

I. The Vital Importance of God's Word

So far, the last couple of weeks, we were off last week because Brother Boffman was here, and he did a great job, and I appreciate him. He is a great guy, and I just think the world of him, and I was glad he and his wife could come and be part of our church service here. Up to that point, we have focused out of the Old Testament, Proverbs chapter 24. We have been really kind of looking at some things focused on those proverbs about the men who, in the Old Testament in particular, but then in the New Testament, we have made a spiritual application talking about men who want to defeat you by taking the most important possession that you have as a child of God, and that is the Bible you have. I cannot think of anything that is more important in all of this world than the Bible that God has given us.

If you took all the literature that man has written in the history of the world, you could put it in a stack that would cover the whole land mass of the United States of America, and then you could continue to stack it, and it would go out past the orbit of the moon, which is 250,000 miles. That is how much man has written in his time on Earth. If we could actually do that and we could put all that material together, I want to tell you, once you got it all in place and it was all piled up, you could take everything that man ever wrote and you could judge it in the light of one book that God wrote. That is why the Bible is so vital to you. The Bible is vital to you as an individual. The Bible is vital to you as a parent. The Bible is valuable to you as a husband and wife. It is invaluable for your children. It will change every aspect of your life.

Most people do not see the value of the Bible until their world falls apart, and that is okay to an extent. The problem with that is sometimes the world falls apart so much that the Bible cannot fix anything because you are too far gone. But the Bible is what you need, and we looked at it as the honeycomb that God brought down to man that He gave to you and me.

I think the greatest book in the Bible, if I just wanted a capsule view of the Christian life, you would not think this, but I think the greatest single book in the Bible that just kind of portrays that out is the book of Exodus. When you look at the book of Exodus, you will find that in the first seven or eight chapters, Israel is in the bondage of Egypt under a man named Pharaoh, who is a type of the devil. It is a picture of you and me when we were unsaved. Then they cry out to God, and God sent them a deliverer. In the story, the deliverer was Moses. But you know there was a day when you and I were under the shackles of Egypt? Do you realize there was a day when the Pharaoh of this old world, the devil, put us under a hot bondage? Man, your life, if you are saved this morning, how did you get saved? You cried out. And God sent you a deliverer. The Bible says that there is one greater than Moses, and that was the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Exodus 12, they come out of Egypt. How did they come out? By the blood of a lamb. They put the blood on the doorpost and on the lintel up there, the door, and He brought them out of Egypt. That is a picture of you and I putting the blood over your sins and then coming out of the world. It is an incredible thing. It was the blood of a lamb. It was a lamb that was innocent,

without spot, that was slain, much like the picture of the Lord Jesus Christ that was the Lamb of God that was slain before the foundation of the world.

Once that happens and they go on their journey, this is where the story really comes in. Almost every chapter, sometimes multiple chapters on the same event, will show you every picture of your salvation, what it needs to be. When they came out, they went through the Red Sea, and they got baptized. The next chapter talks about that they are sanctified. They are set apart from the rest of the world. Chapter by chapter, in Exodus 16, once they come out of the world, once they are on their way, once they are going through those things, in Exodus 16, He brings the manna from heaven to them. This is a picture of the Word of God. They were in the wilderness, the wilderness of sin. There was nothing, no water was there, no food was there. Nothing was there that would sustain them. It is a picture of you and me after we get saved. You may not know this for sure yet, but I want to tell you right now, if you are saved, the world cannot sustain you. You think it can, and you fool yourself into thinking it can, but in reality, you will wind up at the end of your life empty.

What did God do? Supernaturally, He brought the Word of God to them. They did not find it in a cave, but a Dead Sea. They did not find it in some dusty library that some unsaved archaeologist said, "Oh look, I found the very original words of God." No, no, God brought it right to where they were. I want to say to you this morning on the authority of the Word of God, if you have a King James Bible in your lap, you have the absolute perfect Word of God that supernaturally God brought down, preserved, and gave to you. The souls of this life want to take that from you. The souls of life want to take that away from you.

II. The Wicked Man's Attack on God's Word and Rest

We looked at Saul, and we saw how in 1 Samuel 14 and 15, doctrinally he is a picture of the Antichrist. Historically, he is the worst king that Israel ever had, but inspirationally, in a practical way, he is a picture of many pastors today. He represents men in the ministry who have, as the Bible says, a form of godliness. They absolutely have a form of godliness, but the Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:5 that they deny the very power, which is the Word of God in your life and my life.

Last time we were together, we saw how this wicked man, and we defined it as not just the Antichrist, but the Bible said there were many antichrists who take the Word of God from you. I showed you how he will attack the nation of Israel in two basic areas when we studied it last time together.

1. The first one was the land. He wanted to take the land that God had given them. That was their inheritance.
2. The second thing that he wanted to take from them was the city of Jerusalem. That was their place of rest.

Inspirationally, I told you how this all applies to you and me because these same two areas that he went after in Israel, in a physical sense, will be the exact same two areas in a practical, spiritual sense that he will try to destroy in you. The wicked man will come up against, Proverbs 24:15, he will come up against and try to take your inheritance. He will try to take your

garments. He will try to take your crown. Then he will come to the place and try to take the place of rest that will spoil you. The place of rest for the child of God is the Word of God and the church that God has given you.

III. The Church as a Place of Rest and Refuge

In 1 Samuel 22, there is a great model. Again, you would not think it would be back in 1 Samuel. You would think it would be in the Pauline epistles somewhere in the book of Acts with Antioch, the church there. But it is not. God sets these little places way out in the Bible so that when you study it, you find them. Back in 1 Samuel 22, we have David. David has got his own problems at this time. He is running from Saul. He goes down into a cave. It is called the Cave of Adullam. When all the people around heard that David was down in a cave, the Bible says that they went down to be with him. They saw that David was, they knew his relationship with God, and they wanted to be there. The Bible says in that passage that everyone that was distressed, everyone that was in debt, everyone that was discontented found their way to this cave. The Bible says it was about 400 people.

For me, that is a great model because I think that that is about the size of a church you would get before you start losing the family atmosphere and the closeness and the oneness that you can have. That is a great model. It shows that David is a great contrast as a pastor to Saul. I am going to show you that by the time we get to the end this morning. David was a man who was after God's own heart. He had his issues. But he found, when he finds that cave, everybody knew that that is where, if you were discontented and you had issues and you had problems, that is where they needed to be.

Proverbs 24:15 says, the man of sin, whether in the Old Testament or today, the people who want to take your Bible from you, this says the dwelling of the righteous and the spoiling of his resting place. In our study about Saul, Jonathan, and the honeycomb, there were two key words. If you remember, I told you those two key words were found in 1 Samuel 14:24 and then again in 1 Samuel 14:29. It was the word distressed and the word troubled. Here today, some four or five thousand years after the story back there in the Old Testament, here today is where we find God's people. God's people who ought to be living above the circumstances. God's people who ought to be done with the world. God's people who ought to be done with all of the things that wanted to destroy them. Once they get saved, they want to bring those things back into their life, thinking that it can be a counterbalance. All it does is wind up distressing us and troubling us. Here we find God's people today who have no rest in their life and have lost their inheritance.

Now I stated a couple of weeks ago how Israel never got the rest. They did for a short period of time of 40 years. But we are talking about hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years of Israel's history. We are talking about from when God brought them into the land in Joshua all the way up to where we are at today. They have never had the rest, only for 40 short years under Solomon, and then it was gone. You also see when you study the development of the nation of Israel that it was a process that God wanted to get them to His rest.

Everything we do is by design, just like the nation of Israel with God was to get them to their rest. Everything we do, everything the church should do, everything we do is a process that gets you to that rest in your Christian life.

I used to run. I ran for the cops, I ran for my parents, I ran for God, I ran for everybody. I used to be a runner. I got it back from my old airborne days, where you ran everywhere. I used to love to run. I cannot do it anymore because of my back and the surgery, but I walk now. The Bible likens Christianity to running a race. If you are any kind of runner, a long-distance runner anyhow, you learn while you are running long distance, even while you are running, you learn how to rest. You can actually discipline yourself to rest while you are running. That is what Christianity should be. We are in a race. We are never to stop that race. When you get the rest, you do not stop. You just learn within the race how to rest. I want to talk about that today. I want to try to help you. Israel never got it.

IV. The Root Cause of Restlessness: Our Way vs. God's Way

Hebrews 3:7-11

Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.

You can read that little verse right there, and I will tell you right now, the key back there to them is the same key to you of getting God's rest, the reason why they did not get it and the reason why you will not get it. Here it is: "They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways." We are just dead set on doing it our way, are we not? It does not matter how much I preach to you, Bible study, discipleship. As human beings, we are just determined that we are going to do it our way and then wonder why the rest never comes. There it is.

Hebrews 4:1

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

Now, there is a second great key. The first problem why we do not have the rest is because we want to do it our way. The second reason is because the rest is found in the promises. The rest is not found in coming to church. The rest is not found in you going back in a bookstore and buying a King James Bible, though those are two good things to do. Hey, there are lots of people who have a King James Bible who have no rest. There are lots of people who come to a good church, this church, who have no rest. The key to you getting the rest is the promises of God, ceasing doing it your way and doing it His way.

Now, God's rest for the nation of Israel was in the promises He gave them. We know that was the land that God gave them. In the Bible, the land, their inheritance, was called many things.

It was called the land of milk and honey. This is where God wants you to live today. He wants you, spiritually, to live in the land of milk and honey. You are living in the land of sour grapes and cabbage.

It is called Canaan's land. When you find that title in the Bible, that is a picture of Canaan with the Canaanites. That is a picture of you coming out and being saved where the world once belonged to Canaan, now it belonged to Israel. This world and everything in it once was against you and after you, and now God has made you the master of it through the promises of the Word of God.

It is called Beulah Land in Isaiah 62:4. Great song, "Beulah Land," great song. Somebody ought to sing that. Everybody sees that, does not know what Beulah means. They think it is some woman that was a cook for your mother or your father. No, no, Beulah means married to the Lord. The nation of Israel and the land was married to the Lord, and you and I someday are going to be married to the Lord, and you know how we get married to the Lord? Through the promises that God gave us.

And then it is called the Promised Land. It was their inheritance, but to keep the inheritance and the land, if we are getting kicked out by all the other nations who represent the world, they had to keep the promises. The reason why they got kicked out in 606 and 721 BC is because they failed to keep the promises. The reason why you and I go through the heartache we go through and lose the blessings of God and ultimately the inheritance that God has for us, but the rest that God has for you now, is the same reason: you will not keep the promises.

Proverbs 24:15 shows how the wicked man came after them and took their Bible from them to destroy them. Now there has been no rest for Israel for over 3,000 years. Many of you have had no rest in your life for 5, 10, 15, 20, 30 years, maybe more. For you and me, our promises are the spiritual side of things that are found in the Word of God. The rest that God has for us will be found in two things: getting saved and getting part of His body and making yourself part of the local New Testament church that God put into effect in the book of Acts, and then the Word of God, letting this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

V. Overcoming Fret and Finding Light

It goes without saying, and I know you know this, we are in a warfare. I also want you to know, and I know you know this is true because many of you are slugging it out with me, and I love you for that and appreciate you for that, but you know as well as I do that sometimes we get weary in the battle. We need a place to rest. The Bible talks about the renewing of your mind.

My job as a pastor is many things, but three particular areas concerning our sermon this morning and what I want to talk about, my job is a threefold job:

3. I am to prepare you for battle.
4. I am to lead you into battle.

5. I am supposed to prepare also a place for you to rest when you get weary in the battle.

Most pastors will not do that. They want to work you, they want to use you, they want everything from you, but when you burn out, and I have seen it all my life. I have seen good people go into Baptist churches where all they did was put them to work and burn them out. Then when they burn them out by never giving them anything or helping them, then when they have the audacity, when they burn them out, they blame them for being unspiritual. You will find your rest today in the place of commitment and blessings and the Word of God that God has given to you.

The church should be the safe haven for you like it was for the 400 down at the Cave of Adullam. I tell people all the time, I have told people this, I have told guys this, I have told ladies this, I have had people come in, and they have had issues. I understand that everybody has got a history, everybody has issues. As long as the person wants to do what is right, and they want to change and be everything that God wants them to be, hey, you know what, that is all I look for. I know that this church should be a place for people to rest who are beat up. Some of God's people, you got beat up by other Baptist churches, and you got beat six ways from Sunday, and it was not all your fault. Sometimes it was not any of your fault. But you got beat up. You were a threat to the pastor or some leadership in the church, and so they targeted you and they beat you up. I get that. It is tough getting beat up when you cannot fight back sometimes. I understand that.

Some of you got beat up by the world. Some of you had a divorce, and you got beat up. Not necessarily by your ex-wife, but you know what I am talking about. You are beat up from the world system. Some of you come through some tough times in life, and it beat you up. I have people come in all the time, and when they come and see me, and many of them have, the first thing I tell them was when they tell me their story, and I know where they are coming from, and I can empathize with it because I know what the world can do. I always tell them, this church will never hurt you. This church will never hurt you. If I find out that there is some woman or man in this church who steps out purposely to hurt you, they will have to deal with me. This church is not going to hurt you. We are not going to talk about you. We are not going to castigate you. We are not going to blame you for anything. We all have a history. We all have our problems. You may have went through some tough times in life that we have not went through, but you know what? Only by the grace of God that we did not. We have a tendency to look at people sometime when they come into a church, not this church, but other churches, and they are always looking down on people. Somebody will come in and has got some problems in their life, and they will always be looking down on them. My advice to somebody like that is simply that, you know what? You did not look too hot the first time God laid eyes on you.

I tell them, this church will never hurt you. But I also tell them this, but you may hurt yourself. When I say this church will not hurt you, I do not mean by that, you can do whatever you want to do. This church will never hurt you, but you will hurt yourself. I have had many of them come to the place that told me one thing, but all the time the person had a hidden agenda deep down, deep and dark, and they wind up hurting themselves. In every case, I have never had anybody that ever went through that said, "Well, you know what? That church was really good, and it was

me." Never. It is always our fault. But that is okay. As long as I know the truth, I do not really care what you think. But the bottom line is, this church is here for your rest. I will see to that. I will stake everything I am and preach on that. I will take you no matter what condition you are in with very few exceptions, and I will help you get wherever God wants you to be.

Israel never got that rest except that short 40 years. God's people today, they just never will get the rest. Today, I want to read Proverbs 24:19-20, and then I want to make some comments about how to find God's rest in your life.

Proverbs 24:19-20

Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked;

For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.

You know what? We as God's people, we fret about everything today. We really do. Fret is to worry. Fret is to be afraid. God's people will fret about everything today, and that is because they really have no rest in their life. They have no refuge. They have no comfort because they have, for most of them, no truth. Even the ones that have the truth, they do not apply it the way they should.

We got into Christianity and the New Testament moving up past the 1800s and the 1950s, 60s. We developed a whole new vocabulary of words that you never find in the Bible. I mean, maybe you have missed that, but I never found in the Bible the word anxiety. God's people are full of anxiety. I never found in the Bible the word stress. You go to the doctor, and he says, "Well, your problem is stress related." We find emotional issues today. I have never seen a Christianity where depression was more relevant today.

It is a thing where, and you know, a lot of us are like Asa. Asa had a disease in his feet, and instead of going to God, he went to the physicians, and he wound up dying. That is a picture of his feet. It is a picture of our walk with God. Many times when we have a spiritual issue, we will not take it to God, and we take it to the world, the psychiatrist, the doctors, the Prozac, the antidepressants, all those things that will never fix your problem. They know it will not fix your problem because they do not know how to fix your problem. So they just put you on something that will slow you down and will not fix anything. The real fix is always found in the Word of God.

You know depression? Two men in the Bible that are great contrast, you have Saul, who we have been talking about, and you have David, who we have been talking about. Do you realize that both of them went through depression? See, I do not want to tell you that depression is just for you out of fellowship with God. David was a saved man, and he fell into depression. It is not the issue that they both got depressed; it is the issue is how each one of them dealt with it. Saul dealt with it by going to the witch at Endor. David dealt with it by taking it back to God. Everything in life, I do not care what it is, you and I can have the same problems as the world. We will. There are no Christian problems. There are worldly problems that Christians get into, and the real key is not did you get into it, the real key is what are you going to do to get out of it? Are you going to stay with the witches at Endor or the werewolf on Friday night? Are you going to take it to the

throne of God? In our text today, the reason he is saying here we do not have to fret over these things is because, as I have said many, many times, nobody out there is going to hurt you if you stay with the promises.

Then it says that they will lose their reward, that is their crowns, their garments, and their millennial inheritance, and the second thing is the Bible says that their light will go out, their candle, no light of their own. I want to tell you something, the worst thing that you could ever find in your life is a Christian who does not have any light. The second worst thing is a church that does not have any light, and the worst, worst, worst thing is a pastor who does not have any light. Yet you would have to be blind not to see when he talks about the candle going out, not to see the reference to the Laodicean church age. Why? Over there in Revelation, it talks about that there are seven periods of church history, and each period of church history has a candle that represents that church period. It is built on the menorah back in the Old Testament of that seven-pronged candlestick, which pictures the seven spirits of God, and it tells us in the early part of Revelation that these seven periods of church history.

Revelation 2:5

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Now that does not mean you are going to lose your salvation, it means you are going to lose your light. I know lots of God's people that are saved and on their way to heaven, they have not got the light in the left eye of a blind mosquito. They have no light whatsoever.

Revelation 1:20

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

In Revelation 3:15-16, in the Laodicean church period, the Bible says that God spews the angel and the candlestick out of His mouth. You have seven periods of church history, we are the last period, and we are the most messed up, screwed up bunch because we have lost the Bible exactly as Proverbs 24 says. You know what is wrong with the church today, you know what is wrong with Christians today, you know what is wrong with pastors today who stand in a pulpit every Sunday and give you some mealy-mouthed message that they put together? I will tell you what the problem is, they have no light. They could not take you into the depth of the Word of God if you put a gun to their head. They have no light because in this Laodicean, God-awful mess that we call Christianity, God put the candle out.

The final example of that back in 1 Samuel 3, and I always use this as a great example for you young men and young ladies that want to go into the ministry. It is the only place in the Old Testament that I know in that chapter that he just lifts that out and puts it into a context like the church age. He says there is no open vision, that is totally completely against everything else in the Old Testament. God was not speaking through prophets, he said that God only reveals himself in that short period of time through the Word of God, just like today. We find Samuel as

a young man put into the temple of God, a picture of the church which is in total disarray under Eli. Yet God gets him to be the greatest prophet the world, the Christianity of Israel ever saw, but in the process while he is in there. The Bible says in the book of Leviticus that that candle in the tabernacle was never to go out. In that period of time, the Bible says the candle went out. This is a picture of Israel not having any light. You know what the church age is today? It is a church age of the Laodiceans that has no light. You know what a lot of God's people's lives are like today? You are saved, you are on your way to heaven. You do not have any light. I am telling you. How are you going to have rest when you have no light?

VI. The Process of God's Rest: Trust, Delight, Commit

Let me speak to you from a personal aspect here. In my own personal life, I have cataloged every definitive verse in the Bible. I told you this Thursday night when we were talking about some of these things that deal with me and my life. I give them to you like in people ministry and the things that we go through. I took 10, 12, I do not remember, I took at least 10, 12, 13, 14 years of my life. There are 31,102 verses in the King James Bible. There are 1,189 chapters. There are 66 books. I went through every one of those, detailed them out, took me 10, 12, 15 years to do it. I am still working on it. I found every definitive chapter on everything that I needed for me. I made up the promises and the principles for you and for me. All promises are principles, but not all principles are promises. You have to learn to separate what really comes home to you that you want to take and put into your promise book versus what is just a general truth that states a principle.

For me, my own prayer, I cannot speak for you, and I would not presume to. But for my personal life, my passage and my verses on my personal rest is found in one of the great Psalms in all of the Bible. Now let me be the first one to say I wish my rest was 100% perfect. I wish that I did not get anxiety about things. I do. I am human like anybody else. I wish I would not get mad and cuss, but I do. I am human just like, but I want to tell you something. I understand where the principles are. In your life and my life, the rest is only going to come into being. Can we be honest? Do you not get tired of the chaos in your life? Do we not just get tired? Is there going to come a place in your life when you just say, "I cannot do this anymore?" I mean, do not we get tired of the chaotic problems that we have? Say I just add this that are stupid to begin with. He says that we will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee. That is where it went.

Your Bible is simply titled a Psalm of David. I guess if anybody needed rest, it was David and me. It is Psalms 37. I want you to turn over there. I want to read verses one through seven and make a few comments for you. I catalog this in my Bible and my life and my world as my process of getting God's rest in my life. A lot of things I will say, I will say I could have said this, the process of you getting God's rest in your life. I did not say it that way because I am not responsible for you. I am only responsible for me. This is the process of me getting God's rest in my life.

Psalm 37:1-7

Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Let me just open this by saying this. Rest for the believer is the mark of spiritual maturity. The Christian life will not get easier. We make a mistake many times when somebody gets saved or we slap them on the back and tell them all their problems are over. That is not true. Your eternity problem is solved, but you have to face every day now, and the Christian life will not get easier. You will find that it will get harder, and what we do as we grow and we mature, we learn in the midst of the conflict to trust the promises of God against the adversary that is coming against us, and that is where we rest. Learning to rest while we are running.

He says, "Fret not thyself because of evildoers. Neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity for they shall soon be cut down like the grass and withereth like the green herb." You can see the similarities between Psalm 37:1 and our text today in Proverbs 24:19-20. Fret not, be not envious, no reward. You can see the connection between the two. Now I want to walk you through the process here. I want you to begin to see that and I want you to begin to see how this thing works and how it puts together and how it works.

Psalm 37:3

Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Without a doubt, the key to any relationship will be one area. It will be trust. If there is no trust, listen to me, if there is no trust, there is no relationship. You can kid yourself all you want. You can pretend it is okay. Bottom line is this, if there is no trust value system, then there is no relationship. That trust for a child of God has to be in the promises that God has given you. Two things will build trust. I know we go through things in life where we violate trust, and we want to earn trust back. Your kids do it all the time, adults do it, I get it, I understand. We are all guilty of it. Let me tell you right now, there are only two things that will ever restore trust in any relationship, any children, anything. You can either put it into your kid's life or not. You can either do it yourself or not, it does not matter. But you will never restore anything going your way. That is time and that is consistency. Over the time, seeing us being consistent with the promises that we make.

Back in the bookstore, I have one in my briefcase back there, we were going to bring it up, and I forgot it, we show those little promise books. I think they are one of the greatest little books that we have ever had. In the front, they have a whole list of problems that can come into our life with a page, and you turn there, and then they give you eight or nine promises for that particular

problem. It is kind of like a ready, "I need a help problem verse, give me something here." They are great, we pass them out all the time. They are incredible. But the trust that we have with God and the rest that we have has to go through the promises. A promise is something that God gives you when you really need it. Then you never forget it. As you grow and mature, you add those things to what He has already given you, to what He keeps bringing into your life, for what He has done for you. You have got to keep taking the promises that God gives you and keep them. You do not go through your Christian life getting through the problems that you just got through yesterday forgetting what God did for you. The promises and the key to the promises and the key to your maturity is how is God going to get me through what I have got to face tomorrow, what I do not know. You just look back on what He got you through in the last five years of your life that you do know. But the problem is we forget. We do not catalog them. Every one of you ought to have a book of promises of the things that God has come through for you. I do not mean necessarily a notebook, though many of you do. I do not mean that you can put them in your Bible. I do not care. You have to have some tangible thing that you can go to or as the Bible says in our three infirmities, you will forget. You will forget the years, Psalm 77. You will forget the works, and you will forget the wonders.

Proverbs 3:5-6

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 is it. It is the acknowledgement of God in your life. I believe that most of you are saved, and I believe that most of you have God in your life. Our problem is we do not have any acknowledgement of God in our life. We have an acceptance of God in our life. We have a resemblance of God in our life, but we do not have any acknowledgement of God in our life. That is the issue. Trust in God's Word, trust in the promises of God just does not happen. Trust gets developed as the relationship and maturity develop, and that gets developed by what you do for Him that is good, as the verse says. "Trust in the Lord and do good." 99% of God's people will do nothing for God, and even the ones that do do something for Him in most cases fail to remember the promises that He gave us. We come to the place that because we do not do anything for Him, there is nothing Him coming through for us. So your spiritual bank account this morning is absolutely empty. It is just filled with the things that are in there from going your way and not His.

Psalm 37:4

Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Now here is the question today. This is an honest, open question for you and me. As a child of God, here it comes. As a child of God, what do you delight yourself in today? No psychologist, psychiatrist, marital counselor who dabble dabbles in the Bible in the world will ever make your problems as simple as the Bible will. Your Christian life comes down to one simple basic thing, and all your problems you have got come down to one thing. What are you delighting yourself in? How much simpler does it get? We all have the desires of our heart. Have you ever asked

yourself why some realize those desires and some do not? The verse is very clear that the realization of a desire will be based on our delight in life.

Psalm 1:1-3

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

You take any two Christians. I have them in my church today. I have seen them all my Christian life. You have one who is unhappy, unfulfilled, never satisfied, always getting themselves in a jam. And time they get mad at the church, mad at me, mad at God, mad at you. They are never fulfilled. They are never happy. They are not churches. They did not walk around looking like they have been baptized in dill pickle juice. They are the most unhappy people on the planet. Yet they are saved. I believe they are saved. Then you take the alternative that is somebody that just, they have the Midas touch. I mean, everything they touch turns to gold. Every desire that they have ever had. Everything that they wanted to do just realizes itself in front of them. You would stop to think from the outside looking at it that God is playing favorites. But the truth of the matter is God never plays favorites. He just rewards you on where your delight is. The one girl, guy, whatever the case may be, they are not delighting in the Word of God. The other one, the book has everything to them.

I want to say something to you. The quicker you learn this, the better off you are going to be. There are no greater blessings from God in your life personally or your family or whatever you are trying to do for God. There are no greater blessings that will come that God will bestow on you just because you are in love with a book and you honor that book. One pursues the desires of their heart and never finds it. They struggle all of their life, and they get discontented. They get angry. They get cranky. They want to blame everybody. They want to put their blame on everything and everybody else. They will get hooked up with a crowd that will give them the wrong book. They are so stuck in their own ways that they cannot see and understand what I just told you. There are blessings in the Bible that you will not find in anything else. The blessings that you have are not because of this church. The blessings that you may have in your life are not because of me or my preaching or my teaching. The blessing that you and I have is because God has given us a book, and when you delight yourself in it, there shall be showers of blessings that come down. I may add to that a great contrast, light rejected becomes lightning. One will find that rest, and the other will never find it.

Psalm 37:5

Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

Here is our issue. Here is our number one issue. Our commitment. "Well, I have got a King James Bible." Yeah, you are just not committed to it. "Well, I do not know, Pat's Baptist Church."

Yeah, but you are not committed to it. You come when it is convenient. You come when somebody else does not intervene and mess up your world so you do not have to come and hear me. "Well, I want to change. I want to change." Oh, how many times I have heard that. Husbands and wives sitting in my office, in my home, individuals. "Oh Bob, I want to change. I want to change. I will do whatever I have got to do." There is one thing that affects change and only one thing. It is your commitment to change. You want to change. You do not have any commitment to it. You want to change, but you want to keep what you want to keep. Change is a commitment to change.

Notice here it says, "commit thy way." At some point in your life, folks, I am just telling you, you can play with this all you want. You can diddle around with it all you want. It will carry you to your grave maybe. It will strip you of any inheritance or any reward. But sooner or later, you have got to change the way you are going. The way we are. In life, I do not care what they tell you. There are only two ways to go if you are a Christian. You are going to go God's way, or you are going to go your way. "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" The reason why Israel never got God's rest is they were always going their way. Hebrews 3:10, I already told you that Israel did not know His way. They did not want to know it. The reason why you and I will never get the rest is because we are continually going our way, the way we want to go. We have never come to the place that we acknowledge Him in our lives. I do not mean that you are not aware of Him. I do not mean that you are not, I am saying, I am not talking about that. I am talking about "in all thy ways acknowledge Him."

Psalm 37:6

And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

He shall bring forth your righteousness. Bringing forth your maturity. By using you like the noonday sun. Of course, as I told you Thursday night, the reason why He says noonday sun because that is the highest part of the day where the sun is right overhead. It does not get any higher than that. It comes up to that point and then it recedes after that. But the highest point in the day will be when the sun is right overhead at 12 noon. The highest point of your life when God can put forth your righteousness to the world is when in your maturity level you get to that point. Your noonday sun. You are at your brightest for God simply because you are at your highest for God. That is just that simple.

Psalm 37:7

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Now so far we were told to fret not, and then we were told to trust. We were told to delight. We were told to commit. Now in Psalm 37:7, He says, "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Fret not thyself of Him who prospereth." That is a good principle. Just because somebody prospers in their life and has a lot of money and the things that they want does not mean it comes from God. The world will prosper, and you will look at it. Big churches will prosper, pastors will prosper, Christians will prosper, and you will think, "Wow." He says, "be not envious of them."

There is a prospering of the world and worldly Christianity, and there is a prospering of God's people who just love the book and love God and commit themselves, trust in Him, and delight in Him.

Psalm 37:8-9

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

Now you cannot miss that doctrinally. That is Matthew 5-10, the Sermon on the Mount, millennially with the Nation of Israel. I mean you cannot miss that, but for you and for me inspirationally. He is simply talking about you and I today right now getting God's rest in the midst of the battle that you and I are fighting. The rest of the believer.

In Psalm 37:7 is a key word that will be our determining factor to our rest or not. It simply says, "wait patiently for Him." Patience. The key to patience in your life and my life will be the principles and the promises of God, and along with that, acknowledging Him through those principles. I will say that again. The key to patience in your life and my life will be the principles and the promises of God and our acknowledging Him through those principles and promises. When you do that and you acknowledge Him and you put Him in your life, then you will trust in the promises. Once you build your relationship with the promises of God that you trust them and they begin to work for you, it is going to be like the first time you ate strawberries. They are like Lay's potato chips. "Bet you cannot eat one." Once you have one promise in your life that God comes through, you get addicted to it. Once you start trusting the promises, you know what happens next? You start to delight in those promises. How they are yours. You start to realize that God wrote the Bible to you. The person sitting to your left and the right or behind you in front of you got left out. It is your book. Not theirs.

In other words, everybody in this room should fight the person next to you. If you want to fight about something as Christians, let us fight about who God really gave the Bible to. He gave it to me. I am sorry about you. "Oh no, Bob, he gave it to me." Okay, let us fight about it, and then we will go get a cheeseburger, and we will just split it right down the middle. That is your book. He gave it to you, and he gave it to the person sitting next to you, but the acknowledgement of God in your life about that book is your personal accountability that it is your book. Why would you let someone take that book from you? I will tell you really simply because you never acknowledged Him in that book. Trust, it is just a cheap 10-cent word. Delighting in the promises is a figment of your imagination, but when you trust in the promises and you see Him work, and then you delight yourself in it, it is an automatic process that you are not going back to it, and now you are going to commit yourself to it. Only after you trust the promises and you delight in the promises and you commit yourself to the promises, only then can you rest in the promises.

VII. Patience, God's Timing, and Established Patterns

The older I get in the Lord, the less of a hurry I get in. But I was a young guy, and many of you remember me back in those days, I was going Mach 5 with my hair on fire. I thought I could solve every problem in life. I thought there was no problem too big that I could not handle. I thought I had the answer to everything. I mean, I did. I just was stupid in my own immaturity.

I used to have a white horse that I used to get on and gallop through the night. I mean, I was a magnitude of man. It was bigger than life. People in my neighborhood would turn their lights on when they heard the clickety-clack of those big hoofs of that horse going down that cobblestone street. I turned that horse, it would rear up and neigh, and I would head up 83rd Street past Raytown South. Neighbors' lights would be coming on. Police cars would pull in front of me with the lights on, escorting me to the tragedy that I was on my way to. That horse would pull up in front of the house of issues. That horse would rear back. It would look and it would turn in a circle. Sometimes I would paint my face half blue. Pretend I was William Wallace. You know how many times I got off that horse, went in to solve the problems, and found out a great truth? A lot of people do not want their problems solved. A lot of people only want to treat the symptoms. They do not solve the problems.

Now I am going to tell you something. You have issues? We all have issues. I will do anything in the world to help you with your problem. But when you come and see me about a problem, we are not going to dance. I am a Baptist. I do not dance. I will go straight to what? I am not going to treat your symptoms. I am not going to treat your issues that you think are the problem. We are going to go straight to the problem. We will cut all the plastic stuff out. We will get right down to it. I shot that white horse. Took him one day in the backyard, put a .45 up to his head, and blew his brains out. Buried him in the backyard. You can still see the mound where he is down in the dirt. I learned very quickly that you cannot get people to do right that do not want to do right. I realized that, you know what, I had to be patient. I realized that, you know what, those things are in God's hands, not mine. I realized that I cannot make anybody do right. I can only preach the Word of God and do the best I can at putting the truth out. But at the end of the day, you have to decide if you are going to go your way or His way, if you are going to acknowledge Him in all thy ways or not.

A couple of weeks ago, I talked about Proverbs 24:14, where it said, to me, is an incredible phrase, getting the knowledge of wisdom.

Philippians 4:7

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:15

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

The peace that passes all understanding and the rest it brings will not come as you try to fix it yourself. It will only come as through the principles you see how God works in any given scenario, and you will let God be God. You will learn what my responsibility is in dealing with

situations, and you will learn what God's responsibility is. I will stay out of His world, and He will allow me to do mine through patience.

In the Bible, as in life, God's timing will be everything. You find this at the crucifixion. He kept saying, "Mine hour is not yet come." Daniel 2:20 says He changes the times and the seasons. God's timing is everything. Through my knowledge of His wisdom, seeing God's hand and timing in everything and being patient, resting in the fact that it is all in His hands and in His timing and being okay with that because I trust Him. I learned years ago that God will always work through an established pattern. Christian life is not a chaotic life. It is not a hang on and just trust God every day and see what happens. It is not. It is portrayed that way many times. But it is portrayed that way by men who do not understand the knowledge of His wisdom because God will always work through an established pattern in everything that He does. The Bible completely lays out those patterns. In almost 50 years, I from Genesis to Revelation have cataloged every pattern I could see. This is what I give you in people ministry. We started in Genesis and started walking through the patterns. They form the basis of not only my ministry but also form the basis of my life. It has to go in a pattern.

For instance, the Bible says there are seven things that we are not to be ignorant of. When you look at those, you ask yourself, you begin to see how important they are, and what they form is seven distinct patterns that we learn from. Paul says the times and the seasons, they have no need to write unto you. Why did he say that? Because they had the pattern.

In the book of Genesis, Genesis is called the book of the beginning. God essentially lays out every pattern of where He is going.

We talk about the book of Ecclesiastes, an incredible book. The book of Ecclesiastes is nothing more than a pattern of how the world system is going to involve itself.

We are in the book of Proverbs right now. The book of Proverbs is an incredible book. It is nothing more than a pattern of a saved man who becomes a wise man.

The book of 1 Corinthians is the most screwed up church in all of the Bible. It is nothing more than a pattern of how not to do ministry.

2 Corinthians is the handbook of ministry. To get online, it informs the pattern of how to do ministry.

The book of Romans is the pattern for the doctrine of the New Testament church.

1st and 2nd Timothy, and Titus and Philemon. Pattern for a pastor.

The book of Revelation is a pattern of the church history and the future end results for the end times.

You know, a public library in any town is an amazing structure, I think. Probably in any given major library, there are over a million, maybe two million books. They are all the things that man has written that you may learn from. You go to the library when you want to study, when you want to research, when you want to do something. They have there what is called a Dewey

Decimal System. The Dewey Decimal System is a system that was put out that you can find whatever book by the author that you want and then get the information that you need. The Bible is much like that, it is much simpler. If I did not know the Bible was the Word of God any other way, I know it took man, what, 3,000, 4,000, 6,000 years and 100 million pieces of literature. He still is not finished, that he cataloged his truth. You have got to wade through all of that to find something that you think is truth when God's Bible, which is truth, is only 66 books, and His Dewey Decimal System is Book, Chapter, Verse. You see the world has its system, God has His. The world is always much more complicated. One will give you the rest and the peace, the other one, you can never get it. The souls of life will keep you distressed and troubled. The souls of life will keep you weak and worn out. They will never give you rest. Most churches will keep you busy, they will entertain you, they will have restaurants and gymnasiums and racquetball courts and everything that you could ever want except a place of rest. You will find having a racquetball court and a fancy restaurant will not solve the problem with your kids when you have to deal with them. It will not fix your marriage when it is about to bust up.

VIII. Contrasting Pastoral Leadership and True Rest

In the Bible, there are two great examples of what I would call the two greatest examples of pastors in the Bible. One of them Saul, one of them David. One of them the world's choice, one of them God's choice. In a great commentary verse for me anyhow on Saul, which typifies most pastors today, is found in Isaiah 65:5.

Isaiah 65:5

Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

Now that is the mindset of most pastors today. They will never see you to solve your problem. They will always farm you out to some second stringer. He is the head guy, and he is supposed to have the most knowledge, but you can never get to him because whatever he does in the holy sanctuary where he lives, he will farm you out to a second stringer someplace that will solve your problem. He will not know your name. He will not know anything about your family. He will never come over and see your kids' ballgame. He will never do anything except walk into that pulpit, stand up there, and say, "Look at me." His words will be by his own action, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me." You will want to talk to the pastor. You have to go through the Martin Bormann secretary. Most of you do not know who Martin Bormann was. He was the most powerful man in the Third Reich. You say, "More than Hitler?" Absolutely. You know why? Because he controlled access to who got to see Hitler. In most mega churches, there will be some woman or some guy who is the person you have got to go through, and they decide whether you get to see him or not.

Then you have David. Jeremiah 3:15 is a great picture of what I should be as your pastor.

Jeremiah 3:15

And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

One will feed you and prepare you for the battle with knowledge and understanding. The other will live like a king on your dime and make you weak and defeated. One will create a safe place of rest for you and your family so you can build your life and your family for God. The other will take you and use you to build for him and his millennial inheritance down here and care nothing about you or your family. If you have got an issue, it is a thing where, you know what, he does not care. He does not want to deal with it. He will say he cares, but he will not sit down to take the time, you will never get to see him. He will never have time for you. He will always be too busy doing whatever big-time pastors do. If you do call him on a phone in an emergency, make sure he is not on the ninth hole.

IX. The Path to Lasting Rest

Proverbs 24:19

Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked;

Now here is the problem. The problem with God's people is they never learn to trust. They never learn to acknowledge all their ways Him. They never learn to delight. Their delights are in everything else. No, they never learn commitment. So all they ever do is fret. In all their fretting, because there is no trust, there is no delight, and there is no commitment, they never get any rest. Their whole Christian life is just one bad scenario after another. It is one disappointment after another. It is just one disenchantment after another. It is just one downside after the other. Everything in their life, the whole life ends in a disaster. They lose their kid, they lose their marriage, they lose their relationship with God. They lose everything. In other words, their candle goes out.

Proverbs 24 in this great study on Saul and the man who wants to take the greatest possession you have is one of the greatest studies you will ever take. It is your book. It is your promises. It is for you to trust in, delight in, commit in, but most importantly, to rest in.