

Proverbs 25:27-28

Sunday 2/3/2019

We had a great time in the Bible when we talked about the importance of the Word of God as a picture of the water of life. You remember I took you back to John 4, and what a great story that is back there at the woman at the well. We tied that into two great examples out of the Old Testament that really illustrate through the pictures in the Bible and the Old Testament how the water of life will affect us.

You remember first I took you back to Exodus 17 and I told you the story how the children of Israel were in the wilderness of sin, much like you and I are traveling through this wilderness of sin in our lives. There was nothing to sustain them. There was no food, there was no water. They were constantly complaining and afraid they were going to die. In this case, they had no water. God told Moses to go over to the rock and take the rod of judgment, the one that he had done all of the judgments in Egypt, and smite that rock. When he did, the water came out.

I showed you how that was a picture of Christ dying on the cross. I took you back to Isaiah and some places back there that showed you where God smote His Son for you and for me. Because of His death on the cross, our water of life came forth.

I took you to Numbers 20, the second great example. Here again, some 20 years later, the nation of Israel again has no water. So again, Moses goes to God, and God tells him to go to another rock. This time he is to speak to the rock; he is not to smite it, he is to speak to it. We know that Moses failed God, and he got angry at the people and he hit the rock again, and he suffered the consequences for that of the promised land.

The reason why God told him to speak to that rock is because this second place is a picture that after you get saved, not only does the Word of God, Exodus 17, is it your salvation, but after you get saved, Numbers 20, the Word of God will sustain you through the wilderness of sin. These are two great examples of what the Bible will do for you: our salvation and our survival through the sustaining power of the Word of God.

Then I showed you on the second verse a great example of what happens to God's people when we have spiritual problems in our lives, but we refuse to take them to God and we take them to the world. I showed you the story of King Asa, the King of Judah, back in 2 Chronicles 16:11. I showed you how he had a disease in his feet, and instead of going to God with it, he went to the physicians and wound up dying.

I remember taking you back and showing you where his problems started. That is the fact that the Bible says that he made a league with the world. He made a league with the other nations that he wasn't supposed to, and that's where his problems really began. I remember telling you what a coincidence that the story of Asa, instead of going to the Word of God, goes to the physicians, was found in 2 Chronicles 16:11. We don't make any bones about it here that the King James Bible is the absolute perfect Word of God. Some people would have a tough time believing there's any validity to 2 Chronicles 16:11 being likened to the Word of God. So I won't even tell

you that if you want to find the true riches in the book of Luke, you have to go to Luke 16:11. But that's just the way it is, and it's an incredible story.

I. The Danger of Seeking Personal Glory Through Scripture

Today and next week, we're going to try to close out this chapter. We've got two verses left. I was going to try to do both today, and then I thought, with everything we have in here, I don't want to shortchange it. So we're just going to take our time with it and finish it out.

The last couple of weeks have been incredible verses for us to study together. Not only did we get some great principles for our everyday life and dealing with people, but you really got a gigantic piece of the Bible puzzle, key things that help the Bible make sense to you. Most people spend their whole life telling you how hard the Bible is and how you have to spend the rest of your life and get in a cave someplace or go to some bastion of theology. The truth of the matter is, the Bible is a very simple book. The Bible is a picture book. God wrote the Bible; He put it in picture form.

When we teach or preach the Bible on Sunday morning or Thursday night, or one-on-one, or when people are teaching you, we certainly do it in People Ministry and Bible Institute. What I simply do is give you the pieces of the picture. We were in Daniel yesterday in the People Ministry, and we went into Daniel 1, and I told them how important Daniel 1 will be to working with people. So what I did is I took Daniel 1 and I broke it down into, I don't remember, five or six pictures, individual, where they learn each piece componently. Then once they get it down, they can put it together, use their own ability in teaching, and that's how you put it together. Over the last couple of weeks, we've got some great pieces of the puzzle, and my job is just to help you put the puzzle together. That's all I do.

Now today we're going to be in Proverbs 25. I'm going to read verses 27 and 28, but we're not going to get past 27, just so we can kind of put it in a context. Here's what it says:

Proverbs 25:27-28

It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory.

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

It says, "It is not good to eat much honey." Now we know honey is a type of the Word of God. So, right out of the chute, he's saying it's not good to eat much honey. If we stopped right there, I would make half of you happy this morning. I understand that. But unfortunately, there's a comma here, and we're going to move on briskly. "It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory."

The verse is simply saying that you can get messed up and into sin even with the Bible. Let me add the postscript to that: especially with the Bible. You have Jehovah's Witnesses, you have Mormons, you have all the cult groups, the charismatic groups, the Calvinism groups. They study the Bible all day long. They claim to believe the fundamentals of the faith, just like I know,

and many of them do, and many of them don't. But the bottom line is, they're proof positive what this verse says: that you can get messed up with the Bible. You would think that the Bible would be the one book that you wouldn't get messed up in.

You know as well as I do that the Bible is likened to a sharp two-edged sword. It cuts both ways. It's simply saying that you can study, and here's what he's saying: you can study and learn the Bible to your own glory instead of God's glory. You see this all the time. I mean, I do, I'm sure most of you do. You see it all the time in modern-day Christianity, this whole educational movement about our education becoming God. We see it all the time in the seminaries, in the Bible colleges, in the pastors, in the teachers, in the churches. God's people just don't figure it out.

I'm going to tell you something: when a pastor or a Bible teacher, in any place, when he gets into the ministry and he gets to the place in his ministry when he stands up before his congregation or before some class if he's teaching it, and he starts to teach you that the Bible is wrong, that God made some mistakes in it. I mean, God was God enough to preserve it, but He wasn't God enough to preserve it. So when God screwed up and God made the mistakes and got the mistranslations in it or got the words that shouldn't be in there, now this guy is going to help God out and fix where God made the mistake. That's what you're up against today.

So he'll get up there and say, "Well, you know, a better reading should be this." He'll say, "Well, you know, this word here is a mistranslation." He'll say, "Well, this passage here shouldn't be in your Bible." He'll say, "Well, this here is a contradiction." There's a book out that I got someplace, I got it years ago, that the guy that wrote it, his whole goal was to expose that there's over 200 contradictions in the Word of God, that God made 200 mistakes in it.

I got that book years ago as a young guy, and I wanted to know if God made a mistake. If everybody else was helping Him figure it out, I'll do it too. I love Him. He helps figure out my mistakes, I'll help Him figure out His. When I got that book and got going through it, out of those 200 so-called contradictions, 160 of them could be solved with a sixth-grade education reading English. The other 20 or so could be a little bit of Bible study and prayer, and there were only about two or three of them that really required any thought at all to really dig into Scripture to figure it out.

My point is this: there are no contradictions in the Bible. My point is this: there are no mistakes in the Word of God. When somebody gets up and tells you that he studied so much and has so much knowledge now, and he's got into the Greek and the Hebrew and he knows all of this stuff, and he's going to come to you and tell you that God made a mistake, he's done all that for his own glory.

It reminds me back there in Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14. You know what Lucifer wanted to do before he fell? He wanted to get everything that God had. He wanted God's glory. He said back there in Isaiah 14:14:

Isaiah 14:14

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

He said in Ezekiel 28:2:

Ezekiel 28:2

Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:

You know as well as I do, the first time the devil shows up in the Bible, Genesis 3, and you know what he told Eve? He told Eve, "God didn't know what He said when He said that. I'm going to correct it." That's where it comes from. It's exactly where it comes from. It's just that simple.

Brother, there are thousands of men in the pulpit today across this country and around the world who fit Proverbs 25:27 to a tee. They study all their lives. They learn the Greek and the Hebrew, the original language. They spend hundreds of thousands of dollars and 10, 15, 20 years of their life just to display to everybody their own glory and how smart they are when it comes to the things of God. They spend their whole life exposing to people where God has failed, and "I'm going to fix it for Him."

A pastor told me one time, we were talking about pastors, and he's a nice guy, and I love him, and he's a good friend of mine. We were talking about some things, and he was talking about guys that he knew. It was one side of the conversation because I don't know anybody. He was telling about all these great spiritual guys that he knew, and they probably are; I'm not discounting it. He talked to me about this one guy who he was associated with, and he says, "He's one of the most godliest men I ever met in my life. Do you know that every day of his life he has his devotions to God in Greek?" He said that like it meant something.

I'm just going to tell you here, if that's such a big deal, and that is, you have the ability to speak to God in Greek, and God gets closer to you if you speak Greek than He does English or Swahili or Mexican or whatever the case may be, the moment you tell somebody you do that, you rob God of any glory, and you're taking it yourself. It's like a guy told me one time, he says, "What's your spiritual gift, Bob?" And I said, "I have the gift of making people mad." He says, "I have the gift of humility." I said, "No, you have the gift of humility."

You know what the Bible says when it talks about you praying? It says, "Go in a closet so nobody can see it." I mean, it's one of those things where we, why do we do that? He talks about the scribes and the Pharisees, and you see it all the time. They love the uppermost rooms in the synagogues. They love the long robes and the long prayers. They love to be seen of men. When you get to that place in your life that you want to expose to your congregation all the mistakes that God made, you're studying it for your glory, not His. You want to give God the glory? Tell everybody how stupid you are and how great He is. That's where it starts.

People think that your IQ has something to do with your relationship with God and learning the Bible. I'm going to tell you right now, the reason why some of you are so good with the Bible and the reason why you do such a good job is because you're so stupid. You're just so stupid that you believe a book that God wrote that's perfect. You don't spend your life trying to correct God who could make the universe. What did you make? We go up in your attic, we find a little mud

pies with your fingerprints in them when you were five years old. God's slinging out universes and galaxies and planets all over there. What are you doing, planting rose bushes? Read the sign back there: you can't fix stupid.

Education has become the God, the true God, of Christianity today. I guarantee you, I never got into it, I just said, "Mm-hmm." I guarantee you the Greek text he's having his devotion in isn't the Greek text your King James Bible came from. So it doesn't matter if you do your devotion from the devil's Greek text, which is Nestle's Greek text, which I'm sure that's what he used, or you do it from the devil's Bible, it doesn't make any difference. It's not for God's glory, it's for your glory.

II. The Indispensable Role of the Local Church

I'll tell you this, you'll see this a lot, it's going to get kind of personal today if you don't mind. You see this also in young men who get saved. I've seen it all my life in the ministry. The Bible says in Romans 10:2 that young Christians, young men, have a zeal but not according to knowledge. You see that in guys; you don't see it so much in women. Every once in a while you get a woman who, mostly it's not true, it's mostly men, and I'm working on why that is, and I'll let you know when I figure it out.

I see them get saved, and they just decide on their own that they don't need to be part of any New Testament church. I mean, I've had people here, we have people in our church that came to church for a while and then decided, "You know what, I really love the Bible, I really want to study the Bible, I really want to have a relationship with God, I just don't want to go into church." You're probably listening to it on YouTube this morning. Shame on you, and if I could unplug you, I would.

In the book of Acts, I hate to keep bringing the Bible up, I really do, but since it's church this morning, allow me that glitch. In the book of Acts, I don't know why you couldn't see this, when a man got saved, he did two indisputable things: the first thing he did was get baptized, and the second thing he did was join a New Testament local church. These guys are all basically the same. They get, they want the deep things of the Bible, they want the prophecy of the Bible, but when it comes to a walk with God, when it comes to that intimate, personal, one-on-one relationship that really will change a person's life, they're just not interested. They all develop some terrible, terrible, terrible study habits. They know some things about the Bible, but they never take the time to learn anything about the author of the Bible.

God's people today, I'm telling you, we have lost the concept of the importance of the New Testament local church, so we get into all kinds of things that are for our glory but not for God's glory. I get accused a lot of times of being anti-Bible college. I get accused a lot of times about being anti a lot of things, and the truth of the matter is, I'm not nearly as anti about anything as I am pro about one thing: I am pro New Testament local church. I believe that God gave the church for one purpose, one purpose only, and everything in this New Testament that He's going to do has to run through God's New Testament local church.

I know there are some good Christian organizations out there that do some great things. I'm not fighting it, but God's people get to the place that they think that those are to have the same status as the New Testament church does, and they don't. You know, around 16 years ago, when God put it in my heart to start this church here, and that's how it works, Acts 13:2, you just don't decide you're going to, somebody just doesn't, you just don't decide, I don't come up to you and say, "Hey, you don't go out and start a church." It has to start in your heart like it had to start in my heart.

When I got that burden in my heart and God made it clear to me that's what He wanted me to do, I had learned some things about churches. I'd been in the ministry working with other guys and doing things, and I had almost 40 years of observation. I had 40 years of the three invaluable assets in life: watching, listening, and observing. Notice I didn't say talking. Those are the three greatest things that you can add to your life is watch what's going on, listen to what's going on, and then observe what's going on, and the two are not the same.

I was trained by the best of the best, and I also got trained by the worst of the worst, and it gave me a great balance, always falling back on the book to sort out everything and to see it. I knew in my heart someday I was going to go out on my own and pastor, so I put my heart to learning all that I could. My two greatest teachers, besides the best of the best and the worst of the worst, my two greatest teachers will also be your two greatest teachers to learn about you. The first greatest teacher I had was learning from my own mistakes. A lot of people won't do that. My second one was learning from the mistakes that others made. That's an easy one. We all like to look at the mistakes of others and point them out, but we don't like to look at the mistakes in our own life. I want to tell you something, the greatest teacher you ever have to keep you lined out is looking at the stupid things that you and I have done in our lives and learn from them.

III. Edification and the Four Pillars of a Healthy Church

When God put it in my heart to start this church, I had a pretty good idea of the models and the pictures and the examples in the Bible and of life and what a New Testament church should be, and more importantly, I had a pretty good understanding what a New Testament pastor should be to his people. I saw that the key word to any church was one word, that everything you all may do, and we all do a lot of things, but you come down to the final analysis for what any church stands for for you and what you need to have, it's one word: it's edification.

He says in 1 Corinthians 14:26, "Let all things be done unto edification." You know what edification is? It's what this church stands here and should be doing: making you better, helping you through the issues you have in life. Sure, you have to be held accountable in some things. Accountability is part of life. It's part of everything. Because at the end of the day, the church exists to make you better, to edify you, help you grow. The church exists to help you find an easier way to learn the Bible than the guy that's teaching it that learned it, that you don't have to take the time. I spent 50 years of my life coming through things in the Word of God and learning them. You know what? You can have them in a year. I saved you 49 years. Thank you very much. But that's the job of the church. We're here to make you better.

I saw that the church will do four, or needs to do four, absolute things in our lives so we don't get caught up in getting everything for our own glory and making sure that God gets all the glory. You cannot have these four things if you're not involved in a New Testament local church structured the way God wants it to be done. This is true of this church; it's true of any church. These need to be built in a person's life. When a pastor or a church looks at his congregation and he sees them, he better have a plan of what he wants to do. If you think we're just all going to show up for church on Sunday morning and I'll find one of my little twiddly messages from my twinkie, winkie, pinkie sermon set over here and I'll let you have it, you're wrong. You have to have a plan. When I look at you, I've got four things I want to do for you. Now you may not get them, but that will be on you. But any pastor that's going to edify his people, any church that's going to focus on edification, has to have these four things. You cannot have these four things without a New Testament church.

Now the first one is a passion for the Word of God. You have to learn to study that book because you love it. You have to develop a passion for it. You have to have a passion for it that it's the greatest thing that you ever found in this life.

The second thing, you've got to have a passion for the Word of God, and you've got to have a responsibility now to the Word of God. To whom much is given, much is required. You've got people all outside of churches. They want the Word of God, but they don't want any responsibility that comes along with it. They don't want to do the ministry. They want to sit, tune in on Sunday morning, tune in on Thursday night, get on the website, have a great time learning all this great stuff, but there's no responsibility to the Word of God.

I'll tell you the third thing, there ain't no accountability to it either. When a church is focused on doing what God wants to do, you take those people that God gave you and you build four things into their life. You build a passion for the Word of God, you build a responsibility to the Word of God, and you build an accountability to the Word of God. I'll tell you right now, that's why so many young men won't get into a church, or they'll come for a while and then they quit coming, but yet they're in the Bible all the time. Because at the end of the day, here's your problem: you don't want any accountability to anybody or anything. I'll tell you what, you go through life without being accountable to anybody, you won't be accountable to anything.

Through that system of the Word of God, through the church, building those three areas in your life, it will lead to the fourth one. Now you have a passion for the Word of God, you have a responsibility to the Word of God, you have an accountability to the Word of God, and now you have the self-discipline to the Word of God, building yourself in the Word of God. I want to tell you, without a New Testament local church in your life that will address these four issues, you will get messed up in the book, and you will wind up serving for your own glory and not God's glory.

IV. Passion and the Church Militant

I've seen it all my life in the ministry, hundreds of young men. Young men without the guidance of a good church and a pastor who knows what they're doing, they will always get messed up on

some doctrine. They'll always pick up some hobby horse. They'll always get out of whack on something because there's no accountability to them. There's no responsibility to a system that God put into play to keep you between the white lines. I've seen them get some absolutely screwy doctrinal concepts or teachings that are absolutely—and the real funny thing is you could go down through the history in the church and you couldn't find any Bible believing group anywhere that ever even remotely believed what you believe. But, oh, God showed it to you. He just forgot everybody else in the last 2,000 years.

Listen to me. Get this. God never intended for you just to get saved and for you to figure it out on your own. There's an unbroken chain of Christianity of training and teaching and biblical principles to train and equip men and women with the Word of God that is imperative. Why, when Paul wrote the epistle of epistles to his three boys, it was Titus, Timothy, and Philemon, and he gave those boys what they needed to be pastors. Then you know what he said to them? He said, "The same things I've given to you, you take now and give to faithful men." It's the unbroken chain through the concept of the New Testament local church.

Now I understand how important these things are. Let me just talk to you for a minute here. I know, I get it. My passion for the Word of God will just get the better of me. I enjoy many things in life. I enjoy our time together. I do all the fun things we do. But my true passion is for the Word of God. Now I want to be honest with you. You will find better pastors than me. You will find better preachers or Bible teachers than me. But you will never find somebody who enjoys it more than I do. It's just that simple.

When I teach or preach, I can't help it. My passion just comes out. People think I'm mad, not mad, mad, but angry. They say, "Why is he so..." I'm not angry. I'm not angry about anything. I'm just passionate. When I get preaching about something I'm passionate about, believe me, I have tried. I have tried. I've tried to be a soft, no-offending, nice little guy that never will say anything that will make anybody mad. I have tried. Sometimes I've said, "Lord, I'm just going to get up there today and I'm just going to be a mealy-mouthed preacher who isn't going to make anybody mad and just give them the toast so they can all go home and feel good."

I am sick and tired of getting that look from people because I say something. You know, "Lord, if this is your church and this is your ministry," and everybody says, "You know what, Bob is..." No, it's not Bob's church. It's the Lord's church. I said one time, "I'm going to go teach Bible study." And the lady said, "It's the Lord's Bible study, brother." I said, "Great, let Him teach it," and left. He didn't show up. You know why He didn't show up? Same way He won't show up here. Like it or not, that mouth is His. I don't appreciate that.

I wish I could be a poodle preacher. No, we're all dogs, Gentiles. I wish I could be a little poodle. Got one across the street from me. A little pompadous, little prissy little thing, runs around. Got his tail shaved a little right with little circles around his stomach with a little ball in the end of his tail. I'd like to be like that. I'd like to get up here and just have right up there and say, "Well, thank you for being here today, brethren. And you know, this is the day the Lord hath made. Let us be glad and rejoice. Let us ask God to take us ugly ducklings and turn us all into swans today. Let us just look to share what God has given us. You're all such lovely people. You know, God

has the best for all of you. And the trials you're going through today, they're not because of any fault of yours. God wants to use those faults to make you. He wants to give you prosperity. He wants to give you everything that you have. You're okay. I'm okay. God's okay. We're all okay."

I can't do that. You know what my problem is? My problem is the same problem you have in reverse. Fifty years ago, I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior, and I have never gotten over it. Some of God's people have gotten over it. I'm passionate about it. I don't know what to tell you. I mean, I am. I wish I wouldn't be that way. I do. I wish, you know, I'm just like a 200-pound junkyard dog guarding a junkyard like it's full of gold. I'll be honest with you, my bark is worse than my bite. But don't ever think for a moment I can't sink these canine bicuspid into your ecclesiastical posterior. See? Getting better already on it. You've got to look that up, see what that means.

One time a guy broke into a house, and it was a Mennonite, and he's going to steal everything. There's a parrot. He had a parrot in the living room, a talking parrot. The guy is stealing everything, and the parrot says, "Jesus is watching you. Jesus is watching you." The guy says to himself, "That stupid bird, Jesus is watching me. Yeah, watch Jesus." He said, "I'm putting it in." He said, "Jesus is watching you. Jesus is watching you." He's slapping. But at that time, this 180-pound Doberman Pinscher came around the corner, climbed on him, knocked him to the floor, had his face on his teeth. He's screaming and yelling. The homeowner comes down with a handgun and a light and turns the light on. The guy is screaming, and the owner says to the dog, "Jesus, get off him!"

I'm just being honest. I'm just talking to you now. Come on, let me talk to you. That passion is misunderstood by many people. People say, "Well, he thinks he's right and everybody else is wrong." That's not true. I've been wrong plenty of times. I hear this: "Well, he thinks his church is the only church around." That's not true. It's just simply not true. There are lots of guys out there who are doing good works. I don't think that at all. You simply don't understand me. You don't know me. You don't know where my heart is. You don't see this church with the true value that it is. You've done something that I hope I never do: you've taken all God's given you for granted. You take me for granted. Pastors take their people for granted. You always see it from the negative side. You never see the blessing side.

I had a guy one time say, he's no longer in our church, I had a guy say to me one time, he was pointing out this, this, this he didn't like. And I asked him, I said, "In the last three months," I said, "Okay, good. In the last four months, name me, there were 10 of them, name me the 10 people who just got saved." He didn't have a clue. He could point out every nitpicking thing he didn't like in the church, but he had no idea who the last 10 blessings were where God brought somebody and got saved in the church. That's what I'm talking about. I get it. I'm not mad about it. I understand it. It comes with the territory, but you don't get it. Probably never will.

Look, I know that there are hundreds of good guys out there in churches and those churches, but you know what? I don't care. I'm not responsible for those. I care about this one here. I care about the one that God gave me. I've never understood it. Last week or two weeks ago, we watched it here. The Chiefs went to the playoffs. They played the New England Patriots. You

know that game started at five o'clock, at five thirty in the afternoon. You know that the gates opened at like nine o'clock, ten o'clock in the morning for the tailgaters to get in. You know that there were people lined up at four o'clock in the morning, waiting to get in at ten o'clock so they can show up. You know how cold it was that day? There were 80,000 people, 80,000 people, 80,000 people screaming for the Chiefs to win, screaming. That place was a sea of red and yellow. You know what? They thought their team was the only team in the NFL. Was it? No, sir.

Well, why are you upset? Why are you upset with me? Because I'm passionate about this. When you get 80,000 people that they would have knocked you off the top tier of the thing if you just said another team. To them, that was the only team in the NFL, and it wasn't. But that's their passion. They had a passion about, what are you passionate about? That's their passion. Little Patrick Mahomes. He got the MVP last night. Great, I'm happy for it. But you know what? You talk to the average Kansas City. We have waited so long in sports in this town for anything. I get it. But I'm telling you, right now, if you would ask the average diehard, passionate Kansas City Chiefs fan, go down to Power and Light. Go down there today and wear a New England Patriot jersey. See what happens to you. Better take Jesus with you. This town thinks he's the only quarterback in all of football. You know that's not true. But it doesn't matter. You're not mad at them. You don't go around to them saying, "You think he's the only quarterback in the NFL? You think the Chiefs are the only team in NFL football?" But you'll come to me and say, "You think your church is the only church around?" No, I'm just passionate about it. That's all.

You know what Paul said? He said, "I'm going to give unto you my gospel." It wasn't his gospel. It was the gospel of the grace of God.

1 Corinthians 15:1-5

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

But to Paul, it was his. There's no man in that Bible that's more passionate about the gospel than he is. You know what the problem is? You can't see the things that God gives you, the value of them, and take ownership of them, caring less that there's anybody out there, but this is yours. Paul said, "I know it's everybody's gospel, but as far as I'm concerned, it's my gospel."

You know what happens to somebody that takes that kind of viewpoint about things? I'll tell you what, you start to have a passion for it. Then you start to have a responsibility for it. Then you start to take accountability for it. Then that forms a self-discipline in your life because now you

have something that is real. Maybe there are all kinds of other great churches out there, but this is the one God gave you. Are you passionate about it, or is it just like anything else out there?

You know, I'm the same way about my Bible. I've told you this before, I wish He would have wrote you a Bible. He didn't. When He gave the scriptures, when the holy men of God spoke and moved by the Holy Ghost, He was thinking of me. When that Bible came down, He gave it to me. All down through history, when that translation goes down through the body of Christ, they always say, every one of them, I know it's not recorded in church history, that's because you're reading the wrong books. They were saying, "Make sure that's right, Bob Alexander's going to need it." He didn't write it to you.

I'll tell you something else. When He died on the cross, He didn't die for you. He died for me. He didn't die for you. When He's hanging on that cross, He's thinking of Bob Alexander. Now everybody out there can claim that same claim. You want to have an argument in the church? Let's argue over the fact that, "No, He wrote that Bible to me." Or, "Oh, He wrote it to you." "No, no, He wrote it to me." "No, He wrote it to me." You want to have an argument in the church? Okay, let's have it split over this: who was on His mind the day He died on the cross? See? Now that's something to split over. Amen. But I'm just telling you, no passion today. No passion.

Hey, I can't speak for you. I wouldn't presume to speak for you, but I'm going to tell you like this: that Bible means something to me because not just the fact that God gave it to me, and I claim it personally as mine, but I want to tell you something, I know where I'd be, brother, if I didn't have that book. I know where my life would be. I know where I would be headed. I know what my life was going, and I know if God wouldn't have given me that book and saved my rotten soul that deserved to die to go to hell, I'd be in hell this morning. Now maybe you're okay with that. I'm passionate about it. Amen.

You know where the word "fan" comes from, don't you? It comes from the word "fanatic." I'm not just a fan of Jesus. I'm a fanatic. I'm not just a fan of the Bible. I'm a fanatic. This church God gave me that I have to be responsible for, that I have to be accountable to, that is everything where I would be, and it gives me everything that I need. I'm a fanatic about it. Like the fact there are 50, 60 billion other good churches out there. I don't care. I'm responsible for this one. God put you in this one. If you can't see it for what it is, maybe you'll have to get out and lose it and then find out where all those other ones are really at. I get 10, 15 calls a month, emails of people across this country cannot find a church that will teach the Bible and believe the Bible anywhere, shape, or form. I'll send them to you. You know where they're at.

V. The Church Triumphant and Militant: God's Structure for Life

Now the church has two aspects to it. The first one we talked about before is called the church triumphant. That's the spiritual church, the body of Christ. When you got saved, that's Christ's true church. It's called the universal church. People hate the word Catholic and don't like the word Catholic. I understand where you're coming from, but if you go back in history, you'll find out why they chose the word Catholic, because they fundamentally believed that their church

was going to be the universal church, and the word Catholic means universal. So we know that the spiritual church, the universal church, the church that you get into spiritually, Christ's body, that's called the church triumphant.

The second aspect of the church is found in Acts 11, 12, and 13. This will be the New Testament church, the assembly of believers that we're told in Hebrews 10:25:

Hebrews 10:25

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

This is the New Testament local church, and everybody in the book of Acts once they got saved, baptized, joined. This is called the church militant. It's the church of Jesus Christ in the form of us as believers banding together because this is the organization by which God is going to work through. Just like in the Old Testament, it was the nation of Israel, and in the New Testament, it is the church.

Now the church has many working parts to it, many aspects to it. We preach the gospel. It's the base for evangelism, world evangelism, home evangelism. It's where we teach and preach the things of God. It's the place where you get instructions of righteousness. It's detailed out in Acts 11, 12, and 13, in Acts 20, and in the whole book of Ephesians. It's a safe place to raise your family. It's a place to perfect you for the ministry. As I said, God's plan in the Old Testament was to reach the people through the world through a nation of Israel. In the New Testament, He reaches the world through a New Testament local church.

But without a doubt, God's plan to us through the church was one concept and one idea: to ensure that we didn't do what we do for our own glory and make sure that God got the glory out of it. The church will provide, above everything rises and falls on this, what it does primarily in your life and my life is provide structure. Providing a structure for us and for our families. The problem with 99% of God's people today is they have no structure in their life. Because there's no structure, there's no accountability. Because there's no accountability, there's no responsibility. Because there's no responsibility, there's no passion for the things of God. Because of that, there's no self-discipline in their life when it comes to the things of God.

You see, for us, the church needed to be in solid, absolute structure in the wilderness of sin that has absolutely no structure to it. Only chaos, only heartache, only pain and disappointment and brokenness. God's structure for us, for our lives, is a structure of a passion for the Word of God that teaches you the Bible. I'll tell you something, you'll never be passionate about the Bible if I'm not passionate about the Bible. Passion gets infectious. It gets into your life and gets into your world. Somebody said one time, "If a man really wanted to build a church, you know how he'd do it? Just go and set himself on fire, and through his preaching, the whole town will come and watch him burn." You know why? Because passion's infectious. Most of the Christians don't want to be limp noodles, they just are. Because they don't have any passion infused in them. All they get is a nice little sermonette and a handshake going out the door like you just tucked a dead

fish. There's no passion in preaching today. There's no passion to give you the greatest book the world has ever seen that will change your life.

Then building a responsibility to the Word of God. You ask yourself, why are you even here today? Why? Because your boyfriend or your girlfriend was here? Because your wife made you come? Because you're tired of everybody ragging on you for not being here? What do you get out of this? I mean, why are you here? What is your purpose? What is your goal? Why are you even part of this group? People come in, they sit, they listen, they get the same sermon that everybody gets. Half of you got notes down, digging everything out, some of you don't. It's okay if you don't. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with you doing it, but I'm just saying, you don't do anything with it. You come, you sit, and you go. Then you're right back into the wilderness of sin. You do your own deal. Then for whatever reason, you come back next week. Why will you take this abuse week after week after week? You have whip marks on your back. You have scars on your knees because you walk up and down the sidewalk at 12 midnight, scraping all the skin off of it so you can do penance. Why? What's the point? Why would you come and listen to this week after week after week if you don't want to change? There are plenty of preachers out there that will just tell you what you want to hear. I tried. I wish I could. I'm passionate about what I believe. I got news for you, I ain't changing. It's what I am. I know I say stupid things at times. I do dumb things. A man who's full of passion, his mouth gets going faster than his brain.

You need a structure of accountability in our lives. I may keep you honest by my preaching, but you keep me honest by your commitment. Us together, realizing what we have. Don't play the silly little games of who else has got what. Who cares if God brought you here and this is where He wants you to be? What are you worrying about that for? So I'm passionate. Does that bother you? Accountability to the work that God has given us. We know what we have, not taking it for granted.

Then the fourth thing is the structure of self-discipline in our lives. Most young men that go into the military, they don't make good soldiers out of the box. You have to go through a series of structuring to make what the Army wants you to be. It starts you out with basic. There you learn the fundamentals. I remember when I graduated from basic, the top sergeant told us, he says, "You know what, right now," he says, "though you've come through eight weeks, you don't understand anything about the Army. But in time, in the next two or three years, you'll learn what it's all about." He was so right. But they have to start the structure someplace. So what they do is they shave your head. They make you all look alike. You lose your identity. Then through nice, sweet talk and kindness and loving care, they take everything from you. They break you down to nothing. They take everything from you. They take your identity. They take your favorite foods. They take your phone calls. They take your friends. They take you. You have signed up for a system that is going to just absolutely deny you of everything you had as a human being. Why? Because they're going to break you down so they can build you the way they need to build you.

It's the same way in Christianity. You're supposed to give up all of those things and go down to the base level so God can now build you the way He wants you to be built. In basic, that's Disciple One and Discipleship Two here. Then if you got a 211 Bravo MOS, you go to advanced

infantry training school. That's where you get the next level. That's where you study tactics. That's where you perfect your physical conditioning and get you to a place where you start working as a team. That's where you get all the specialty training and weapons and all the things that you do. This is where you get really the meat of what combat in the military really is. For us, this would be the People Ministry Bible Institute, Thursday night Bible study, Sunday morning. Then finally, when they get you ready, they ship you off to some foreign place and you're in combat.

Christianity is the same way. Most of you, the day you got saved, you weren't ready to go to war yet. But by putting on the armor of God, Ephesians 6, and disciplining yourself and realizing what the church was for you, an instrument of God to build structure and discipline in your life, you got to the place now where you can eat nails. Yet you've got in every church, you've got people who are in a church five, six, seven, eight years who could do it all. Then you got people in the same church that haven't grown one inch since they got there. Why? I'll tell you why you make it: because you put yourself into a biblical structure. You became accountable to it. You became responsible for it, and you developed a passion for it. I'll just tell you right now, you will only be in life what your passion is.

Without a doubt, the number one fundamental issue we all have will be a lack of self-discipline. Nobody's born with it. It has to be cultivated and built through a structure. This is why years ago, I wouldn't do it now, but years ago when a young teenager got in trouble, stole a car, did this and that, this is back in the 40s and the 50s and maybe up to the 60s. When he went before the judge, the judge gave him two choices: go to jail or join the army. That's what they did. Because the judge knew back then that what the kid needed was structure and discipline. They didn't have any. Back in that day, if there's anything that could give you structure and discipline, it was the military. Maybe not so today, but it was back in the day.

Nobody's born with it. Our lack of self-discipline has been the issue of our lack of our passion for our responsibility to the Word of God and to the church that God has given us, to the accountability to God's structure. Yet we pretend we're okay. We do. It's amazing. When somebody's out of fellowship with God, it shows. The funniest thing in the world is for the whole church to know so-and-so is out of fellowship. Everybody knows it, but him or her. Because they're pretending. You stick out like a sore thumb. It's a thing where people, they pretend they're okay. They hide behind the Bible, and they conveniently leave out the church, the biblical structure. By the way, the Bible says that God loved the church. He died for it and gave Himself for it in Ephesians 5:25. But you could care less about it.

Self-discipline is making yourself do what you need to do when you don't want to do it. It's telling your friends, "I'm not coming over to have a party over there because there's alcoholic beverages there, and I'm not going to be part of that." It's your ability to stand there and say, "You know what, I'm not going there. I'm not going to do that. That doesn't work for me." You don't have the courage to stand up because the moment you say, "I'm a Christian, I ain't doing this," they have watched you for so long. They would laugh you to pieces, and you can't stand the humiliation.

I'm going to tell you something, folks. You better at some point in your life just decide where you're going to clear off the spot and make your stand. When I got right with God, whatever it was, I hope I'm saying, whenever I got back, I was working at the Hoover Company. This was back in about 1970, 71, maybe 72. I was just like everybody else. I was just like one of the guys. You couldn't have told me a difference. I mean, I didn't smoke and I didn't drink, but boy, I had a mouth on me, and I didn't care. I was the kind of guy, I didn't care anything or anybody.

One night I went to church one day, and boy, I'll tell you what, you've heard the story about old Tommy Thomas dying in that pulpit and God getting a hold of my heart. I went down and got right with God. I knew me. I knew me right then if I didn't declare where I was and who I was and now what has changed in my life, I'd never do it. So on the way out that day at church, I went in there and bought me a whole handful of them Chick tracts like you're going to pass out this afternoon. Back then, they didn't have as many nice ones as they got now. I think all they had was "This Was Your Life." I got a whole stack of those. I remember I paid a dollar for a big stack of them. I went and got me a little New Testament Bible.

I went to work the next morning there at the gate. Everybody was waiting there to get in. I can never understand that. I can understand waiting to get out of work, but I can never stand when they get into work. But the old timers, they'd be 50, 60, 100 people there. The gate wouldn't open till like five or seven when you had to go in and punch in. I got there with that gate and handful of tracts in my Bible. I just said, "Folks," I said, "I want you to know," I said, "I know most of you don't know me. Some of you do. I said, I got saved this last weekend, and my life changed." I said, "I want you to know that I'm going to be a different person." And I started passing out tracts. I had to do that because I knew if I didn't clear off a spot and make a fool out of myself for Christ, I'd be making a fool out of myself for myself the rest of my life.

I'm telling you, there's some point in your life, you just got to clear off the spot. Some point in your life, you've got to do what they do in the football games or in the basketball court or wherever it is: time out. You got to regroup. You got to come out of that huddle deciding, "I'm done with it." You got to start realizing what God has done for you and what God has given you. You see, the day you got saved, you got put into Christ's body at salvation. That's the church triumphant. But you reject fellowship of being accountable to His body in the church militant. You'll take one but not the other. You really think God's okay with that?

I mean, we pick and choose out of the Bible what we want. No discipline in our study, no balance in our life, no accountability. We come up with some of the goofiest, stupidest, ridiculous stuff you could ever see in your life, all because there's nobody in the structure putting into your life those things that keep you between the white lines. You get to pick and choose when and when and when you'll give God what's left over your life. It's all for you. It's all about you. It's all for you. Then whenever you have five, 10 minutes, you'll give to God. When it comes to the offering, you've got all kinds of money. God done good, blessed you and everything in your life. What do you do? You flip God a quarter and then you tell Him, "Don't spend it all in one place." This should never be accountable to it or responsibility for it.

There's no structure in our lives. There's no discipline in our lives when it comes to God's structure. So we get out there. We just do our own thing. We sit at home and get on the website, get on this, watch YouTube. You're just what? Five, six, seven, eight miles, 10 miles, 20 miles. Could be here in 15 minutes, 20 minutes. Oh, no, no, no, no. You want all the great things in the Bible. You just don't want any accountability to the structure. Without the concept of God's local New Testament church, see the book of Ephesians, all you do and everything you study is for your own glory. Because I'm going to tell you something, folks, there can be no glory to God in our lives without the structure of God in our lives.

Just like Israel, 2 Chronicles 15:3, for a long time last week, no God, no teaching priest, no law. Yet, if you'd have looked around, boy, you'd have thought God was everywhere. That's because they had a form of godliness, but they denied the power thereof, 2 Timothy 3:5. The whole world is about you. The whole world is about what we want. It doesn't matter the fact that He hung on that cross and died. We have no passion for that. We can't get to church, but boy, I'll tell you what, we can get to a Chiefs game. We can get to a Royals game. We can get everywhere we want to go. I'll tell you something else I learned over the years: we get to where we want to go. Amen. No accountability to God or His word. It all has to be on our terms. You'll never submit yourself to God's structure, the New Testament local church.

The verse says, "It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search out their own glory is not glory." We spend our whole lives stealing from God the most precious thing after He's given you and me the most precious thing. He's given you and me the most precious gift that we could ever have. That is the gift of salvation. We take it, and what do we do with it? We take it and then we spend the rest of our lives stealing His glory for ourselves.

VI. The Fruits of God's Structure: Soundness and Wisdom

The structure of a New Testament local church, of you and I submitting ourselves to it, and what it will do is God will take that structure and build into your life those things that I talked about, those four things. But adjacent to that, as you build it, you get the six things that Paul talked to his young men about, five of them anyhow, the other one's in Proverbs. Because this is what the structure will do for you, and it's what it's doing in so many of your lives, and what it's not doing in people's lives.

The first thing that will do for you when you put yourself into a structure and you give yourself to that accountability and responsibility and you get the passion for the Word of God and the self-discipline, it'll build what Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:10. It'll build sound doctrine in your life. You'll know why you believe what you believe.

As you build a sound doctrine in your life, it'll do the second thing that Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:9. It'll build a sound mind in you.

You build a sound doctrine and a sound mind. It'll do what Paul told Titus in Titus 1:13 that it'll do. It'll build you a sound faith.

You get the sound doctrine with a sound mind with a sound faith. It'll do what Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:13. It'll give you sound words. You'll speak the things of God the right way.

Then it'll give you, as he says in Titus 2:8, sound speech. You'll take those words, put them into communicative language of sentences, paragraphs, and you'll get the work done for God.

Then as Proverbs 3:21 says that when you have sound doctrine, you get a sound mind. You get a sound faith. You get sound words and sound speech. You get sound wisdom and discernment. You only get that through the structure God has provided for you, making that structure your accountability platform, your responsibility, making that your passion.

I wonder what God thinks when He sees 80,000 people going absolutely crazy over somebody throwing a dead pig down to the 100-yard line. He looks at God's church on Sunday morning, and we're all sitting here, and we have to really work at it to get you to even say, "Amen. Glory to God. Praise the Lord." Why do they have the passion and God's people don't? That's because that's their religion. The Bible is very clear that when you have these things in your life, you're passionate about it.

Now you don't have to. I know I kidded you a little while ago. I was trying to put it into an easy format. But at the end of the day, I don't give a flip what you think about me. I could care less. You didn't die for me. That book's been everything in my life. I live my life like I don't. All I have is God. I got hundreds and hundreds of friends. I got friends in this church that are unbelievable. But I live my life every day like you don't exist, even though you do exist, and I love you very much. You know why? I'll tell you why. Because at the end of the day, you may all leave me, but He never will. I'm not going to wake up to the morning to that disappointment. Yeah, I know we're friends. But my point is this: you got to love Him more than anything on this planet. Your passion to that book, to this church, to the Lord Jesus Christ, to the salvation, to the structure God has provided for you. Don't ever take it for granted.

I promise you one thing in my passion as your pastor in this church, I promise you this: I may do a lot of dumb things and stupid things, but I promise you one thing will never happen. I will never take you for granted. Never. Not a day goes by in my life that I'll thank God for what God's given me here, what God's given me in you, and what we have and what we're going to do for the Lord. I'm passionate about it. I'll give you everything I got. I'll spend every last ounce of my strength pouring everything that God's ever taught me, good or bad, my mistakes, my good things, whatever. Learn from it all. Take it. Use it. Get that passion that God wants to give you. Get in that structure. Let God take you and use you and do whatever God needs to do with you. That's what it's all about. We'll hold up there.