

## I. Recapping Principles of Family and Ministry

Last week, we finished our section with some of the great principles on dealing with families. We talked about children robbing their fathers and mothers of honor, out of Exodus 20. Then we talked about moms and dads robbing their kids of that time of innocence that God has put in their lives to train them the way God wants them to be. In both cases, what happens is that families now get robbed of the blessings of God in ministry together as a family.

We talked about the principle of short-term and long-term. So many people just look at the short-term of things. A father, right now, short-term, should look at his family as his church. He is the pastor of his family. He should pastor them, teach them, and train them. That is short-term. Long-term is he needs to see the generations that follow, and how he is to build his family through that unbroken chain of ministering together down through the next generations. We saw clearly how God's plan in the Old Testament and also the New Testament was reaching the world through families within a New Testament local church structure.

Last week, we talked about my obligation, my duty as a pastor, and also your duty if you are teaching anybody the Word of God. We talked about Ecclesiastes 12:9-11, where it says that we are to give you acceptable words, gracious words, to give you knowledge, and to set in order many proverbs. We talked about how that is exactly what we try to do with the Bible. We try to take the principles and lay them out so you can have them and understand how you should work through it.

Then we talked about how the Word of God is like nails, and it nails things down for us that otherwise we would not understand how to deal with. But at the same time, many times it nails us, and we need to be nailed. We talked about setting in order those principles so you do not have to follow your own heart, and that really was the key last week: to walk after the heart of God. We talked about a principled life, changing the attitude, not just the action.

## II. Hearing the Heartbeat of God

The greatest example of that anywhere in the Bible, getting God's heartbeat, we have talked about this before, this is certainly nothing new, but just to put it in remembrance, is the Apostle John. He is one of the greatest pictures in all of the Bible of what our relationship should be. His writings are probably more unique than any other writer in the whole Bible, because when he writes—and he writes five books of the Bible, which just happen to be the five wisdom books of the New Testament, just as you have five wisdom books of the Old Testament—he writes clearly from his position, having everything else in the New Testament before him. He writes from a unique perspective. He writes from an Old Testament Jew coming up through the time of Christ into the Church Age and becoming one of the greatest pictures of what your life and my life should be.

It is in John 13:25 that we are told that there at the Last Supper, they were all sitting there, and the Bible says that he leans over and he lays his head on the very breast of the Lord Jesus. Now, that is a tremendous principle. Most people do not get it. They do not see it. John did something that no other man in the Bible did: he actually physically heard the heartbeat of God. I have often thought about that, that he is a type of the church, and the church today is the only other body down through history of believers that can actually do that. You can hear the heartbeat of God because the heartbeat of God is the Word of God.

Back in Song of Solomon, I just bumped into this one day about 25 years ago and I never forgot it. I always knew that Song of Solomon was a picture of my relationship with Christ and all the things that I am to have. But in Song of Solomon 2, it is one of the most personal chapters about Christ coming, looking at me, loving me, and then coming in the rapture to take me out. In Song of Solomon 2:6, it is describing my love relationship with Him and Him with me. He says there in 2:6:

*Song of Solomon 2:6*

*His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.*

I must have read that for the first 20 years of my Christian life and never really understood the impact of that compared to John. Because John is sitting on the right hand, he lays his head on the breast of Jesus. And in Song of Solomon 2:6, for you and for me, it says, "His left hand," Christ's, "is under my head and his right hand doth embrace me." That is a picture of John laying across and hearing the heartbeat of God. That is where every one of us should be today, hearing the heartbeat of Almighty God.

### III. The Principle of Giving to the Poor

So we closed out that section, and we are going to deal with the last two verses here in Proverbs 28 today. In our verses today, again, we are going to just add some more principles about the Christian life that you can add to the list that we have already had as we have been coming through the book of Proverbs.

Here I am going to read these two verses and then we are going to come back and we are going to kind of look at it here.

*Proverbs 28:27-28*

*He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.*

*When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase.*

Now, verse 27 says:

*Proverbs 28:27*

*He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.*

The verse is dealing with the poor, and there are several important things that we want to take time to note out of this this morning, and it is found in this verse.

First of all, allow me to tell you that doctrinally, this is a picture of the nation of Israel, the Jew in the tribulation period. When you come through the Bible, you will find that one of the key words is the word "poor." Every time you find that, you want to stop and look at it. I am not going to say 100% of the time, but I would say probably 90% of the time, either directly or indirectly through a type, it will be talking about the nation of Israel, who is very poor when it comes to the rest of the world as far as being taken advantage of by the world. They are defined all through the Bible. If I remember right, there are 37 references in Psalms, and I think there are also 37 references to them in Proverbs in reference to the poor. Every one of them in those cases will be the nation of Israel.

In Matthew 5-10, we have what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. It is there that Jesus says, "Blessed is the poor in spirit," and He is talking about the nation of Israel. In Matthew 25, there is a story—we will come back and talk about it in just a little bit—a story about somebody in the tribulation period helping the Jew. It is very obvious when you read it that they are very poor and they need the help of somebody to get them through.

Now, historically, it will be the man of our context of Proverbs 28. We have been talking about him the last couple of weeks. He is the guy who basically is a respecter of persons. He caters to the rich and the famous, but he holds the poor in disdain and would not walk across the street to help them. As the verse says, he hides his eyes from them. We made no bones about it that this is probably 95% of the pastors in churches today that cater to the rich and famous because they think that they have a lot of money, and the pastors always have some grand scheme, and no bucks, no Buck Rogers, and that is the whole mindset.

But inspirationally, and this is where I want to focus on it today, it will deal with one of the greatest principles that Jesus ever taught, whether it is doctrinally or inspirationally. It is a principle that He Himself followed and set the example for us, and that is taking care of the poor. You have heard me say it many times, the importance of a balance in a Christian's life, and there is no question about that.

Last week, I talked about the book of Philippians, and I told you that there were nine valuable principles in the book of Philippians that if you did not have any other part of the Bible and all you had was that book, you could take those nine principles, and those nine principles, if put in the right place, will form the balance of any child of God. There are nine incredible principles. We have talked about it before on Bible study, except it has been a while since we did that. Philippians is the best church in the New Testament, and Paul writes to all the other churches, and he always has something that he has to correct them on or deal with them on. You are going to notice that he does not do that with the Philippian church. They are a good, well-balanced church. So because of that, you find these nine great principles that if you put them into your life and live by them, it pretty much will take care of everything in life.

Most pastors would agree with the concept of a Christian being balanced, and they would understand that, and I am sure that most of them would agree with that. Yet what happens is that

they may agree with that, but they fail to see that their own church needs to have a balance. A balance just is not for you. A church needs to have a balance. For me, I see in the Word of God, and I try to take every component that will fit the balance of this church, because when you drive down the road in your car and you have got four tires that are out of balance, you are in for a bumpy ride. I will tell you something else, as an individual, you go through life out of balance and you are in for a bumpy ride. I will tell you one thing else, you take a church that has got four tires out of balance, and you are in for a bumpy ride there too. It is a thing where as the church grows, the balance will change. As you grow, the balances in your life will change. It may keep the same principles that you got starting out, but you are going to add to them as you increase and develop yourself, and that is true. That is true of churches too. I understand that.

Now, there has to be a balance between preaching and teaching. You come to the place where it is a thing where preaching and teaching, you find a lot of churches where all the guy wants to do is teach, and he never preaches. Then you find the other guys who all they want to do is scream and yell and preach, and they never teach. You have got to have a balance in that. There is a balance between pastoring and preaching. I have observed that all my life in the ministry, and I have said this many, many times, most pastors that are good pastors, most of the time they are not very good preachers, and most really good preachers do not make very good pastors. You find somebody that can do both. It has a balance that can do both of those, and that is what you are looking for.

There is a balance between grace and truth. You have to be able to give people grace, but you have to hold them accountable to some degree with the truth. There is a balance in that. In preaching itself, there comes a balance. Every heresy in the body of Christ and without the body of Christ has gotten in and did its damage because of the unbalance between the doctrinal, the inspirational, and historical application of the scriptures. You have got to have that balance. There has to be a balance in music, and most churches are completely out of balance when it comes to music. There has to most certainly be a balance in ministry.

I have learned over the years, almost 50 years now, and I have been associated with most Baptist churches. Most Baptist churches run their ministry by tradition, Baptist tradition. The Baptists have sat down for what now? I do not know, since the 40s or the 50s, with J. Frank Norris when he broke out of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Independent Movement started. They sat down a—we talk about tradition, and the Catholics have traditions and the Methodists, but I want to tell you something, some of the biggest traditions you ever saw in your life are Baptist. They follow their mindset, and they think that if you do not do it this way, then God is not connected with it. They have been brainwashed with the aspect that you have got to have a Sunday school, and then you have a church service, and then you have a Sunday night service, and then you have a Wednesday night service. I have had people call me on the phone and ask about the church and say, "What time is your Sunday night service?" And I just say, "Well, we do not have a Sunday night service." And immediately you can hear the apostate tendencies come up. They think we are all dying and going to hell because we do not have a Sunday night service. It never dawned on them that in most of their mindsets with their churches, they teach their

people Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, and Lord knows what else. When is the time that you as a church go out and minister to people?

Of course, I have decided, I have never been a traditionalist. We do not have a Wednesday night church service. I have a Thursday night Bible study, and I get more done on my Thursday night Bible study for two hours than you get on Wednesday night with a bunch of people that do not really want to be there. They just came because they know you would be knocking on their door if you did not, because you are not giving them anything. Pastors like to manipulate people. They like to intimidate people. I had a guy one time preaching, and he said to the congregation, "You will tell what people think about their church when they show up on Sunday morning. Then you will find out what people think about their pastor when they show up on Sunday night. And then you will find out what they think about the Lord when they show up on Wednesday night." That is about as goofy as I have ever heard in my life. But that is what they do today. You know why? They are traditionalists.

You go to most Baptist churches, every time they preach a sermon, they give them an invitation. They sing 28 stanzas of "Just As I Am," and when that does not work, then they will shift over to "Have Thine Own Way, Lord." And when that does not work, they will shift over to "The Yellow Rose of Texas" or something like that. That is tradition. See, you know what tradition does? Tradition locks out the Holy Spirit of God as far as I am concerned. I do not want to get locked into anything except the Word of God. You get into the New Testament, there is no Sunday night service, there is no Wednesday night service. You know what you do? You do what works to reach people. I would much rather take a hundred of you out this afternoon and ministering to people and witnessing to people. I would much rather have 30 of you discipling somebody on Wednesday night all through this city than just coming in here and sitting down and giving you more Bible. You get more Bible here than any place on this planet. That is not the problem. You know what the problem is? Getting you to do something with it. And that is where it has to be. But that is where churches are. They are traditionalized today.

It is a great answer to why, here anyhow, I do the things that I do. Many times I feel like that insurance guy, "I know a thing or two because I saw a thing or two." And that is so true. I have watched half of a century almost in churches what works and what does not work. I am not going to waste any more time doing things that do not work when I know what will work. It is just one of those things where that is just the way it is. In doing that, I will follow the patterns and the principles of the three areas that are really laid out in the scriptures for what a church ought to be.

The first one is the Church of Antioch. The Church of Antioch is where they are first called Christians. To me, the Church of Antioch is invaluable. It would be Acts 11 and Acts 12, because it is in the Church of Antioch that you see the structure of the church. You get to see the mindset of the church. It tells you there that one of the greatest keys to ministry that most churches never get, certainly most Christians never get it, is ministering to the Lord first. If you asked the average pastor what that means, he could not tell you. He could not tell you. Of course, that is where I go first to put my bow.

Then the second one is the Church of Ephesus in Acts 20. You are going to find that Acts 20, Paul's farewell address to the church in Ephesus before he goes down to Jerusalem, it is one of the greatest places anywhere in the Bible. When you study it and look at it, you will see that there are six things that Paul tells that church they are supposed to do. Where Acts 11, 12, and 13 give you the mindset of the church, Acts 20 shows you the ministry of the church. And it shows you the balance.

Then the third thing finally will be the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He spends 33 years on this earth, the last three and a half in His public ministry. It is incredible. There are so many things that you can learn from it. Of course, we have got the heretics today that pop up, the hyper-dispensationalists and all that crowd that says that we are not to follow the words in the Gospel, that they are not for us. They get so hyper over it that all they do, they throw out everything else in the New Testament and just take Paul's. When that does not work, they even cut some of that out. Of course, that is heresy to anybody that knows the Bible. But that is just the way it is today. So there are many lessons on all of these, and it forms for us a balance. As you grow, you have to reshape your balance. As this church grows, we have to reshape the balance.

When the Lord showed up at the first coming of Christ, we can list a lot of problems with the nation of Israel. But you know what the bottom line fundamental problem was? They are totally out of balance. They have lost sight of everything that God gave them in the Old Testament. The reason why they have done that is because the whole religious system of Israel had been given over during that captivity time in those four silent years. The scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees showed up. Now, both those groups are non-biblical groups. They show up around 160 BC, 167 for one of the other groups. The scribes, who were biblical, are totally corrupt. What they do is they completely destroy everything that God gave to the nation of Israel. At the first coming of Christ, the nation of Israel is completely out of balance. What Christ does in His most simplistic form is He tries to bring them back to some form of balance about God and the Word of God and Him being their Messiah.

I have watched that, and we talk about the lessons of history, or maybe I should say not learning the lessons of history. But the church today is also completely out of balance. The great parallels between the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ. Our modern-day scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees have done the same thing that they did to the nation of Israel. Pastors today, instead of building some dynasty or some monument to themselves, should be trying to restore that balance and get back to what the New Testament is really all about, and that would be people and training them and building them as families.

But in both cases, as we find in verse 28, Jesus was always caring about the poor. Again, the scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees, they did not. They loved the uppermost rooms at the synagogue. They liked to wear the long robes and be seen of men walking down the street. They liked to be seen praying and give out the prayers that they were really spiritual. They did not care about the people that Jesus really came to minister to. When you study it, the apostles fell into that same trap. It is an easy trap to fall into because the problem with the church that gives you so much Bible, any church, the problem with the church that just gives you the Word

of God, the Word of God, and the Word of God, and you get all fat and sassy about it. The bottom line is you can enjoy the blessings of God so much that you lose your perspective. The blessings of God are a great thing, but they can be a bad thing too, because you get so caught up in the blessings, you lose sight of who you really are. That is when you are out of balance. It is just that simple.

#### IV. Jesus' Example and Practical Ministry to the Poor

Today, it just so happens, and I did not plan this, but it just worked out this way, is our Restart Sunday. Two days a month that we take and dedicate to going out and taking care of the poor throughout the city and do what we can do. To me, it has always formed a great balance. I am going to talk about it in two formats, but for me, it forms a great balance and part of what we do here. I have tried to strategically build ministries that will be profitable to your spiritual growth and also to evangelism.

We have Chris out last night with the guys down in Westport doing the street preaching ministry, and they do a phenomenal job down there. We have a counseling ministry where you people work with me in the people ministry, and we work with people who have issues and people who have problems. We have our sports ministry that is basically an outreach. Volleyball coming up here after the first of the year, and softball, and then of course, Zach's deal like the flag football or the kickball or the things that we do, or dodgeball or whatever it is. Those are the things that we do to try to bring people in, young people, and try to get them. It is a thing where we have our camp and our youth ministry that Zach and Jenny head up, and so many of you help them with it. We are coming up, we have our special events coming up on New Year's Eve. We are having our Bad Attitude Baptist Blowout. We will take all night long that night and just preach the Word of God and sing and have a great time and get preached to us. We have our prayer groups on Saturday, Sunday morning that we saw 150 people meeting up there all around and building people and building relationships and praying. We have our Sunday morning obviously and our Thursday night, and our Bible Institute and all the different people ministry and all the things that we do. We have our website and our bookstore and YouTube, and it has been an incredible thing.

I had not told anybody this other than just a few people. Thursday night when I was teaching Bible study, I had my cell phone in my pocket and had it on vibrate, and I felt it vibrate going off, and obviously was not going to do it then. But I forgot about it. As I was getting in my car to go home, I remembered and I thought I better check it in case somebody needs me. I looked at it, and it was a private call, but they had left me a message. So I took the message, and it was hard to hear, but it was Mike Veach from New York, up in Mount Sebago's old church. He was telling me that he says, "Bob, this is Mike Veach. I want you to know I am in the Philippines right now." He said, "I just wanted to call and tell you that we just finished a week with 200 pastors from 200 churches throughout the Philippines. And I wanted to call and thank you." He had asked me when I went up there to preach the 50th anniversary, the fourth anniversary a couple of years ago, but you went with me, he saw our material that we had that we put out through the books and everything. He wanted to buy them. I told him, "Mike, I am not selling them to you. We will

send up what we have. You do whatever you want to do with it. You print it off yourself, but you can use it fine. I do not want a dime for it. You just take it and use it."

Anyway, what he told me there, he says, "I just wanted you to know and thank you for graciously letting it. We took three of your books and we formed the basic Bible teaching curriculum for 200 pastors in the Philippines." One of them was \*20 Lies About the King James Bible\*. Another one was \*How to Rightly Divide the Word of God\*. I think the other one, the third one, it was hard to hear, was \*How to Study the Bible\*. He wanted me to know that basically, Old Paths Baptist Church has just invaded the Philippines. All week long, I did not say a lot about it. I just thought in my mind, I could just see, because I have been in the Philippines, I know how it is over there. I saw some of the Filipino pastors sitting out there in the bush someplace in a hut, or just a little flat house, sitting at a table with a candle going through that material.

You know what? It is because of you. It is because it is church. It has nothing to do with me. You could get a trained monkey to do what I do. It is you guys that took that material. It is John Biscuit who works a 40-hour week at Ford and disciples four or five people who takes and makes those books. It is you ladies here and you guys who proofread for him that you go over that stuff and actually make me look good because my grammar is not the best in the world. You cut out all the cuss words. Sometimes you do not have much left in the book. It is you. It is this church. You are the one who does it. Of course, you reach out and you make this stuff available. Now here, he sends me this thing. I had no idea what God was doing with that. Now here are 200 churches in the Philippines. He said, "They just love the material. It was so well received. They are dying to get material that is based on the Bible that will take a stand on the King James Bible." I am just telling you. It is because of you. It is because of you and your faithfulness of allowing us to do that and being part of that and working through that system that makes those things happen.

It is a thing where the name of the title I told, I was preaching one time and I talked about how that I give more stuff away and how the bookstore is always running in the red. So she listened and she made a little sign and sent it to me, and it said, "The Little Red Bible Bookstore." Because you know what? Bottom line is this: freely give, freely receive. How in the world can I honestly—I mean, I know we have costs in making it and things like that—but you know what? If somebody wanted, some pastor, and they had that, "We use your book, you would have to pay them for every book that you use." Are you kidding me? God gave it to me free. I am going to charge you for what God gave me? Are you out of your mind? What planet do you live on? Of course, that is what it comes down to.

I got a call last week from a guy out on the West Coast who runs the "Last Fight" radio program. I looked at his website. He has got a pretty good radio deal out there, and he wanted us to put, he listened to the website, he wants to put our preaching stuff on his website out there on the radio program. It is one of those things that it is because you form the balance of what we have here. You do all the work. You have gravitated to the Word of God, you fell in love with the Word of God. Now all of this forms the balance, and it just is not here. We have got a church, a little church over here in England. Why? Because Caleb Miller spent his own money to go over there because they are watching on the website, stay with that family, send them everything that we

have got. We have two in Africa. We have one in Holland, and we have them all across the United States. Why? Because when you have a balance, it is what God uses. And you form that balance. A church needs to have a balance, but the church will only be balanced as the individuals in that church are balanced.

Most churches are like that movie, \*Young Frankenstein\*. Remember that movie? When they made that Frankenstein and they sent that hunchback guy to get the brain for it, and he picked up and he said, "What can they turn into a monster?" And he says, "What brain did you get?" He says, "I do not know. I just got one that had a guy's name on it." And he said, "What was his name?" And he says, "I do not know, some guy named Abby Normal." Got an abnormal brain. That is what most churches have a problem with. You have an abnormal brain, Abby Normal.

Giving to the poor. Now there are two aspects to this, and it has to be formed around a balance. In Matthew 25:31-40, you find a great story of somebody caring for the poor and the needy. I know, doctrinally, it is the tribulation period. I get that. This is the great judgment of the nations. He talks about the judgment of the separation of the sheep and the goats. I understand that. But in the story, Jesus says to these people:

*Matthew 25:35-36*

*For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:*

*Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*

And they said unto Jesus:

*Matthew 25:37-39*

*When saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?*

*When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?*

*Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?*

And He says to them in the next, He said down through there:

*Matthew 25:40*

*And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

You know what? I get it. Doctrinally, that is talking to the Jew in the tribulation period. But I am telling you, Jesus always had a love for the poor. Inspirationally, He is always taking care of the poor all through His ministry. He cared for them. I will tell you why, because He understood what it meant to be poor. He left the aristocracy of heaven and came down to be a man. He told us in the Gospels that when a guy wanted to follow Him, and He says, "Hey, I do not have any place to sleep tonight. I do not have any food in my pack. I do not have any of these things. If you are going to follow Me, you better count the cost." I will tell you something else. When He came down from the glory of heaven, the Bible says in 2 Corinthians 8:9:

## 2 Corinthians 8:9

*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

You only got the riches in Christ Jesus today because He came down and gave it all up and became poor. He understands the poor. Now that we have all the riches of Christ Jesus, we need to take care of the poor. I am telling you right now, if Jesus Christ walked this earth today, He would not be with Joel Osteen this morning. He would not be in the mega churches across this city. You know where He would be? I will tell you where He would be. He would be down on the Paseo. He would be down at 10th and Grant. He would be down there where the down-and-outers are. So we do it today because that is what He asked us to do for Him. That will form for any church who understands that they need to have a balance. That will be a very important balance, and I will talk about why in a moment.

Today, the head of the Roman Catholic Church is Pope Francis. I am certainly not pro-Catholic by any stretch of the imagination. I stand by my guns in the Bible, and it is Satan's church with Satan's Bible. I get it. But I want to tell you something about this guy. He is not a favorite with the Roman Catholic hierarchy. He really is not. When he became Pope, he did not want to wear the big white robe and the gold. He wanted to wear his little clothes he did wherever he was when he used to minister to the poor. He actually wanted just a little one-room apartment. He did not want to live in the Pope Playboy Mansion. He did not want that. He wanted just his little one-studio-room apartment. He wanted to be close to the poor. They have these great possessions, and he rides in the Pope's bill, and the crowds will come around, and they have diseases, they have leprosy, they have all these things. He will stop the whole thing, get off, and hold them and kiss their babies and be with them. That is not what the Roman Catholic Church is really all about. This guy is, and he is dying and going to hell. And yet you have God's people who will not walk across the street to give something to the poor. And he is lost on his way to hell.

I remember a couple of years ago, we were down at Restart, where the park is out there, and I was out there, there were some other groups out there, and I got to know those people pretty well. All of a sudden, I am sitting there and looking around the corner, down here comes two big charter buses. I mean, they were expensive buses. They pulled up on this side and sat there for a moment, and then the doors opened up, and two armed guards got out, one of each bus, and walked up there, but the door stood, and then all these people filed off this bus, ran over to that fence over there, and quickly started to put gloves and hats and tie them to the fence up there for the homeless to come and get for Christmas. As soon as they were done, they were guarding their children like you are in pedophile, and they are all looking around, and they are putting these out, and as soon as they were done, boy, they were back on that bus so fast, the armed guards. See, that is the way they look at it. That is a nice warm feeling that they want to have that they do at Christmas time. What about July? You say, "Well, it is so cold." What about when it is 102 in Kansas City down in the inner city? You kidding me?

We used to go get groceries at the Hy-Vee and leave Summit there. We do not go there anymore. I remember one time that this big, no, no, no, on Hy-Vee. I mean, we just, it is just the fact that it

is easier to go to the one in Raytown. So they had this big truck out front, and it was one of the big mega churches, and I will not tell you which one it is, but one of the big mega churches, and they had people out there that were passing out bags that when you went and got your own groceries, that you would put some groceries and buy it and bring it out to them. Long story short, they wanted to load up this big tractor trailer truck with food for the homeless, and I get that. But it is all about, you see, they will do that. It is all about getting that nice, warm, fuzzy feeling, but there is no way they are going down and feed those people. It is just, I get it. Dealing with the poor can be a hard job.

I suggest to you that you go get the biography of Mary Slessor, who back in the 1880s, she was a single female missionary to Nigeria, and she worked her whole life with the poor. Never forget the one on Mary Reed, who lived around the turn of the century, and she was a missionary to the lepers in India. She spent her whole life. I get around a lot on Restart because I do my thing, but then I have to make sure you guys have everything that you need. But I enjoy watching you guys at work. We have a group that goes down there at 13th and Cherry. We have a group that works the library. We have a group that works along the river. We have a group that Will's team that I am never sure where they are at, but they are in the inner city someplace. Then of course, we have Restart itself, the facility, which we are not going down there today.

I watch you. I really do. I remember a time when down along the river, it was one of the most amazing things that you ever saw. There were whole cities down there. You would walk into those woods along the river, and there would be log cabins. There would be tents built into huts. There would be all these, and there would be 30, 40, 50 people living in those communities. It was like going back in the 1850s. You would look over the trees, and there was a skyline of Kansas City. I remember that we actually went down there and held church services. Every Sunday after here, you guys would go down, and they would come out, and you preach and you tell them. Many of them were drunk. Some were, but they all were homeless, and they all had nothing. We stopped it because someone got killed down there. Then the police went down with bulldozers and bulldozed the whole thing away. So it is very sparse now, and it is not like it was down there. But I will say this, the guy that got killed, you guys led into Christ the week before he got killed. It is an incredible thing.

I watched down at the bus stop, that big bus stop. You have a captive audience down there. I like watching you guys work down there. I watched one of our gals wait for the bus, and one of the gals was sitting there with a lady who had a little baby, and she was talking to her and playing with the baby and telling her about the Lord. I watched sometimes they smell terrible. They look terrible. Certainly, they are the outcasts of society. No question about it. I get it. I watched a lady last time we were down there walking around, and she obviously had not bathed for a long time, and she had blood all under the seat of her pants where she was going through her monthly cycle. Had no way to stop, and the blood was just soaking through. You look at that and you think to myself, "Oh boy, I do not want anything in that." You know what? I watched one of our ladies go up and put her arm around that lady and tell her about the Lord. It is tough. I get it. It is hard. I know the average Christian, well, they would have a heart attack. "Not me, brother." Oh, I know not you, because we all forget how absolutely putrid we were the first time God put His arm

around us. We are out of balance. And 99% of God's people today would not walk across the street to give to the poor. I get it. They are not your social circle. I understand that. Well, it was Jesus' social circle, and I want to be where He would be.

Years ago, with the Canton Baptist Temple, when I was just a young guy, we had a guy in that church. Everybody called him Crazy Lou. Lou obviously was not, he was mentally challenged, but he was a nice kid, and he really loved the Lord. Everybody kind of made fun of him. Everybody kind of tolerated him. He never caused any problems. He was just very odd. One night after Bible study, Mel and I are walking out the back door, and here is Lou. There was brush across the thing there, and here is Lou down on his knees with his head in his bush just like this. Mel said, "Lou, are you okay?" And he did not say anything. And he says, "Lou, are you okay?" And he went over and put his hand on his shoulder, and Lou came out, and he had a dead sparrow in his hand. And Mel said, "What are you doing, Lou?" And he says, "The Bible says that not a sparrow shall fall from the ground, but the Lord does not know it. The Lord was just here, and I want to be here too." You know what we need in our churches? We need some more Crazy Lou's.

The last part of the verse says, "but he that hideth his eye shall have many a curse." Doctrinally, again, that is the people in Matthew 25 that turn their eyes and do not help the Jew. But boy, is that ever God's people today. If you do not look at them, then they are not there.

## V. Personal Balance and Thankfulness

Now the second reason why I do it is a personal thing. It is a vital part, I understand, of our church balance, but it is also a vital part of my Christian balance because it will form a balance not just for our church, but for each one of us. For me, it is a balance of thankfulness for how good God has been to me and how my own world would be a shambles if it was not for the grace of God and what He has done in my own personal life. I cannot speak for you, but I never want to forget that. I never do. I will tell you something else. I never want to take all that God has given me for granted. Like I said earlier, you can get so many blessings of God, get the Word of God so much that you actually become a Goodyear blimp and you lift off planet earth and lose sight of what is going on around you.

I never want to forget who I really am. Dealing with the poor and needy will keep me humbled to God and all His goodness to me. I never want to lose sight. I never want to read the press releases. I just want to, I know who I am, and I never want to lose sight of that. I want to keep my perspective. I never want to hide my eyes from the poor because I know that when I do that, I will lose sight of who I really am. I may not be the homeless guy on the street this afternoon that you give a bottle of water to a hot dog, but I want to be honest with you, I should be. I deserve to be. And so do you. For me, it is a balance of the fact that between a good balance and a right perspective, the mark of an unbalanced church and for me personally, an unbalanced child of God in my own life, would be hiding my eyes from the poor.

Proverbs 31 is that great chapter on the church, the light, the virtuous woman. What an incredible chapter that is. It is a picture of what not only the church is, but what we should be. It says in Proverbs 31:20:

*Proverbs 31:20*

*She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.*

She just does not reach out to them. She touches them. A lot of times we do not want to do that because honestly, we just forget what we looked like the day God first met us. I do not walk outside on a freezing night, take the dogs out or whatever I am going to do, and not think about those people sleeping out there in the park and not thank God for what He has given me. I do not get in my bed at night and pull the covers up and not thank God for all that He has given me, knowing that there are many in Kansas City that have no bed tonight. It is easy to take those things for granted. It is easy to get in that mindset where we kind of get that entitlement. I do not sit down and eat a meal and not know that God provided that for me, and in this town there are many people tonight with nothing to eat. I have watched them in McDonald's where they go through the trash to pick out what somebody did not all eat because they are hungry. I do not look at my kids and my grandkids and not thank God that so far to the third generation my family is all serving God with me. I thank God for that every day of my life. Now I am only to the third generation. I am a little worried about Macy. She may turn out to be a terrorist. I mean, I am set for life. One of them wants to be a doctor. The other one wants to be a veterinarian or take care of my dogs. And what is the third? Maddie wants to be a nurse. I have a book called \*Enemas 101\* I want you to look at.

I never want to take what God has given me for granted. I will tell you what, when I see those people out there, I talk with them. I know they can be very crusty. They can be very unthankful. They can be very dirty. They can be very entitled. In a lot of ways, they are just like me. I never want to forget that. That keeps my personal life, my balance. I never want to think that I am too good for that. It all goes back to the book that God gave us. Keeping that balance.

## VI. Standing Against the Wicked and Apostasy

Then the last part of that verse in 28, or the last verse here is, "When the wicked rise, men hideth themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase." Now again, doctrinally, keeping our balance, all this is dealing with the tribulation period and the Antichrist. He rises for seven years in the tribulation period, last three and a half in particular. He persecutes people, and people are hiding, especially the Jews. Matthew 24, Matthew 23, Matthew 25. He perishes at the second coming of Christ, and then the increase that he is talking about here will be the millennial reign of Christ when Christ sets up His throne.

Historically, the Bible is filled with people like this. You have Saul, you have Absalom, you have Rehoboam, Jeroboam, and all the bone boys. You have Ahab. You have Pharaoh on the other flip. Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar. But inspirationally, it will be aimed at, as far as I am concerned, every preacher and every Christian in the 20th, 21st century, in the Laodicean church period that we live in. For sure in Christianity, the wicked men have risen today, men who deny

the very book that God has given us. Our modern-day scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees, the men who deem themselves smarter than God, men who with the Laodicean mindset and the teachings have destroyed the very doctrines that once made Christianity such a powerful force. Men who, like the scribes and the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus' day, have destroyed the simplicity of Christ, like this talked about in 2 Corinthians 11:3. The Bible is not a hard book, man makes it hard. Salvation is the simplest thing on the planet, man makes it hard. Man spends his whole life taking the simple things of God and making them complex so people cannot figure it out. Pastors today and God's people today alike will do absolutely nothing about it. It blows my mind.

Edmund Burke, not one of my favorite guys that I read, but I have read a few of his things, and he was an Anglo-Irish statesman from back in 1729. I think he died in 1797 or something like that. He is not one of my favorite guys that I read, but he said something one time that I have seen quoted many, many times, and I think that it is so true, and it has become one of my favorite things every time I see something. He said one time, "Evil triumphs when good men do nothing." Boy, that is so true.

For me, my balance as a pastor, my understanding is to realize that in every church period of church history, Revelation 1, 2, and 3 lays out seven for us, that in each period the body of Christ had to deal with a doctrinal issue that had come up that threatened Christianity.

- In the early church in Ephesus, it was the resurrection itself.
- When Smyrna came around, it was then the virgin birth, the Deity of Christ, Council of Nicaea.
- When Pergamos came up, it was the baptism regeneration.
- When Thyatira came into its own, it was amillennialism and post-millennialism.
- In the Sardis church period, it was eternal security.
- When the Philadelphian church came into being, it was Calvinism and hyper-dispensationalism.
- Today in the Laodicean church that we all live in, it is simply, "Do you have the authoritative words of God in your lap this morning?"

Did God know what He was talking about through a King James 1611 Authorized Version, the only Bible in the world that when God wrote it, He wrote it against two people groups: the Roman Catholic Church, Pope's person and a dedicatory, and then conceited brethren, the Calvinists of their day. Only Bible on the planet.

As a pastor, again speaking for myself, I do not presume to speak for anybody this morning but me. I have one overall primary goal as a pastor and certainly as a Christian. That overall, and I know there are a lot of things that I have to do underneath this, but first and foremost is taking my stand for the Word of God. Declaring the words to the world in these last days that we have a complete perfect copy of God's Word. My enemies are many. They really are, and that is okay, the more the merrier. Now I am not even talking about the cults like the JW's and the Mormons. I put them aside. They are not even worth messing with. The enemies of a Bible believer today will be what people who call themselves Christians really are, just like it was in Jesus' day.

You have the neo-evangelicals who do not believe anything about God or the Bible. They are just a worthless gray mass of nothing. They have dumped the rapture. Most of them are Calvinists. They have done everything they can to destroy the Word of God. They laugh at people who believe the Bible until they would come to a Thursday night Bible study.

The second group is the neo-orthodox. Where the neo-evangelicals wanted to take the common—it starts around 1900—they want to take the common Bible out of the hand of the common man and put it back in the scholarship world. That is what they wanted to do. Then you had the neo-orthodoxy group, which starts around the same period of time, comes out of Europe. Their game plan is to take the Bible and Christianity, and as society changes, the Bible and Christianity changes. That is why we have gays in the pulpit today. That is why we have all the things that we have that in the Bible, if you studied and read it, God was against. That is that mindset.

Then you have the Charismatic Movement. Of course, they know nothing about the Bible. They are absolutely totally out of their mind and have absolutely no truth even in a sliver. Then of course, to me anyway, I think the greatest enemy—I mean, I can understand all those guys—the greatest enemy is the Baptist churches themselves. The Baptist churches who stand in that pulpit every day and tell their people that they do not have a Bible they can trust. I am going to tell you something. When it comes, I told you this Thursday night, when it comes to the Bible and His Word and your stand for it, you guys ought to be like John Knox. John Knox, they said about John Knox that he never feared to face a man. He stood before Bloody Mary, who was the most godless, perverted queen England ever had, that killed every Bible believer and tried to bring England back under the Roman Catholic Church after they broke with Henry VIII. She was the most wicked queen that they ever had, and she killed more Bible believers than old John Knox stood there and pointed his finger in her face and nailed her and lived to tell the story. They all have one terrible heresy in common. They will all take from the common man God's common Bible and replace it with a Bible that is worthless.

Today for me, it just comes down to taking my stand for the Word of God. I cannot speak for you, but I would hope that you would want to take that same stand amongst the world of Christian apostasy and us not putting our tail between our legs and running from the fight. God's people are gutless today. They are absolutely worthless. If I had to go into a real war battle again like I experienced, I would just as soon have a good German shepherd in my foxhole than most of God's people. The verse says, "When evil men arise, God's people hide." You will hide your eyes from the poor, and then you will hide your eyes from the truth of the Word of God. God's people today are weak and they are cowards. You have not got any idea why you believe what you believe. Somebody told you to believe it. You want to believe it, but if you had to be put on the spot and open up a Bible and explain why you do believe it, you could not do it. You are so afraid to offend somebody. You tiptoe around their heresy. Somebody that may be your friend or somebody that you do not want to be put in a category of a troublemaker. So you take the apostate mindset, "Well, we will just agree to disagree." You will tiptoe around their heresy and you will say, "Well, you know, you have what you believe and I have what I believe." For me, it is the Elijah principle found in 1 Kings 18. You hack them to pieces. Read it sometime. There is nobody agreeing to disagree there. There is nobody saying, "Let us all hold hands and sing

Kumbaya." He knows what he believes. He knows what God has told him, and he knows who the enemy is, and he does not run from him or hide from him. Taking God's stand against the men who want to destroy Christ's body, His church.

Guys who want to take Baptist off the name of their church because they do not want to be associated with Baptist because they think Baptists have a bad reputation. Well, so you become an evangelical that also has a bad reputation. What in the world are you going to associate with if somebody is not going to not like it? I am a Baptist. I will stay a Baptist. I will never take Baptist off our name. You know why? Because there are two names in the Bible or in history that were given to us by our enemies. One was the word "Christian" in Acts 11, and the other one was the word "Baptist" because we got it from our enemies because we would not submit ourselves to infant baptism for salvation. I will keep it. I will keep it. I may have to get up and explain I am a Baptist, but I know that I am not a weird Baptist, but I will do that.

Now you will forsake the preaching of the Word of God, and you will replace it with a stool and a laptop and your silly little teachings about the Bible. You will replace the power of the Holy Spirit of God with your education, and you will spend half the time correcting what God said in His Word and gave to His people. You do not build people. You build buildings and monuments to yourself. You have lost the power of God in any kind of reality of preaching, so you keep your image by bringing in the world and all the music and the booze and the lifestyle that the Bible clearly—and you have a form of godliness, but in reality, you deny the power thereof.

You are the church of Revelation 3:16 that has no candlestick, hence no light from the Holy Spirit of God. You are the church in Revelation 3:15-16 that makes God sick, and He spews you out of His mouth. You are the church of the closed door in Revelation 3:20 where it tells you that Christ Himself was knocking on your door to get back in your church because you kicked Him out, closed the door, and locked it. You are the church that has rejected the truth of God's Word and now has to follow all the heresy or the false teaching of the Christian apostates, and you have lost the great teachings and the truth of God's Word that our church was built on. You have lost your perspective. You are the church of Revelation 3:17-18. You are the church that has lost your way. You have lost every aspect because:

*Revelation 3:17-18*

*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

*I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

You think you are rich, but in absolute, you are destitute. You think you can see, but in reality, you are blind, and you are that evil man that has risen as God's people were afraid to take their stand against you, and evil triumphs when good men do nothing.

## VII. The Call to Stand for the Book

Let me tell you something. As far as I am concerned, going back to 1 Kings 19:18, when Israel was in all the problems she was in, I can tell you this as far as my church is concerned, there are still 7,000 men who have not bowed to the knee of Baal who will take our stand with the book and the Word of God. You see, the prophet Jeremiah saw your day long ago. He saw what evil men like you did to his nation, and he prophesied about it and against you and what you will do when you rise to power in the New Testament Christianity, just like you did to the nation of Israel. He said in Jeremiah 23:1-2:

*Jeremiah 23:1-2*

*Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.*

*Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.*

That is the church today. Jeremiah saw that in his own nation, and he also saw it in the New Testament church, and he spoke prophetically about it. He warned us about you and showed us who you really are in Jeremiah 23:16-18, and he said:

*Jeremiah 23:16-18*

*Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.*

*They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.*

*For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?*

And he clearly told us that you are not from Him, but you destroy His church and His people. He said in Jeremiah 23:21-23:

*Jeremiah 23:21-23*

*I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.*

*But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.*

*Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?*

You notice it was not the original manuscripts here. It was not some translation. It was His words, and the authority question today is, "Do you have those words?" That is what they try to get you to believe. They try to get you to believe that if the lights were dim and the smoke was thick and the music was loud, God could not see what went on. Then he says in Jeremiah 23:29-32:

*Jeremiah 23:29-32*

*Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*

*Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.*

*Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.*

*Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.*

Therefore God is against you. He is against you and your message that brings the filth of the world with your music, your preaching, your Christian counseling, your weak teachings. He says, "Is not my word like as a fire?" You see any preacher that gets up in a pulpit and does not have as a goal that Sunday to light a fire under you, he is not doing his job. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rocks in pieces?" You know what God's people need? They need a fire lit under them and a hammer busting up what they have got in life. "Therefore, behold, I am against the prophet, saith the LORD, that steal my words, every one from his neighbor." There it is. There is somebody who simply steals the Word of God right out of your lap. "Behold, I am against the prophet, saith the LORD, that use their tongues and say, He saith," obviously when God did not say it. "Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them and cause my people to err by their lies and by their lightness. Yet I sent them not nor commanded them, therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD."

99% of the churches in Kansas and around this world, the people that go into today, He just told you, there is absolutely no profit in them for those people. The Bible says that God is against them. I will tell you right now, so am I, every day and every way, to expose what it is, that you may find somebody out there today that still wants to hear the true Word of God and wants to believe it. We will take our stand, and we will stand on the book. It is our truth. The monarch of the books. The book that if you put every other piece of literature that any man had ever written—and I read one time that if all the literature that man had written in all of history was put in one pile, it would be a pile that would cover the state of Nebraska and go out past the orbit of the moon, which are 250,000 miles—if that was possible today, I am telling you right now, you can judge everything that was written in those books in the light of one book. This book. The monarch of the books.

We will stay separate from the world while you build your whole church around it. We will build families. We will take men and women and young singles and young teenagers, and we will train them that carry the truth till the Lord comes back. We will not hide when evil men rise. We will not put our tail between our legs and close our eyes to what is going on around us. We will use the pulpit as God intended that the pulpit to use to preach truth, and through that preaching is where men's lives get changed. We know our stand. We understand that we are in the seventh

period of church history, the Laodicean church period, which means rights and justice of the people. We understand all that. We understand today that our stand on the authority of the Word of God is what God has called us to do in our final fight.

## VIII. The Thermopylae Principle: Come and Take It

I often think of some of the great things in history that really are a picture and a model of where we are at today. I think of the Battle of Thermopylae, where the Persians under Artaxerxes were coming to take the Sparta and the Greeks and try to defeat them. The Greek Empire was kind of in disarray, and they were not prepared, and they found out that there were over 70,000 Persian troops landing at a shore that was going to come in and destroy Sparta and then move on into Greece. They did not know what to do. The personal guard of one of the men there, one of the generals, had 300 Spartans. Those 300 Spartans went down to the sea, right before the sea. There was a little town there and a pass on the mountains called Thermopylae. It was a pass so narrow that an army could only come through it two men at a time. You could not move 60,000 people through it. They held up a defensive there, and for weeks they held back 60,000, 70,000 Persian soldiers, just 300 Spartans. They held that line of that pass there that they could not get through. The only way they finally got through was they got betrayed, and they found another pass that went up around the other side and came in and cut them off. They surrounded them.

Those 300 Spartans stood there, circled by 60,000 enemy. Xerxes sent a message to them, and they said, "We admire your valiant stand. We admire your courage. We have killed many of you, and you have killed many of us. On this day, let there be no more bloodshed. Lay down your swords, and we will let you live and go home to your families." What was left of the Spartans sent back a message and said, "You want our swords? Come and get them." There is a little patch that has been put out over the last couple of years with a Spartan helmet on it, two cross swords with Greek that simply says, "Come and take it." That ought to be the motto for every Bible believer and child of God on this planet.

The world wants to take what you have. They want to break you and bust you. They want to destroy your family. They want to take the very book from you that God gave you. The book that men like the Waldensians and the Albigensians and the Huguenots and the Paulicians and the Nestorians down through history knew was God's Word. When the Roman Catholic Church of their day persecuted them for that book, they gave their very life and blood that you and I today might hold that book in your lap. Today they want to take it from you, just like they wanted to take it from them. You have got two choices. You either hide and put your tail between your legs, or you stand and fight. You want my book? You want my Bible? Come and take it. That is the cry today.

Proverbs 28 was a great chapter. It laid out so many principles, and it ends with the principle of us taking our stand for the things of God and not being a coward, not turning our eyes from what is going on around us. In these last days, men and women, take your stand, get some courage and some guts, and take your stand against the very people who want to take that Bible from you.