

## I. The Unchanging God and the Changing Church

Proverbs chapter 24 seems like it has been around for a thousand years. It is one of the greatest chapters anywhere in the Bible, for sure. Last week, we talked about, and I would like to give a little recap so we can kind of keep everything moving in a blending way that all comes together. Last week, we talked about the complete and total destruction of the New Testament church through the infiltration of three unbiblical systems.

These three systems were started around the 1900s that brought us through to where we are at today. We talked about the Neo-Evangelical movement, the Neo-Orthodox movement, and the Charismatic movement. We talked about it in great length last week, how that completely changed everything about Christianity in that short period of time.

Our verse last week was Proverbs 24:21. This is what kicked all this off, where it says:

*Proverbs 24:21*

*My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change:*

I took some time last week, as I always try to do, to show you how Christ never changes, God never changes. We saw the warning from God never to change what our unchanging God has given us through His unchanging Word. The Bible is very clear that God always has established everything through pattern.

There is a pattern for the New Testament church. There is a pattern for New Testament Christianity. There is a pattern for salvation. There is a pattern for the Christian life. There is a pattern for the ministry. There is a pattern for building a church. There is a pattern for being a pastor. Everything is found in the Bible. When you use the Bible as your final authority and establish what you do according to the time-proven patterns that have been handed down for centuries, like I showed you last week, we come away not changing anything that God has given us.

Let me just tell you something: nothing man is going to come up with is going to be better than what God already came up with. All this idea of change today is totally off the wall as far as I am concerned. It is interesting, Proverbs 24:21 said, "I am told to fear the Lord and the King." So that is what I do. I fear the Lord, God Almighty, and I fear the King, my King James 1611 Authorized Version.

I showed you that for 400 years, that book stood alone. The only Bible that God used, the only Bible on this planet for 400 years, was the one that the majority of you are holding in your hands today. From 1900 to 2018, the day that we live in today, all of Christianity has completely changed. It has changed from an area that was certain about what it believes to an area now where it is uncertain about everything. Christianity has gone from a very focused picture to a very out-of-focus gray mush.

I am not much of a photographer. I am not much of a picture taker. But I remember one time I bought a 35-millimeter camera that had little digital cameras, and they had just come out with it. It had what they call, I am sure they have many things on it now, but it had Instafocus. In other words, I could look at you when you were blurry and push the button that was going to take the picture just halfway down, and that lens on the front automatically brought everything into focus. Then I took the picture. Otherwise, you had to hold it and crank the end to get it where you wanted it. This was Instafocus. You just looked at it, you were blurry, I pushed it halfway down, and it zipped right into focus. I thought that was an amazing thing. It did not help me take any better pictures, but it taught me a great lesson.

That is what the Bible does for you. The Bible is an instant focus book. When you get into the patterns of the Word of God, whatever you look at, whoever you look at, whatever circumstance in life, if it looks blurry, the moment you apply the principles and push the button down, it is instant focus. That is what the Bible does for us. That all changed when Christianity changed. Through a very slow process, we lost all the time-proven doctrines and principles and teachings that once made Christianity great.

## II. The Peril of Seeking Popularity Over Truth

I got a call from a guy this week, a nice guy, and he was obviously listening last week, or at least he listened to the sermon when he called me, and I appreciate his phone call. He wanted to explain himself, and he said, "I was a Baptist one time." He said, "I left the Baptist Church, and I now belong to," I will not tell you what church it is, "it is here in Kansas City. It is an evangelical church, and I am going to this church now." The reason I left, he said, "I felt like I was," he said, "I just was tired of being part of the dumb, stupid Baptists and the way that they are. And Baptists," he says, "they turn people off."

I said, "I totally understand that." So I asked him, "Let me get this right. You took Baptist off your own personal name, and you moved from a Baptist church into a Neo-Evangelical, non-denominational church because you did not want to be associated with weird Baptists and some of the weird things that they do. Am I right?" He said, "Yeah, that is exactly right."

Then I said, "And then you became a Neo-Evangelical by going to so-and-so church because that is what they are." He said, "That is correct." I said, "Let me ask you a question. In 1994, if you heard the message last week, we talked about the Catholic-Evangelical Accord where 75% of the Neo-Evangelicals lined up with the Roman Catholic Church for evangelism in the third millennium, and they all got together. The reason why they could all get together is because they made sure that they were not going to talk about doctrine. They were talking about reaching people, but the Catholic Church reaches people by getting them baptized for salvation and then making them join their church to keep their salvation. Are you okay with that?" He said, "Well, certainly not."

I said, "The evangelical crowd, your crowd, they go whatever they want to do, and whatever is okay with you is okay with them." I said, "So here is the deal, and I am just asking. You left one church denomination because it was goofy, and then you joined another one which is just as

goofy. Because now what do you do with the fact that the group that you joined because the Baptists were goofy have now aligned with the Roman Catholic Church, which was totally goofy? How do you answer that?" Of course, he did not have an answer.

My answer to him is this: In any group of people, in any churches, in any center of denomination, you are going to have weird people, and you should know that because of your own family. Do you not have a crazy uncle in the woodpile someplace? Do you not have an aunt that everybody, when you start talking about it, you say, "Oh, yeah, and remember, and so and so what she said?" Do you not have a crazy grandpa running around someplace? My girls better shut up and not answer a thing here on that one.

There is weirdness in everything. Why would you leave an organization that at least in its concept is biblical, has the truth of salvation, and move into a gray mush area that has no truth, that has not got the sense that wants to align itself with an organization that will send you to hell quicker than you could ever dream of? We get the idea, "Well, I am leaving this one because this one is goofy, and I am going to..." They are all goofy.

You do not pick what your Bible format is. You do not pick what you become or what you believe on the popularity. He said, "Well, Baptists turn people off." Well, I am a Baptist, and I am as straight down the line as you could be according to the Bible, and I still turn people off. You do not have to be a three-headed monster walking around to turn people off and be goofy, because I will tell you what, you can turn them off that way, but I will tell you what will turn them off just as bad: the truth. So I told him, I said, "You know, you just traded one bad situation for another really bad situation."

There is no perfect denomination, and you do not pick a belief system based on the weird people in it. You pick a belief system based on the truth in it, but that has changed too.

### III. God's Pattern of Revelation and Silence

It has been said and pointed out in history, by the great teacher, it has been said and pointed out that when God closed the Old Testament canon, those would be the Old Testament books of the Bible. In your Bible, that would be the last book, which is Malachi. In a Jewish book, it would be 2 Chronicles. But when God closed the Old Testament canon, wrote the last book, it has been said that then there was no revelation from God for 400 years. We call it in the Bible teaching world, the 400 silent years, where God spoke to no one.

Any truth anybody got, they got from what God had given the nation of Israel before that 400 years began or the captivity began. Any revelation of God to man, anything that God had to say to man, He said up to that point. Once the canon closed, God never revealed Himself again for 400 years until the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. That broke the silence.

During that 400 years, this is where all of the times that Gentiles began. This is where all of the heresy and all of the misteachings and all of the Gentile philosophies began to be formed because God is not speaking. He spoke the last time in the Old Testament when He closed the Old

Testament canon and did not speak for 400 years. That silence was broken at the first coming of Christ when He spoke.

It has been said, it has been pointed out, this is called God's consistency in Bible study. It has been said that under the New Testament, the last time that God spoke to man was when He gave His final revelation of the Word of God in a King James 1611 Authorized Version. There is no question about that. That was the last Bible that was out, for it stood for 400 years. For 400 years, God gave no revelation to man outside of the book that He gave him.

It has been said that just as God closed the Old Testament canon of Scripture and then did not speak for 400 years and then broke that silence with the first coming of Christ, it has been said and pointed out that when God closed the canon of the New Testament and gave it to you in the form of a King James 1611, there has been 400 years of silence that will be broken again by the second coming of Christ. Interesting.

Now the Neo-Evangelicals laugh at that. Most Baptist pastors laugh at that, and certainly Bible scholars and Bible critics will laugh at that, but that is okay. We are rejoicing today, as Luke 10:21 says, that God hid those things from you. We are happy about it.

*Luke 10:21*

*In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

Only time the Bible records Jesus rejoicing is at this point right here where He is rejoicing over the fact that God shut down the revelation to people who thought they were smarter than God.

## IV. Unfolding Prophecy and Historical Context

So slowly, very slowly, oh so slowly, the change took place as the Bible says, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." I think it was Jared who asked me this week about Larkin not having Daniel 7 down, about how he missed the fact that those three beasts were America, Russia, and Great Britain, which he wanted. I remember he told me that, and that is a great question because he has a great mind, and I told him, I said, "That is so interesting that you would say that, or catch that, because there is no way Larkin missed that."

When you get his dispensational truth, he has Daniel 2 down, but when he gets to Daniel 7, he does not quite know what to do with it, and so he does not have it right. That is not his fault. I am making a point here. It is not his fault because Larkin writes that in 1900. In 1900, Russia had not come on the scene yet. England was on the scene but not in a proper place, and America had not come on the scene yet as the greatest nation. So he did not have that to judge the verses by. In other words, sometimes the Bible will give you revelation that reveals itself as the things in history wrap themselves around that revelation.

I say that to say this: the same thing happened to me, but a lot of people like me, back in the 1970s. When I got right with God and we started studying the Bible, this is 1972. When we got

into the book of Revelation chapter 3 and we read about the Laodicean church, everybody back then thought that that was talking about the Methodist church, the Lutheran church, the Presbyterian church, the churches that came out of the Catholic church during the Reformation, remained fundamentally strong for a while, and then all collapsed and now had gone back into Rome. We actually thought that. We taught that, and we taught that because at that time, in just 1972, you did not hear about Neo-Evangelicalism at that point. There were no great evangelical churches. All there were were Baptist churches, and we could not conceive at that point in time that the Laodicean mess that He is talking about in Revelation 3 could be us.

We thought for sure it was those who came out of Rome that went back to Rome and apostatized, and we taught that, believed that, and now we know from 1970 to where we are at today, it was us. It was the Laodicean church, it was the Baptist church who sold their birthright, embraced the Neo-Orthodoxy, embraced the Neo-Evangelicalism, and let somebody take the Bible right out of their hand, and it is off. But you see, we could not see it back then, just like Larkin could not see it in 1900. Why? Because time had not played itself out.

One of the greatest things about the Bible is that you do not get it all when you read it. He told you that He sealed some things up in Daniel that He did not give Daniel. You are told that when John wrote the book of Revelation that God sealed some things up and told him not to write about them. You know why? Because God was not ready to reveal that truth to us yet, and maybe He will and maybe He will not, but if He does, it will be because the history of the world has brought itself to the place where now it demands that those revelations come forward. The Bible is an amazing book. It is an incredible book. The more I study it, the more I learn it, the more time I spend with it, the more in awe I stand of it. It is incredible.

## V. Unlocking Proverbs 24:24-27

Now today, we are going to move on to Proverbs 24. We are going to look at verses 24, 25, 26, and 27. Allow me to read them for you.

*Proverbs 24:24-27*

*24 He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him:*

*25 But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.*

*26 Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.*

*27 Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.*

Now, places like this, not only is there a good lesson in here that I want to give you, a couple of them, as a matter of fact, but this is a great example because you read verses 24, 25, 26, and 27, and many of God's people look at that and heard what I just read and said to myself, "Now what is he going to get out of this?" I mean, when you read this, this is kind of an abstract verse. It does not just fall out on the table for you, but this is an example of how you use the key words

and phrases and how you use the principles that you already know to unlock the scriptures when you get into a place like this.

Now, let me say this first off. Doctrinally, all this will be dealing with the Antichrist with the Jew in the Tribulation period. We know that in the first three and a half years, he will enjoy the praise of men.

## VI. The World's Desperate Need and the Antichrist's Solution

Last week, we talked a little bit about America and the impossible situation that we are in in America. It is not just America. We are facing a worldwide calamity, a breakdown of every nation. I do not know of one nation that can stand on its own today. It is in a mess. They are not eroding from the outside, but they are eroding from the very inside. We are looking at a worldwide calamity, and we are desperately looking for someone who can fix it.

We have President Trump. Your opinion of him does not interest me one way or the other. I have no opinion. I do not care one way or the other. I am about to make a statement. Trump ran on the theme, "Make America Great Again." That was the theme that he ran on. He had enough sense to know that America was in trouble. But the problem was he did not have enough sense to know what really will make America great again. He thought it would be making the economy good. He thought it would be building a wall down around the border to keep all the illegal aliens out. He thought in his agenda, which I am not fighting his agenda, but what I am saying is he thought that fixing the physical problems would make America great again. The physical problems are not what destroyed America. It was the spiritual problems that destroyed America. Once the spiritual problems got destroyed, then the physical problems came in. It is just that simple.

We are in a mess in America. We really are. It is a thing where the thing that will make America great again has nothing to do with how much money you have in the bank or if you have a great job or that. I am not saying those things are unimportant. But he ran on the issue that he had the ability to make America great again. You heard him say it. I have got to tell you, he is a very convincing guy. He has done well. My goodness, he has made his own fortune five times over. Everybody says, "Well, he is a bully." Well, that may be true, but I am tired of all the other nations bullying us. Maybe it is time we get us a bully, bully somebody back.

I do not really have any political aspirations. I am not a Democrat or Republican. I am a Bible-believing Christian. I think they are all crooks. I think if you really believed, if you really were a Christian the way the Bible defined it, and you got elected to the United States on Monday, you would be assassinated by Tuesday because you would be out street preaching. You would be holding Bible studies, winning people to Christ. You would be having revival services instead of political rallies. That is what a real Christian does. But you see, it does not work that way.

He ran on the theme, "Make America Great Again." And America believed him. I do not know that they believed him because he was so persuasive. I think they believed him because he was persuasive, but everybody wanted to believe it because we all want change. We all know we are

in a mess. The Neo-Evangelicals and the Baptists, they endorsed him. They thought, "Here is a guy who is going to bury the Democrats, all those liberals." Here is a guy that he says that he is a Christian. He told us he was a Christian, and they wanted change so bad that the leaders of the Neo-Evangelical movement made a statement at a great press conference and said, "We backed and endorsed Donald Trump as the candidate for the United States as the Neo-Evangelical crowd, or this mess that we call ourselves as Christians." I am not sure that was before he paid off the porn star or afterwards.

We want change so bad in America. We want to believe that somebody can change it. We desperately see around us terrible injustices. We see around us our own society eroding where as a young girl you are afraid to go out jogging at night. Forget night, you are afraid to go jogging in the day. You are afraid to have your kid wait at the bus stop for a bus to go to school. In my day, you did not have those problems. I walked to school back and forth, a mile and a half or whatever. I waited here, waited there. My mom and dad both worked. I left school, came home for lunch, cooked my own lunch, and then walked back. I am not saying there were not terrible people out there, but there was some structure to the fabric of society that has been ripped out of it.

I do not care what anybody says. There is no safe place in America today. You used to think that churches were safe. They will come in the back door and kill 30 people before somebody takes him out. They will walk into a ball field or ball thing and shoot somebody there. There is no safe place. We are in a society and a world in a country that has lost its mind. We are an insane asylum run by the very inmates. We are anarchy. There is no king in Israel, and everybody is doing what is right in their own eyes. This country desperately wants change. Then a man can get up and say, "I will make America great again." And because to that point, nobody else has, they say, "Let us give him a shot."

But the only thing that will make America great again is America coming back to God, and that will necessitate her coming back to God's Word. In both cases, that is not going to happen. There will be no fixing America. In fact, the Neo-Orthodox and the Neo-Evangelicals and the Charismatic movement are not fixing the problem. Honestly, from a Bible perspective, if you know anything about it at all, it is paving the way for the Antichrist to make his entry a lot easier.

When the Antichrist does show up, going back to our verse here, he will overnight unite the world. He will fix every problem that we have. We have a tremendous problem in the Middle East between the nation of Israel and the Muslims. He will solve that just like that. We have arguments going on about religion and doctrine that will all go away. Of course, the ringleaders of that will be taken out of the way, by the rapture of the church. As Proverbs 24:24 says, at that point in time, the world will say to the wicked, the Antichrist, "Thou art righteous."

Right now, the Neo-Evangelicals and certainly the Neo-Orthodoxes teach Amillennialism and Post-Millennialism when it comes to the second coming of Christ. What does that mean? We believe that we call what we believe Premillennialism. That means that we believe that Jesus Christ is going to come back, set the world straight, clean all the mess out of this thing, and then set up His kingdom. The Post-Millennial crowd, which is most Neo-Evangelicals, they believe

that they are going to make the world a better place to live. They are going to do it through their fixing the social injustices. They are going to do it by feeding the hungry and taking care of the poor, which I am all in favor of. They think they are going to do it by cleaning the world up, and when they get the world, through their good works and through their great endeavors, to a point that is okay with Christ, then He is going to decide to come back because we cleaned it all up. That is Post-Millennialism.

Amillennialism, which is the Neo-Orthodox crowd, they do not believe there is any millennium at all. They believe you make your heaven and hell right here. So you can see that once we are gone, the Pre-Millennial crowd, all that is going to be left are the people who have been teaching for years, hundreds of years, that we get it ready and Christ comes back, and they are going to say, "We got it ready, and Christ came back." He is called the Antichrist for a reason. He is not called the Anti-Dictator. He is not called the Anti-Governor or the Anti-President. He is called the Antichrist. He comes as Christ to a world that is left thinking that he is Christ, and they say to him, "Thou art righteous." That is what the verse is talking about, doctrinally. The world will blindly follow him just as the Baptist and the Neo-Evangelical crowds have followed the scholars of their day and have been totally deceived and in time get totally destroyed.

## VII. The Faithful Remnant and Their Reward

Ah, Proverbs 24:25.

*Proverbs 24:25*

*But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.*

Not everybody will fall for it. One of the greatest truths anywhere in the Bible is, I do not care whether it is before the law, during the law, in that 400 silent years, in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, in the church age, in the Tribulation, I do not care where you go in the Bible, no matter how bleak and how bad it gets, no matter how dark it becomes, God will always have His remnant. He will always have His faithful few. He will always have those who, in spite of the difficulties, in spite of the challenges, in spite of the ridicule, in spite of the pressure, in spite of everything that goes on, that they will take their stand and hold true to what God has said.

Proverbs 24:25 says, "But to them that rebuke him shall be delight and a good blessing shall come upon them." Now, doctrinally, again, staying with it, this will be the Tribulation period. This will be the 144,000 that we know that is defined for you in Revelation 7 and Revelation 14. Their work is defined for you in Matthew 22 and Matthew 25. These are the preaching evangelists that during the last part of the Tribulation exposed the man of sin for what he is. Where the whole world says, "Thou art righteous," these guys stand up and say, "Oh, no, he is not."

Now, historically, who would it be? If you know anything about church history at all, you know that historically this would be the Bible-believing groups that we all know and love and talk about so many times.

- It would be the Waldensians.

- It would be the Huguenots.
- It would be the Hussites under John Huss in Czechoslovakia.
- It would be the Paulicians who rejected the teaching of Peter at the Catholic Church and realized that they needed to follow the teachings of Paul like we do.
- It was the Anabaptists.
- It was the Dutch Baptists.
- It was the English Baptists.

It was all those early groups who stood up and preached on every street corner throughout Europe that the Pope was the Antichrist and the Roman Catholic Church was the great whore of Revelation 17 and Revelation 18. If you think I am exaggerating that, you did not read much about history. They were the minority in the midst of a world held in the clutches by the most satanic organization the world has ever seen. They called it as it was, and they took their stand as a remnant, and they paid the price for it in blood. They exposed the Roman Catholic Church as the bride of Satan and the Antichrist as the man of sin, as the Pope.

Martin Luther used to refer to the Pope, where all the Catholics refer to him as "His Holiness," Martin Luther used to refer to him as "Your Hellishness," not very Christian. We would go back in the annals of church history, and there was more than one Pope reigning at one time, more than one time, and then one did not like the other, the other one did not like him. So the one Pope would get up and say that that Pope over there, "Do not follow him, he is the Antichrist." The other guy would get up and say, "Do not listen to him, he is the Antichrist." What do you think of that? I think it is the only time in history the two Popes were right.

Now, inspirationally, it is me and you exposing the antichrists, not the Antichrist. First John talked about many antichrists a couple of weeks ago, exposing today who want to steal the Word of God out of your hands. The Bible says there is a delight and a good blessing in it. I might say the good blessings of God are good. When you take your stand for God as a remnant, there is going to be some blessings in that. God will take care of you, He always has.

Another great principle that I would tell you to write down and remember, and I tell this to people going through marital issues or wherever, and I always say this: no matter what you are going through in life or what you are facing, God always takes care of the person who does what is right. There are blessings in doing what is right, even though the circumstances are overwhelming. I might say the blessings of God are great, but the delight in taking on some of these guys is also fun too.

God will have His remnant who will stand greatly overwhelmed, greatly outnumbered, and they will take on a system of false teaching. They did it in history, they will do it in the Tribulation period, and there are some of God's people who will do it today. Personally, I like being outnumbered. I think it is a great thing. I think it keeps you on your toes.

I remember, and I told this before, Dick Winters was a commander of Easy Company, 101st in the famous miniseries Band of Brothers. When the Battle of the Bulge took place, it caught the Allies completely in disarray, and they took in like, I mean the Germans moved through Belgium into the Ardennes Forest, and they took a whole unit, 10,000 prisoners of Americans who never

expected it. They were told they were going home in two weeks because the war was over, and Hitler put one last offensive to that, which we know today as the Battle of the Bulge. It is because the line was here, and when the Germans came through it, they pushed that line all the way back, almost to Antwerp, Belgium, and formed a great bulge in the line, so it became known as the Battle of the Bulge. Some of you fight that battle today, as I do myself.

The 101st Airborne was pulled out of the rest camp, did not have any winter clothes, and by the way, this was right before Christmas in December, it was the coldest winter in 40 years in Europe. They were thrown into the line, most of them did not have any ammunition, they did not have any warm clothes, they did not have any food, and for 20-some days they held the line because Bastogne in Belgium had five roads coming into it that was the key that if the Germans took Bastogne, they could take all the way to Antwerp, and it would have been a real mess, and we could have lost the war. So they threw the 101st Airborne in there, and they had to hold Bastogne, and the German army completely circled and cut them off in Bastogne. They could not get anything in, they could not get out. No food, no clothes, no ammunition, nothing, and it was so cloudy that the aircraft could not maneuver to fly to help them. They were in real trouble.

One of the newspaper guys who was there was interviewing him, and he came up to Dick Winters, who was a great leader. He is dead now, a great leader, I met him one time, a great leader. They are interviewing him, and he says, "The news says and the whole world is watching Bastogne and the 101st Airborne, what do you think about the fact that everybody says and the Germans are saying they are going to crush this town and they have got you completely surrounded?" Now he is expecting some kind of, you know what Winters said? He looked at him and he says, "We are paratroopers, we are supposed to be surrounded."

And you are a Christian, you are supposed to be surrounded, you are supposed to be overwhelmed. Let me tell you something, if they are not coming over the north wall in your Christian life, there is something wrong with you. If you get along with everybody and you mamsy-pamsy with everybody and nobody hates you and nobody does not like you and you are not, nobody is giving you, there is something wrong with you. You are supposed to be the remnant. God's people today as a remnant will take their stand against the most overwhelming odds you have ever seen, and personally, I like that.

I never say much about it, I just keep it to myself, and I just do not, I do not ever say much, but I think there has been a lot of times in my life, but one in particular that I like to think about, I look back and see how God handled it, and to me it was one of the greatest things that God ever did in my life. I never tell anybody about it, I do not go around bragging about it, it is just what it is. It is what we do.

A number of years ago, probably 25 or 30, we were taking discipleship teams all around the world. Many of you were part of that, and I took a team down to a place in Brazil called Rio de Janeiro. At Rio de Janeiro, there was a man down there who had the largest church in all of Brazil. His name was Dr. Finini. Dr. Finini, to put him in some kind of context, was like the Billy Graham of South America. He had an incredible church. I had met him, and he had seen our discipleship material, and he wanted to know if I would personally bring a team down and teach

his church how to disciple. I said, "Absolutely, I will." Steve Dad, Steve Bracken Sr., Michelle Dad, Steve Bracken Sr., were missionaries down there, so they know I am telling you the truth when I say that. It was a thing where I said, "Absolutely." So I had about 20 or 30 people, we all got on a plane to Brazil. Anybody here go down that time that you are going to confess to it, one here? Is this one of you? I thought there might be more. You did not go, Penny? No, that is right, you were in jail at that point, you could not get out on probation.

So Dr. Finini calls me, and I had met a guy by the name that was in Sao Paulo whose name was Thomas Gilmour. Thomas Gilmour was a great missionary. He was a King James guy all the way. Thomas Gilmour had called me and he said, "Hey, there is a real ruckus down here about you coming down because they have seen some of your material and your standing on the King James Bible. All of these churches down here that are connected with Finini are all connected to this Bible college." He says, "It is really getting ugly." He says, "And I am just calling, I want to ask, Dr. Finini wanted me to call you that you are going to be down here for a week and a half, that Saturday morning that you are here. They would like to have a debate with you on the issue of the King James Bible. Dr. Finini believes it. I am not sure he is strong enough to take it on by himself. And he wants to know if you will take and have a debate with the professors of the college over the King James Bible."

I said, "Absolutely. I think that would be great." And he said, "Wait a minute." He says, "There are 30 of them and there are going to be 5,000 students here. And they have allotted from nine o'clock in the morning to one o'clock in the afternoon for you to go back and forth with these guys. But I am just telling it, you do not have to do this." He says, "It is going to be 30 to one." And I said, "Oh, I am in, man, no problem for me." I will tell you, I knew what the opportunity was down there.

Now, let me show you how God works. I went down fully ready to go. It got to be Thursday, kind of happened Saturday, ready to go. Oh, Thomas is all nervous. He is going to be my translator. He was a great translator. Him and I really worked well together. But he is nervous. 30 to one, and he says, "There is still time." I said, "Let us go and do this, man." I mean, in my mind, you put 30 guys against me. I will tell you what, I will run between the cracks so fast and so far, I will get you guys fighting among yourselves. So I said, "I am ready."

So that Saturday morning, Thomas picks me up. We go there to this big auditorium. Dr. Finini is there. Dr. Finini is, I can tell he is nervous. And I meet the college professor, not the college president, and Dr. Finini. And we are sitting there. All of a sudden, somebody comes in and comes over to Dr. Finini. Then Dr. Finini, I can see he is really troubled. He comes over to me and Thomas and he says, "They are not coming. All 30 of them have backed out. They are not coming." Thomas, as he laid on the floor, wiping his brow, praised the Lord for that.

Dr. Finini was enraged. He had put so much into this that he felt like he had lost faith that these guys have betrayed him. So for the next three and a half, four hours, Dr. Finini said, "Everybody is here. You came to teach. You teach us for the next three and a half, four hours why the King James Bible is the Word of God." For the next three and a half hours, without any opposition at all, not one person, I beat these guys that did not show up senseless. At the end, Dr. Finini got up

and Dr. Finini said, "This church, my church, will always only stand on the King James Bible as the absolute Word of God." God always has His remnant. It was a case where he wants to put you in the same kind of scenario.

## VIII. Embracing Truth: The Kiss of Christ's Word

Now look at Proverbs 24:26.

*Proverbs 24:26*

*Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer.*

Now, this is a Tribulation and the Second Coming passage all the way.

*Psalms 2:12*

*Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*

Here is what you have. In the Old Testament, you had Baal worship. Baal worship was a worship of graven images. Part of Baal worship in the worship of that was to actually kiss the images. You see it all the time. The Roman Catholic Church has you kiss the Pope's ring.

*1 Kings 19:18*

*Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.*

See, they kissed the graven images. I told you down in Rio, when you come into Rio de Janeiro, there on that mountaintop is a 600-foot Christ. Did you ever see it? You stand with his arms outstretched. That is their God. I just tell you, Rio de Janeiro is the most demon-possessed city on the planet. We were there holding our discipleships, and we were up on a little hotel up there where we stayed at, which was kind of on a little hill, and you could look out around all the different things down there. Word got out that we were there. Every night you would see the witch doctors and the witches having a little fire down around the circle of where we were staying and against us. Every morning you would come down there, we would run, and there would be dead chickens and blood all over the place. It is a very gigantic town. Unbelievable. That statue needs to be a little bigger. It did not do much for them.

They have one down the Ozarks. Did you ever go see the Christ of the Ozarks? Not the neat one. I was there one time, just to show you how it works. I was there one time. You cannot get close to it because they have a chain-link fence about this high around it, and people are all standing looking at it. For whatever reason, you have this long park your car, long walk up, chain on the side, and a big circle around it with chain. You cannot get close to it, and everybody gets quiet. They are standing there. I am sitting there watching. I am loving this. I am just checking it out. There is just one lady. I know. Here is the Christ. Here is the fence. She is right here. She steps over the fence, comes up to the statue. I am sitting here. You have got this. It was the only time in

my whole history of my life where I was off my game. I should have been on my game. When she went up there, I should have said, "Hi, what are you doing? Freeze."

*Hosea 13:2*

*And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.*

Now, to kiss something is to embrace something. Israel embraced Baal worship. Along with that embracing came the intimacy of all of that religion. In the Tribulation, they will follow the same thing. What they did is they kissed the images. It shows they are embracing them, how important it is. They embrace those images by kissing them. In the Tribulation period, the nation of Israel is going to have to embrace Christ, kiss Christ. We are talking about kissing Him and embracing Him. We are talking about on the mouth. We are talking about the words of His mouth, embracing the words of His mouth. It is not the fact that you go up and kiss Christ. It is the fact that the words out of His mouth, as Job 23:12, a Tribulation passage, says:

*Job 23:12*

*Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.*

When you embrace the words of Christ that come out of His mouth, you kiss Him. You embrace the intimacy. Now, inspirationally, it is me and you.

*Song of Solomon 1:2*

*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.*

Has God ever come down and kissed you? He comes down and kisses you through the kisses of His mouth, the words. For you and for me, the precious intimacy of a precious embracing of His words, of His mouth, my promises to me that from my out together, lovely.

Everything in this world, no matter where it goes or where it comes from, all goes back to the Bible. I think of all the stories that we tell our children. I think of all the movies that we see. I think that all of the things that we watch and we get so caught up, we do not even know that the very plots by which the movies are made that we watch all follow back to the Bible, the very nursery rhymes that we told our children, the fairy tales as they go.

The Bible says, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." I want to tell you something. There is a fairy tale that we like to tell our kids. They made cartoons about, they made movies about. Walt Disney made it famous. It is the story of Snow White. You know what? When you have Snow White, what you have, you have Genesis 2 and Genesis 3. You have a woman that was Snow White who took of a forbidden fruit by the wicked witch of the west, and she died. You and I, because death passed upon one man, death passed upon all men, and you and I are dead in the trespasses of sin.

You have Snow White who is a picture of you and me. You have the wicked witch who is a female deity who brings death to her. You have seven dwarfs, and in the Old Testament book of Leviticus, dwarfs are demonic. So they are probably the seven unclean spirits that Israel gets over there in Matthew 12. You have the wicked witch, you have the seven dwarfs, you have Snow White. All we need now is a prince.

You know the story. She is lying there dead. Here comes the prince. That prince comes in. She is lying there. He kneels down and he kisses her, and she comes to life. I want to tell you, there was a day that you and I were dead in trespasses of sin, and we were dead. One day my Prince came down, and when He kissed my soul with the Word of God, I came alive. That intimacy of that kiss of your soul has bonded you for eternity. Someday you are the bride. He is the Bridegroom. Like every fairy tale, when the prince kissed her, brought her back to life, they live happily ever after. I want to tell you something. My Prince came down and kissed my wounded soul and gave me life. I am telling you right now, someday, quickly, maybe today, hopefully by the time I am done here, we are going to live together forever happily. That is no fairy tale, folks. One day my Prince will come. I am not talking about standard alignment photo mat.

## IX. Preparing for God's Work and Finding Your Fit

Look at Proverbs 24:27.

*Proverbs 24:27*

*Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.*

Now this is a great principle. Here again, doctrinally, this is Israel and the work of the 144,000, which we have already talked about a couple of times. Inspirationally, it is a great picture and principle for us in preparing ourselves for the work God saved us for. It says, "Prepare thy work without and make it fit for thyself."

The Bible says that all scripture is given by inspiration that is profitable, profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Then it says in 2 Timothy 3:17 that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. God has a perfecting process for your life and my life after we get saved. That perfecting process is where God wants you to fit in what He is going to do. Proverbs 24:27 is simply saying, and this is true of so many of you, that when you get into God's ministry, you will find exactly where you fit into God's overall plan.

Now there may be a lot of God's people out there in the world today that do not know where they are going or what they are doing and cannot figure it out. I am going to tell you something, I for one know exactly what my job is. I know exactly what God has called me to do. I know exactly where He has called me to do it. I know what my job is. I know where I fit into what God is doing. That ought to be every question ought to have that.

There are two types of lost in the Bible. There is a lost man who is without Christ, and he is lost to where he is at. Then there is a saved man who is lost to who he is with Christ. You get saved to

serve. You do not get saved to sit. Nowhere in the Word of God does God ever recognize or acknowledge a child of God not involved in ministry.

When you get into God's ministry, you will find out exactly God will bring you to the point that He will open up and He will give you exactly what you need to find out where you fit into what He is doing. Over there in Philippians 2:12, there is a verse that everybody has a struggle with. I never saw the struggle with it. It talks about "work out your own salvation."

*Philippians 2:12*

*Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

Everybody says, "Well, that means works is for salvation." How can it be works for salvation if you are already saved and then you are told to work it out after you get saved? If it was works for salvation, they would say, "Work for salvation, get saved by works." He is talking about somebody who is already saved, and you are supposed to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. What does that mean? It means that once you get saved, you are supposed to find out what God wants you to do, and you are supposed to do it. You are supposed to work out and find out where you fit.

In our Christian life, there are many things that we are to be absolute about. I get that. Sure of. But three of the main ones the Bible talks about are:

1. A sure word. 2 Peter 1:19

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: It says, "We have a more sure word of prophecy." Whereunto you do well that you take heed of the light that is set up in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arrives in your heart. That is the rapture. So you have a sure word. If you go back to 2 Peter 1:18, you will find what it is more sure of because 2 Peter 1:18 talked about the very voice of God. You have a Bible in your hand that is a more sure prophecy than the voice of God Himself. You know why? Because when God gave you the book in 1611, He is not going to speak to you other than through that book.

2. A sure calling. Then you are supposed to have a sure calling. Once you get a sure word, then you can have a sure calling. You know what God has called you to do. 2 Peter 1:10

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. It says in 2 Peter 1:10, "If you do that, you will never fail or never fall." Once you figure out what God has given you in the book, then you will figure out what God has called you to do, and then you will figure out how God is to define you and fit you into that to accomplish that. The worst calamity that you have ever saw in a Christian life will be a Christian who is not sure of his calling, and they are wandering around everywhere. They do everything they think they are supposed to do except what they are supposed to do. The fulfillment for a Christian is found in only two areas: who you are in Christ and what you do in Christ after you figure out who you are in Christ.

### 3. A sure reward. Proverbs 11:18

The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward. Proverbs 11:18 says, "He that soweth a deceitful work, but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward." You want to understand the law of sowing and reaping? It is simply this: you reap the wind, you reap the whirlwind, you reap righteousness, you reap a reward. I mean, you sow righteousness, you reap a reward. Life is about, a ministry is about reaping what you sow. You invest your life in the Word of God, the sure word and the sure calling, you invest your life in that, it will bring a sure reward. It is just that simple. Whatever you invest your life in is what God will bring apart in the harvest.

Now look at Proverbs 24:27, the middle of the verse, "make it fit for thyself in the field."

*Matthew 13:38*

*The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;*

Matthew 13:38 now tells us that the field is the world. So you are supposed to fit yourself into the world as God's ambassador, as God's remnant, to do through a sure word and a sure calling to receive a sure reward.

*Proverbs 31:16*

*She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.*

Proverbs 31:16, where it talked about the virtuous woman, it says, "She considereth the field and buyeth it." I always looked at that and always thought what an amazing principle that is. The Bible says the field is the world, and the Bible says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." When Jesus Christ came down and died on the cross, He died for the whole world, the whole field. He never asked you to buy the whole world. He asked you just to buy a field within this world. He bought the field, He asked you to consider a field. My field that He asked me to consider is Kansas City, and you know what? I bought it hook, line, and sinker. Only place I have ever been since God saved me. Only place where I came here and I will die here. This is my field right here. I got a sure word that gave me a sure calling, and I saw the field that God gave me, and I bought it. Your job and my job is through the sure word to get the sure calling to get the sure reward. Figure out the field that God has called you to, figure out where you fit. Find out that field and then buy it. Everything you have.

## X. The Principle of "Fit" in Ministry

Now the word "fit," I like that word. The word "fit" is a key word to study in our text here today. For you and for me, it is a great principle that we need to understand, and you have heard me say many times that the key to ministry will be unity. Everybody basically on the same page of ministry doing things. When I talk to you through the people ministry, I teach you on a unity concept of that if you are going to work with people, I give you how I do it, what I am thinking, how it works, and I expect you to do it that way. I mean, I will leave you room for your own personality, of course. Unity will be based on our understanding of the word "fit."

*Song of Solomon 5:10-12*

*10 My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.*

*11 His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.*

*12 His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set; his cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.*

He says this: "My beloved," talking about me, talking about Christ. "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousands. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set." Now there is the first time you find the word "fitly set." It is talking about the eyes of the Lord Jesus. His eyes are fitly set. You know what that means? It means He sees things just the way they are. There is a good balance to them. His eyes are fitly set, and your eyes, when it comes to the Word of God and what you see in life, you should see it as it really is, not an appearance. You know how you do that? You see it through His eyes. In fact, over there in Song of Solomon 5:12, it says that He has the eyes of a dove, and when you go over there to Song of Solomon 1:15, talking about the church, it says that she has the eyes of the dove. In other words, we are to see things through His eyes, and His eyes are fitly set. So the first thing you have to do to get fit into what God does, you have to get your eyes fit. Fitly set, not just fit, fitly set. What are your eyes fitly set on? The Word of God. Notice what He says: "His eyes are as eyes of doves," type of the Holy Spirit of God, "by the rivers of water," type of the Word of God, "washed with milk," type of the Word of God. In other words, you are fitly set in what you look at on the book that God gave you.

Now if that was not enough,

*Proverbs 25:11*

*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.*

A word talking about the Bible, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." That is the Word of God. Once you get your eyes fitly set, then you start to put out the Word of God, and you start to get your eyes fitly set. It is fitly spoken. When I preach the Word of God, when you teach discipleship or you work for somebody or you preach like wherever you go to preach or whatever you do, our message, our preaching, when we preach, we should make it fit. We should understand our crowd, we should understand what we are trying to do. So many guys that they preach, they are over the time to do. When you preach, you have one theme or one thought you want to communicate. You get that thing out there and lay it down, and then everything else you use, you use to drive that point home, and you make the message fit.

*Ephesians 2:20-22*

*20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;*

*21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:*

*22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit:*

Talking about the church, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building," the church, "fitly framed together." There it is, "fitly framed." A church needs to be fitly framed together. What does that mean? Every piece fits. The framework of the church should be fit perfectly together, and it grows into a holy temple in the Lord, "to whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Once the church, once your eyes are fitly set, once your words are fitly spoken, once the church is fitly framed, you will become fit for what God wants you to do in your temple.

*Ephesians 4:16*

*From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

"From whom the whole body fitly joined together." There it is again, the body, body of Christ, "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Now there is the perfect picture of what a New Testament Bible-believing church should be. Its eyes are fitly set on the fit Word of God. The church is trained and built that everybody is fit together, and then as you are fit together, you take that and you build your body, your temple for God, fitly built together, and everybody is on the same page and understands what God wants them to do because you fit in.

Now let me speak clearly. All my ministry, wherever I have been, I have heard the whiners and the complainers, "Well, I, we just, I just don't fit in." "Well, I just, I like the churches, but I just..." First rule number one: you only get out of something what you are willing to put into it. "I do not have any friends." But it is hard to have friends when you never come to church. "I know everybody should be calling you up." We had to pass your name out on the call list this week, 100 people call so-and-so, they feel unwanted. You get friends because you show yourself to be friendly. You only get out of something what you are willing to put into it.

All my ministry, all my life, I have heard, "Well, some people say, 'Well, I, I, I just, I just, I just do not fit in.'" Well, allow me just to take another couple of minutes and broaden your horizons. In any Bible-believing, Bible-teaching church, when you have a faithfulness in ministry, a fearlessness in ministry, and a ferventness in ministry, there are your threes. By God's design, you will only fit in when you make yourself fit into the field of ministry. Notice it says, "make yourself." Nobody is going to make you fit in here. I mean, I do not know, whatever you do in life, there are probably very three things that you did that you really wanted to do that somebody had to twist your arm to do it. If you like to play football in sports, nobody probably made you do that. Maybe there are some parents that made them do it, but the majority would not. You like to play baseball, we have got some great baseball players, nobody made you do it. You want to

go do this, you want to do that, nobody makes you do it. But suddenly when it comes to getting into the ministry, somebody has to make us. You only get out of something what you are willing to put into it.

Honestly, if you are going to fit in in a Bible-believing, Bible-teaching church, the only way you are going to fit in is through ministry. I praise the Lord every day of my life that this church is not a social club, but I will tell you, we are always looking for a party. Each one of you, every one of you sitting under the sound of my voice today, each one of you are an incredible piece of work that God wants to fit into His plan. My job and the job of my dear people here who work with me in ministry, our job is to mold you, our job is to shape you, our job is to knock off the rough edges, our job is to polish you and to fit you in to the ministry of what God is doing here. We have one common thread that weaves its way through everything that we do: it is ministry, and the ministry is people. You want to fit in, it is through helping people. It is through understanding through the sure word your sure calling for a sure reward.

My philosophy in ministry is completely foreign from every philosophy I have ever seen in every pastor in any church. We do not break everybody down into little cell groups. We do not have, all right, we do for the teens, but for their own reason. We do not have, we do not have a little section for the teenagers and then a little section for the singles and then for the college and for the young adults. We do not have a Jolly 60 ministry here where we put you on a little bus and take you out someplace where you can try to free samples of cheese or whatever, because you do not have any money. That is not what we do.

I get it, the reason, and they will sell this, they have told me that the reason is that they say, "Well, you have somebody that is 60 and somebody that is 20, they really do not have anything socially in common." I understand that. You know, a 60-year-old, and this is really not true in our church, but just for the sake of, let me say this, a 60-year-old is not going to be out there playing ball with a 20-year-old or playing volleyball, even though in our church we have some really weird people who can do that. I get it, a 60-year-old and a 20-year-old may have nothing in common playing ball, but they have everything in common for ministry. It is just where a pastor puts the emphasis.

I started a softball ministry years ago before we ever had it here. Hundreds of people came to Christ through it. Basketball too, volleyball also. The Memorial Day picnic, you think we have had ever since we have been here, that Memorial Day picnic goes back 40 years, long before you ever were born, some of you. You know what? I have never, we do a lot of fun things, but we do more fun things than most churches. Most churches, I mean, they do not have anything fun you do. I mean, the funnest thing for the pastor is, "We are going to take up an offering now." I mean, that is his fun day.

So you have softball leagues, volleyball leagues, and here is what they were, here is the mindset: "Okay, we are going to have a softball league, and we are going to play softball, and hopefully we will get some people to come, and maybe we can get some people saved." That is the standard thought. Here is my idea on it: "We are going to have a softball league, and it is going to be a ministry. I am going to give two captains and a co-captain, so I am going to give you seven

people. You have got to have ten to play. You go find three more people. We are going to have a softball league, and it is going to be ministry, and in the process of having a ministry, we are going to try to figure out how to play softball." It is a ministry.

I get it, a 50-year-old, a 60-year-old has nothing in common with somebody going out there playing ball or running the Iron Man or whatever, but you know what? This church is not about the event. The common thread that codes everything we do together is the ministry, and the ministry is reaching people. That is why in discipleship, you can have a 60-year-old and a 20-year-old and a 15-year-old, and they minister together. When they are out in the street on outreach, you have got them all ages out there, and they are ministering together. Ministry does not know an age limit. The older ones are supposed to lead the younger ones. Many times the younger ones in some churches lead the older ones. It does not matter. We can put any 20 people together, any 15 people together, put you in a scenario where you have got to go do this, and I know you are going to get it done. Our church is a great example of this. You team up to do whatever needs to be done, and it is not, "Well, I am 60 and I cannot do this," and, "I am 20 and I can." You minister together because you fit together, and you fit together because your eyes are fit on the book, your words just fit in your mouth, your church is fit and pulls it together, and you have built your body together in this church, fitly joined together for the work of the ministry. Your vessels that are fit for the Master's use, why? Because you fit together. Why? Because in any situation you go in, it does not matter who does what. You do not stand over there, "Well, I did not get to win so-and-so to Christ. I did not get to preach. I did not get to give my testimony." You are there, you fit in, you are part of the body.

It is like your physical body. I do not go home this afternoon, take my shoes off and take my socks off, and my toe says, "Well, thanks a lot. Your hands were waving all around, your mouth was going, your nose was going, but I was stuck down here in this old leather suit with this big old wool sock around me. I am just not going to be a toe anymore. You think you are such a good preacher, you think you can move around up there, just let my big toe friend here freeze up for a while and not do what it is supposed to do, and see how good you dance around up there making a fool out of yourself." Oh, that hurt. Tried to teach you my lesson, I just taught myself one.

Your toe has to connect to your body. It does not get any glory. It is probably the ugliest part of your body. It does not get any glory. Nobody says, "Wow." I know you go places and spend hundreds of dollars to paint them, then you put shoes on and nobody sees them, and at the end of the day, the paint does not keep them from smelling just like they did before you painted them. They are toes. I am telling you, the part of your body that never gets recognized, the part of your body that everybody always sees and hears and watches, "Oh, what an amazing person she is," or this, "Yeah, yeah," and the toe down there said, "Yeah, I never get any credit." No, the toe does not care, but you know why? Because it is fit to your foot, and your foot to your leg, and your leg to your hips, and to the part of the body, and it is fitly joined together, and all it takes is your toe saying, "I am not doing it today," and the whole system breaks down. That is the way a church works. It does not matter what you do, it does not matter what I do, it does not matter who is preaching, who is teaching, it does not matter who gets to say what. We are fitly joined together as a body, and we work together, and that is what makes it work.

## XI. Prioritizing God's House Over Your Own

Look at the last part of Proverbs 24:27, "and afterward build thine house." Wow, another great principle. Put the building fitly joined together of your body first and everything else in life second. Now I know it uses the word "house" here, and we will talk about it in that context, but he is using the word "house" here in a broad expression of everything that the world has. You do not want to get caught up with all the worldly things and neglect God's house.

Of course, there are two great examples in the Bible. The first one is the book of Haggai, where they go back under Ezra and Nehemiah. They are told to rebuild the temple, God's body, the place where God is going to meet with them. They are told to rebuild it. They begin to build it, and then when Haggai writes, it is 15 years later. Somewhere from point A when they started to build it to now, 15 years later, they quit building it. Not only have they quit building it, all the material that was gathered to build that, God's temple, they are taking it and building their own houses with it. Haggai says, "What is wrong with you?" Somebody said, "Well, it is just a building." He says, "Just a building? That is the temple of God. That is not just a building. That is the future of your nation." "Oh, it is just going to church." "Oh, it is just Bible study." "Oh, it is just this or just that." You are nuts. It is building your future as a child of God that you can get a sure word, get a sure calling, and get a sure reward, and most importantly, that you will fit in to that calling. God has got a spot for you.

Then the second one is Solomon, chosen by God to build the temple of God. The Bible says in 1 Kings 6:38 that Solomon takes seven years to build the temple of God.

*1 Kings 6:38*

*And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.*

But in 1 Kings 7:1, it says he took 13 years to build his own house.

*1 Kings 7:1*

*But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.*

Now Solomon is one of the great disappointments in the Bible. Though he may be the wisest man that ever lived and gives us a couple of really good wisdom books, the end of his life is not very good. You can look at all the dumb things that he does. He puts his own kid in sacrifices to the fire of Moloch. He collects women from all around the world. He does a lot of stupid things, and everybody focuses on all the things that he does. He puts his fool for a son in who splits the kingdom and brings an end to the nation of Israel 400 years later. We can look at all that and list all those things out, but I will tell you this, let me tell you where it started. Let me tell you where it all started, the end disaster of his life. Let me tell you where it started: it started all the way back right here where he took more time to build his own house than he did God's.

Your life will wind up as a disaster someday, and you will have all kinds of problems, and you will be scratching your head why, and I will tell you right now ahead of time why: it is because you spent more time with the things of this world and building your own world home than you have building the temple that God gave you and fitting in to what God has called you to do. You not only have a sure calling, you do not have a sure anything, getting caught up in all the things of life illustrated here by a house and neglecting what God has saved you for. Never have your physical house in better shape than your spiritual house. Never have more things of the world dominating your life than the spiritual things that God has given you.

"Preparing thy work without and make it fit for thyself in the field, and afterwards you build your house." You want to be God's minister, and again I say that there is nowhere in the Bible, you may not be a pastor, but everybody in here that is saved is a preacher and a minister. You want to be God's minister in His field, the world. You want to buy a field someday, buy it with all that you have, and you have got to do the work to get there. You have got to pay your dues. You have got to make it work for you because there will be times when you do not want it to work for you. I am just being honest. There will be times that you do not want to study it. There will be times you do not want to come to church. There will be times that you do not want to come to Bible study. There will be times that you do not want to do it. I am just telling you, as saved as we are and love the Lord as we are, we still have this flesh, and sometimes that old house wants to run the new house, and you have to fit yourself into it and make yourself fit and allow God to make you all that He wants you to be.

Priorities in life: ministry number one. It is always saved you for. Everything else is great, not saying you should not do it. I am just saying priorities in life. God's people are the worst at prioritizing the things of God in their life as anybody on this planet, and they always wind up prioritizing the things that do not matter and putting God at the short end of it. You prioritize your life by first of all getting a sure word. When you get that sure word, you get your eyes fitly set. You start speaking a word fitly spoken. You start letting the Word of God in your life through ministry give you a sure calling. Through that sure calling, God will take you and mold you and make you. He will use people in your world to bring you where He wants you to be. Once you get established and your part fitting into what God's program is, not your program, not my program, what God's program is, the ministry of a New Testament local church, then you will receive a sure reward.

## XII. Conclusion: A Sure Word, Calling, and Reward

There is a sure word to be had. There is a sure calling to fulfill. There is a sure reward to be desired. We will hold up there. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We do love You. Thank You for all You do for us. Thank You for the Word of God You have given us. Thank You for these good people. Thank You, Lord, for how they work together and fit in together and cover each other and work with each other, that everybody just dovetails in. It is like a fine crafted piece of furniture, everything fits perfectly. That is because they have got the sure word and they found their sure calling, and their eyes are fitly set on the book that You gave them, and their words out of their mouth are fitly spoken, and they will fit in because of the

things that You made us and gave us that we might be all that we can do for You. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name. Amen.