, "That is my point. Before Adam had a need, God created the air." He said, "Before you have a need in your life, God has already created what He needs to have to fix it." That is deep. So simple, but that was him.

He said one time he was speaking, and he says, "Let me ask you a question. What do you get when you squeeze a lemon?" A lady down front raised her hand. She says, "Lemon juice." Like she was going to get an award for that. He said, "Lemon juice." Then he told her story. He said, "That is not true." He says, "Back home in Atlanta where he was from, we had a case here last year where somebody was going into the grocery store, and with a hypodermic needle, was injecting a poison in the lemon. Once they did it, you could not see where it was, and everything. Six, seven people had died. People were buying the lemon, going home, and making lemonade, drinking, and dying." He said, "So I asked the question, 'What do you get when you squeeze a lemon?' and you say lemon juice because that is what you should get. But the truth of the matter is, when you squeeze a lemon, what is really on the inside comes out." He says, "When a Christian gets squeezed, what is really on the inside comes out." That is so profound. It is not about when everything is going good in your life. It is about when everything is falling apart. When you are squeezed, what really comes out? Christian juice or your juice? Our text today says, Proverbs 24:10, "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." And Job 2:10, in the book of Job, they go hand in hand.

VIII. Five Great Truths About Adversity

Doctrinally, as I said, they are both pictures of the Jew and the tribulation. But for me and you, in a practical way, it will always go along with Proverbs 24:10. It lays out five great truths that I want to leave you with today.

1. God alone will be enough for you.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

There are three main areas of Christianity: the Bible, music, and preaching. Modern-day Christianity has failed in so many ways. But the number one way that it has is that they have tried to bring God down to man's level. The three aspects of Christianity: the Bible, they say that you can understand English language in its most perfect form. So they want to put a degraded language in it and bring the Bible down to your level. If there was a perfect language out there in a time period, which English was when the King James Bible was written, the English language

had its purest form. Even Shakespeare was written during that time, and the language is called classic. It is called Elizabethan English because of the time period. You would think that if somebody wanted to be pure in their language, they would want a book that was pure in its writing. We do not. We want to bring the Bible down to man's level, so we bring it down to the gutter language that we all love and understand and how we talk. Music. Music goes through a number of stages in history. It is one of the greatest studies that you will take, four or five different periods of church history. The early period of church history was Mozart and Bach; the music glorified God. It was a great period of time. Then, as time goes on, music degenerates, and the great hymns of the faith that we have in our hymnal were all written during the Philadelphia church age when the King James Bible reigned supreme. Now look at the music in the churches now. You cannot tell us from the world. And preaching. Preaching now is not elevating the Word of God and lifting Christ up. It is bringing Christ down, that we are supposed to accept homosexuals and lesbians, and everybody is okay. It is okay to social drink. It is okay to do this. It is okay to do that. That is where it has all gone. It all comes down to the fact that this is why people fall. I am telling you, God should be enough in your life.

2. God will make you with the very things that the devil tries to break you with.

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

God will never let anybody hurt you. As long as you stay with the Word of God, stay with the truth of it, nothing or no one will ever harm you. I tell people that come to this church, they have been beaten up in churches all over the place. I tell them, "Nobody will hurt you here. Nobody will hurt you here. You may hurt yourself, but nobody here will hurt you. Nobody will beat you up. Nobody will clobber you." Your churches ought to be the safest haven for people to come to heal and to get what they need. Unfortunately, they are the most messed up places. But I am telling you, when you stay with God in the Word of God, there is no weapon that will ever be formed against you that will prosper. You may have to get a licking and a kicking from it, but at the end of the day, you will win, and they will lose. As I have said many, many, many, many, many, many times, it is not in the Bible, but it is a true statement: you sit by the river long enough, and the body of your enemy will float by if you stay with the book. I have seen some float by.

3. You will always be stronger and closer to God after the adversity than you were before the adversity.

This is true of Job.

So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

Job 42:10 says that Job got back double everything that he lost. Not only that, but there is a resurrection. He gets his kids back, and the Bible says the longevity of life, he now sees what God took for him. He now sees his family to the fourth generation. That is unheard of.

4. Sometimes God has a message for us.

He had a message for Job. Sometimes He will use the devil as the delivery boy to give us the message. We are so weak, and we are so frail, and we are so small, we get caught up with the delivery boy, and we never get the message. As a child of God, we need to know our limitations. As a Christian, I need to know the devil's limitations. As a child of God, I need to know that God has no limitations.

5. Sometimes God will allow adversity to come into our lives for somebody else's sake.

Somebody is going through exactly what you are, and you do not even know it. You are a Christian. They are struggling. They know you are struggling. So they watch and see how you handle it. Maybe God gave you what you have so when you go to the doctor's and you go on for a long time, the doctor can see how you are handling it, and you get a good chance to witness to him. Stop always whining and complaining about what your issues are. Maybe if you had the right attitude about it, you would come to the place where you would see that maybe a neighbor or maybe a friend of yours or maybe somebody that you are associated with is watching how you handle it. They are really asking themselves, "Do I really believe that Christianity is real?" Maybe the only real answer they will get is to see how you deal with it. Adversity is a tremendous witnessing tool. It is an incredible opportunity to show to others that what is really in your life is that God is enough. That you are struggling, and you are going through some tough times, and you are having some real issues and some heartache, but God is enough.

Coming up here in September, I am going to have a guy coming through town. He is going to preach. His name is Jerry Boffman. Jerry Boffman was a missionary to Canada. When I first came to Kansas City in 1976, one of the first mission trips I took was with a high school kid. Penny, were you on that trip with me? Yes. We went to St. Catharines up in Canada and did street work up there. Jerry really taught me a lot. Jerry's first wife was killed in a car accident. They were coming home from church one night. A guy coming down the other way was drunk. That car hit their car head-on and killed his wife. Jerry is remarried now and moved on with his life, but it was really a tough time for him for a long time. He told me the story. I had him preach at a retreat one time, and he and I were off someplace. I did not ask him; he just told me the story. He bawled like a baby, but it was a very meaningful time for me when he told me this. He said that he really struggled with the death of his wife, and he struggled with this guy who had killed his wife. He said that just really bothered him to the point where he said, "I was so caught up in it and so angry." He said, "I called after we were all over and everything." He said, "I went to meet this guy." He said, "I sat down with him, and I want you to know that you have taken the most precious thing out of my life with my wife, and you killed her through your drunkenness." He said, "I want you to know because of what Jesus Christ has done in my life and the difference that He has made, even though through the pain and the tears and the heartache that I am feeling, I want you to know that I love you, and I pray for you, and Jesus Christ will save your soul if you

will ask Him to." I have never forgotten that. I thought to myself, and that is why I want guys like him to come and preach.

He taught me one of the greatest lessons in winning people to Christ one time. We were going door to door knocking on doors in St. Catharines, Catholic Canada. I was with Jerry, and we were walking down here, and we were passing out literature. He was starting a church right there in the neighborhood. I am with Jerry, and there is a guy up here who is digging his bushes up with a hoe or shovel. I am thinking to myself, "No, this guy is not going to want to listen to all these guys." Do you know what Jerry did? He walked over, and he says, "Hey, have a seat there. Give me that shovel." He started digging for the guy while he was telling the guy about his church. He understood that if you want to get into somebody's world, and you want him to see what you have is real, then be real. Do not be this plastic Christian. Do not be this plastic pastor. God is enough, giving God the freedom in our lives to do whatever He wants to do to use us, and us being okay with that because of the relationship that we have with Him. Job said it, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

This is what God's wisdom and understanding will do for you. This is how when I say I want to make you better, I do not have any formula magic potion. It is giving you these principles, working with you, helping you, being there for you, taking you where you are at, discipling you, giving you what you need, giving you the ability to see all of this and to live above it. Any adversity will not go any farther than God allows it to go. In Job chapter 1, when God said, "Have you considered my servant Job?" The devil says, "Yeah, he is not much. You take all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." Do you know what God said? He said, "Okay, you can take all that he has, but you cannot touch him." The devil came down and took all that he had, but the devil could not touch his body if he stayed up all night and tried to do it. In Job chapter 2, the devil comes back, they have a similar conversation, and this time the devil says, "You touch his body, and he will curse you to your face." God says, "Okay, you can touch his body." The devil starts to go out the door, but God says, "You cannot kill him." The devil could not have killed Job if he wanted to. Do you know why? Because when God sets the limitations of your adversity, they are set. When you know that and you trust in God because of your relationship with Him, you can rest in that. The devil could never move outside those parameters.

The Bible says in Proverbs 16:4 that the devil was created for a purpose. God had a purpose for creating him. A child of God with wisdom and understanding will know that purpose. The devil's purpose and God's purpose will be one of the great contrasts of the Bible to whoever studies, seeing what the devil does and what God does. Light versus darkness, good versus evil, the world versus Christianity, the NIV versus the King James Bible, true Christianity and phony Christianity, the church of the open door, the church of the closed door, seeing and identifying what is real and what is phony. But God will use it to get the honor and glory from it through you. Whatever adversity we go through, whatever happened. I cannot think of Job without thinking that that thing happened back in Abraham's time, probably around 1900 BC. From 1900 years up this side and 1900 years up the other side of the New Testament, how God has got the honor and glory out of that event that took place so many hundreds of years ago. God will allow you to go through what we go through. He will allow me to go through with you. If we get the

right mindset about it, God will not only make you better. God will not only make you stronger. God will use it in somebody else's life, but ultimately, praise the Lord, God will get the honor and glory out of it. But too many times, we complain, we whine, and we want all the honor and glory for ourselves. "Look at me. Look what I am going through." Never one time do we say, "Yes, I am going through something, but I never compared to what He went through with me on the cross." Do you know why? Because you have no relationship. That is why. It is phony. It is an illusion. It is not real. It is unreal.

You young Christians here that are coming in here, my job is to help you get to that point. You are the best people on the planet. God does not bring zeros here. He really does not. If they do, they just pass through. That is why we have doors over here. Some of them have been out there for a year now. We are not feeding them either. They are back there. They are probably dead now. God brings the best here because I am only looking for the best. I want to take the best that you have and make you better through the Word of God and teaching you these great principles that will change your own personal life. It will change your marriage. It will change your kids. It will change your family and help you be everything. So when adversity comes, because it is going to come, you will be able to stand in the day of adversity because your strength will not be small. It will be great. But it will be based on the principles of understanding and wisdom that God has given you. You older Christians, keep on doing what you are doing. You are the rock, you are the bedrock, you are the foundation of this church. You are what makes all the pistons fire. You are what makes it work. You are what makes it happen. You are the glue that holds it all together. I am not under any illusion that it has much to do with me. It has to do with I just gave you the Word of God, you picked it up and ran with it, and God is doing what He is doing. I am just trying to hang on for the ride. It is you. Every man and woman that comes into this church that wants to be better than the average Christian, not better in the sense of superiority, better in the sense of the Word of God, knowing that you have a final authority that will change everything in your life, in your family, and in your world, giving you the right spouse, giving you the right doctrine, giving you everything that you need so you can continue on with what God has saved you and called you to do.