

I. Introduction and Recap

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want to invite you to turn back to, yes, you guessed it, Proverbs chapter 27. As you know, we have been coming through the book of Proverbs for the last 20 or 30 years. The book of Proverbs, as we have said many, many times, represents the mind of God. If you want to really know how God thinks, you go to the book of Proverbs. If you want to know how the world thinks, then you go to the book of Ecclesiastes. If you want to know how Christ thinks toward the church, then you go to the book of Song of Solomon. It is a great book, and we have had a great time with it.

Last week, we ended a couple of weeks ago into chapter 27. Last week, we looked at two great verses and several great principles on our attitude toward the preaching of the Word of God. We were in Proverbs chapter 27, verse 6 and 7.

Proverbs 27:6

Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

We talked about how the best friend you will ever have in life is someone who loves you enough to tell you the truth. We also talked about how we do not grow without being wounded, because the key to growth is change, and sometimes we do not want to change.

Then we looked at verse 7, which says:

Proverbs 27:7

The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

What a great principle that is toward our attitude toward the Word of God. In fact, last week we looked at two really key, important attitudes toward the preaching of the Word of God, if you remember. First of all, I talked about the pastor and his attitude as preaching to his people. Then we talked about the people's attitude in receiving the preaching.

Many times around here, and we do not make any apology for it, we believe that God's program for this day and age and God's structure is the New Testament local church. I understand the true church is the spiritual body of Christ. I get that. But the Bible says, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is," in the book of Hebrews. All through the book of Acts, you find Paul establishing God's structure of a New Testament local church. It is a great institution, and it is to give the world God's truth. That was the original plan.

The New Testament church today, as all down through church history, is filled with men and women who have been born into the family of God by a spiritual new birth, and then fulfilling God's plan for their life as they put out the Word of God. The pastor's job, as we saw last week, is to look well to his flock and make sure that they have all that they need.

II. God Provides More Than Enough

As I read through the Bible a few times, I am always looking for things that maybe I missed before, and little things that are subtle. The deeper you get into it, and the more you see it, the more God gives you things that maybe you missed the first several times through. I was reading it one time, and I thought to myself, "Did you ever notice how when Jesus fed the multitudes, and He did that in Matthew chapter 14, and then He did it again in Matthew chapter 15, when He did that, every time He fed the multitude, there was not only enough food for them to eat at that moment, but they also had leftover food that they could take with them when they went?"

I thought to myself, in our life, God always will not only give you what you need at that moment, but He is always going to give you more than you need. It is one of the great characteristics of God. It is true in the blessings of God. We could just start with the fact that we all deserve to be in Hell this morning, and we are half ahead of the world. You know as well as I do that God just does not stop with one blessing. He continues to bless us, and many times there are blessings in the blessings of the blessings that He gives you that they just keep unfolding themselves.

That is true with the Word of God when you read it and you study it. God just keeps opening up that book to you, and He keeps feeding you and feeding you and feeding you. That is where so many of you got to where you are at today with the Word of God. You come to the place that God has not only given you the blessings of life because you have done what is right with the Word of God, but He has done so because you have been in the book. He continues to teach you the Word of God and give you the blessing.

When you preach, and I know a lot of you guys do that, you go down to the Mission and you go around and preach up in Lincoln and all the places that we go and we teach the Word of God. I thought in my own mind, in my own heart, and I have thought this for a long time, that when you preach, you always want to leave some full baskets for later for people. You want to send some stuff home with you.

Two things we do well around here: one is to teach the Bible, the other one is to eat. Tomorrow, I guarantee you, I have 230 or 240 pounds of ribs, and we have close to 200 people coming. We have hot dogs for the kids or whoever likes them, and a lot of people do not like ribs. Personally, I like hot dogs and ribs, but here is what will happen, it happens every year: we always have a big old thing of ribs left. So what we do is we get the ladies together, we put them on plates, stack them up, 10, 15 ribs, put them in tinfoil, and you take them home with you.

I have always thought to myself, I know in my own personal life, nobody likes to eat better than I do. There is nothing better than getting your food when you are there, and then knowing out in the car you have a little plate that you are going to take home with you. I do not know if that is biblical or not, but it sure tastes good anyhow. I have always thought when I preach, I always try to follow the same thing. I want you to take some stuff home with you.

The mark, and I am not saying I am a good preacher, but the mark of a good preacher is the depth that they have that is able to not only give you what you need for the moment, but you are able to take stuff home with you that you can use throughout the rest of the week. I have heard

all my life, Dr. Ruckman, we sell his books in the bookstore, and he was a personal friend of mine who went home to be with the Lord a number of years ago. I hear all the time, and people say that he spends too much time fighting everybody in his books, and they wish he would just stick to what he is doing here. That is really not accurate. It is, but it is not. Because when you understand what he is doing, he is simply laying out what these guys who are against our Bible believe, and who they are. To me, that is invaluable. When I want to get into my Bible, I need that. I do. In my life, these are the guys that I need to understand their position so I can better have my position.

I want to know about Dr. A. T. Robertson. Maybe somebody else does not. I want to know about Westcott and Hort. I want to know about Tregelles. I want to know about Griesbach. I want to know about the pulpit committee. I want to know about the other commentary. I want to know about Dr. Neal and Dr. Custer down at Bob Jones University. I want to understand where Dummelow was coming from when he makes his commentaries on the Old Testament, or the Lachmann, and the Lachmann Foundation, or Adam Clarke, or Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown. I get it. Some folks do not want it that deep. I understand that, and that is okay. But for me, it is like when I eat. I want it all. We go out to eat at Jamie's or someplace, and you all bring such great food. I get a little bit of everything. I am not a racist. I eat it all.

There is a little book that I suggest that everybody get. It is out of print for years. It is a little paperback. You probably could buy it for 15, 25, 50 cents. I think people are listening to our YouTube, and every time I announce a book and say it is 25 cents, you all look for it, it suddenly jumps to \$400, \$500. I think they are listening. But it is a little book called Who's Who in Church History. It is one of the greatest little books I have ever found in my life. It gives a complete bio, very small, of everybody in there. If you want to know who is with you and who is against you, if you are ever going to do anything with the Bible, you are going to either bump into these guys or the people who are following these guys.

I try to do the same thing. I am not as good as Dr. Ruckman does by any stretch of the imagination. But I try to give you everything that you need and then add a few things to it. One time Jesus, and this is another little thing I found, sometimes Jesus, He was ready to go to the Garden of Gethsemane, and He is really tired and going through a lot of things. It talked about the fact that He went to a place and then the Bible says that He went a little farther. I have always thought, "Boy, that is great advice for me. Go to, you cannot go anymore, and then go a little farther." It is a thing where, in preaching, give them what they need and then let them fill up some baskets. Put them on a plate, wrap tinfoil on it, and let them take it home with you.

As we saw last week, life is a learning curve. It is a learning curve based on change. We talked about making the statement, "Life is a learning curve," and that does not really mean much to you. Realize the learning curve is about us changing about ourselves what we need to change. That is the learning curve. A lot of times, as we talked about last week, learning to change is a change about ourselves. When you get to that point with the Word of God, then you enjoy the bitter things, the wounding, because you realize that it is going to work for your profit and you are going to come out of it better than you went in. Like Job. Job came out of his ordeal a lot better than he went in. We talked about the wounds of a faithful friend that will lead us even to

love the tough things in the Bible. As the Bible says, the bitter things, they become sweet to us. So you are going to see that as we move through Chapter 27, it kind of all goes together. I like giving a little recap before we move in.

Today, we are going to move a little farther into Chapter 27. I think as we continue, you are going to begin to see a picture take shape here of how important it is to continue that spiritual growth of change. It is something for all of us. Nobody, I do not care who he is or who she is, nobody gets to the point where you do not have to change anymore. If you get to that point, then you need to change that. I am just telling you.

Now let us look at Proverbs chapter 27 here and we are going to look at, believe it or not, three verses, 8, 9, and 10.

Proverbs 27:8

As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.

Proverbs 27:9

Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

Proverbs 27:10

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.

Drake, would you stand up and ask God to bless us on our preaching this morning, my friend?

Dear Lord, thank you so much for this great church that we have. Thank you so much for the fellowship and just the body of believers we have here. Thank you so much for the Word of God, Lord, and just the pastor that is going to preach and teach and stand on it, Lord, and teach us to do the same. Right now I pray you will just give him the word to say, please bless his message, and I just convict our hearts, Lord, to change the things that we need to change and just to live more and more for you every single day, Lord. I pray all these things to you this morning. Amen.

Amen.

III. Doctrinal Interpretation of Proverbs 27:8

Now let us begin with verse 8. There are some powerful things here that we want to look at. So we are going to walk through this thing here, a verse at a time, and we will talk about it. It says, "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place."

In a practical way, the verse is a great verse for us, and we are going to talk about that in a moment. First of all, I want to talk about the doctrinal impact of this verse, how it relates to what God is doing with the nation of Israel. We know now that doctrinally, the book of Proverbs is about the man Israel, who in a corporate sense, Exodus chapter 4, is God's son. We know that the book of Proverbs talks about a wise man and a foolish man. When we get over to Matthew

chapter 25:1-10, we actually see ten virgins, five were wise and five were foolish. We know that kind of made the connection. When you get into the book of First John, it is about two men, one is wise and one is foolish. We know how to make the connection.

So we see and understand from a doctrinal standpoint or prophetically how this thing is dealing with, that he is dealing and talking about the nation of Israel. God, as we all know, had a place or has a place for them. They have wandered far from that place. We know now that the nation of Israel is scattered all over the earth, even though God now began to, around 1800, bring them back as fulfilling the prophecy of Ezekiel and Isaiah and all those other places. But we know that in 606 BC, they got scattered and God began what we know as the times of the Gentiles. We know that they had wandered from the place that God had for them. The place that God had for them was the land that God had promised to Abraham in Genesis chapter 15.

If you want to simplify the Old Testament, and I know there are a lot of characters, a lot of events, and a lot of things that happened in a generalized sense, if you want to just understand the Old Testament in a very simple, basic way, it is dealing with the fact that God in the early part of the book of Genesis, He begins the formulation of the nation of Israel. By the end of Genesis, they go down into Egypt. Now you begin to see the beginning of the nation of Israel. A little bit later on in Exodus chapter 12, He brings them out. You see the calling out of Israel. By the time you get to First and Second Samuel, and Second Kings, you see the establishment of Israel. By the time you get to First and Second Kings, you start to see the demise of the nation of Israel. Then by the time you get to 2 Chronicles chapter 36, you see the captivity of Israel. But the whole Old Testament is nothing more than God getting them, calling them out through Abraham, promising them a place, and then embodying them to get to that place. Of course, that place was the land that God promised to Abraham, Jerusalem. That was the place that they have wandered from here.

Now I have to say this, and just bear with me here. This place in Proverbs 27 is one of the most misunderstood, badly taught, ridiculous teachings anywhere in all the history of the Bible, by pastors and teachers. I always call this, and do not take this in the wrong way, but take it however you want to, I always call this the pastor's stupidity test right here, understanding this concept. I have gotten many a laugh out of this one. If you have a moment, I want you to see this, you need to get this in your Bible if you do not have it. Turn over to John chapter 14.

John chapter 14 will be the verse that is used almost at every funeral that you will go to. When somebody dies, a pastor will get up and he will read John chapter 14:1-3. I have been to a thousand funerals where I have heard that. Many of you, you come back and you go to a funeral and they say, "Yeah, I got you John chapter 14." The standard teaching is this. He says:

John 14:1-3

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Years ago when I was in Ohio, I was working at the Hoover Company and I won a guy to the Lord. He was a black guy, his name was John Tony. I won him to Christ and I had not seen John for, oh, 20, almost 30 years. When Mel Sabaka died, we went back to Ohio to go to his funeral. Lo and behold, old John Tony showed up at the funeral and he is still preaching the Word of God, still ministering the Word of God. We had a great time together. But old John, he had a unique way with the Bible. Back then, the NIV was becoming very popular. When John would deal with his own folks, in his family or in the church that he pastored there, they all wanted to get the NIV and he always wanted to stick with the King James Bible. They asked John, "Why do you stick with that King James Bible?" I would have never thought of this, but this is John's mind. He took them over to John chapter 14 and he said to his church, a black church, he said, "John chapter 14 in the NIV says, 'If you believe in my Father's house, there are many rooms.'" John said, "I am not taking any Bible that is going to take my mansion away from me as the King James Bible says and give me a room." Do you know that whole church dumped the NIV and got a King James Bible? They did not want a room either.

Standard teaching here, there are six things in this passage and I want you to see it because it goes right along with what we are talking about today. I want you to see this and the standard teaching is that God has got a mansion for you up in heaven. I have heard, and when he says, "And I go to prepare a place for you," we use it at funerals like the guy has died and he has got a mansion coming and God is saying, "Let not your heart be troubled. If you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go, I will come again, take you and then you know, I live happily, I come by," you know how that thing goes. I even heard preachers over the years, believe it or not, go back to Revelation chapter 21 and 22, take the dimensions of the New Jerusalem and then figure out based on how many Christians they thought were living down through history how big these mansions were. 100 feet by 200 feet for everybody. Oh yeah, and the people in the church would go, "Amen." They would think it was great. The standard teaching is He is coming and we will see if you want to Himself and that where He is, you may be also. Then he would say, "I am sorry that Joe Smith is dead but he has got a mansion, you do not have yours yet." Now every head bowed and every eye closed because I got lunch here in 20 minutes and that is how it worked in a funeral.

It always bugged me or I always thought it was funny that it never seemed to bother anybody that John chapter 14 during that time period, there is no church. The church is not even in effect yet. The Holy Spirit of God had not come. That comes in Acts chapter 1 and 2 and there certainly are not any Christians. They are not first called Christians in Acts chapter 11 in the church of Antioch. I looked at this and there are six things here and none of this has anything to do with you and me in the church age. It all has to do with the Jew and the nation of Israel and the place that God has given them.

He says here, "Let not your heart be troubled." First thing I do is ask myself, "Who is the 'ye'?" It is the apostles that are here. We like to think it is the whole body of Christ in the church. They are not even here yet. Then He says, "My Father's house." If you go through the Bible, you will

find that the Father's house is the whole house of Israel. Then He says, "In my Father's house there are many mansions and I go to prepare a place for you. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you unto myself and where I am there you may be also."

The book of Ephesians clearly tells me that the day I got saved and the day you got saved, you became one with Christ. He is in you, you are in Him. What has happened in the Laodicean church, and you hear me talking about this all the time, you heard the song service this morning. We still stay with the old hymns. Do you know why? Because we still stay with the old book. Those hymns that we sang this morning were written in the greatest period of time in church history when they believed the Word of God was the Word of God. But what has happened today is once you dump the Bible, you lose your doctrine, you lose your teaching, and you lose your music. Pretty soon you just got one big gray mush thing that everybody calls Christianity. Nobody knows what anybody believes anymore. So you get all of these things floating around out here like John chapter 14.

I have heard a preacher preach one time out of John chapter 10 and he wanted to prove that you could not lose your salvation. So he goes to John chapter 10 and he says, "I want you to know you cannot lose your salvation," which you cannot, by the way. He says, "Here is the proof you cannot. The Bible says that Jesus was in the hand of God and I am in the hand of Jesus and Jesus is in the hand of God. How are you going to lose your salvation when you are in the hand of God?" Anyone amen? Do you know how stupid that is when it comes to the Bible? You want some doctrine this morning? You want to fill your basket up? You are not in His hand this morning. That is not where your eternal security is. The book of Ephesians says you are part of His body. You are His hand. You are not in His hand. You are part of the body. You cannot lose your salvation because if you go to hell, He has to go with you because you are in Him and He is in you.

I tread lightly when I say some of these things because I may be able to get away with it here but if I was preaching someplace else I would be very careful with this because God's people are the most goofiest people on the planet. When I go to, I used to go to preach someplace and somebody had me over and on the refrigerator or on the wall framed up was that little thing of the footprints in the sand. It is very moving. If I did not know my Bible, I would weep. You know how it goes. The picture is two pair of footprints in the sand walking side by side on the beach. The story goes, "I had a dream last night and I looked down and I saw two sets of footprints in the sand and I knew that that was my relationship with Jesus. When I walked a little farther, now there was only one set of footprints. I thought to myself, 'Why did Jesus leave me? We walked together and now we are walking, I am walking by myself.' So I turned to the Lord and I said, 'Lord, we were walking together and then I saw just one set of footprints. Why did you leave me? Where did you go?' Jesus looked down and smiled. 'Son, I never left you. Yes, there were two sets of footprints. We walked together and then you only saw one set of footprints and that is when I was carrying you.' That is moving. But I got you, some great stuff that you hear is not very good Bible. Your walk will never be two, there will always be one set of footprints in the sand because you are in Him and He is in you. He is not carrying you anywhere.

You are in His body. The day you got saved, you became one with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is living inside you and He is in you.

The thing that He is going to place that I am going to go away from you and then I come back and I will be with you. Hey, that Bible says that I am already seated in heavenly places. My Bible says I am going to join heir with Jesus Christ. My Bible says that my citizenship is now up in heaven. It is not that "where I am you may be also" wherever you are, Lord, you and I are together. He is in me, we are one. I can never be with Him because I am Him. I am part of His body. Of course, you begin to see how that when you read something like this, if you do not know your Bible, know how to rightly divide your Bible and ask yourself, "Who is He writing this to?" Now I know all the Bible is written for you. I get it. But you know as well as I do not all the Bible is written directly to you. The key to understanding the Bible is looking at a passage and understanding where it goes and who He is saying it to. Instead of taking it and trying to make it into your world that, "Yeah, my Father's house has many mansions and He is gone away right now and He is going to come back and then He is going to come back for me and we are going to be together every morning." No, no, no, He is inside you right now if you are saved. He is never going to leave you and the fact that He went back to heaven, you know what He gave you? His body, the body of Christ, and not only that, He gave you His mind, the Word of God. He is here in you and you will never be separated from Him. So there is something else here.

Now let us look at the word "place." This "place" here is not heaven. The guy who figured up the rooms could not read because in Revelation chapter 21 and 22 when it talked about the New Jerusalem, it talked about the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. It is not in heaven. When you really get into your Bible, you are going to realize why you do not need a mansion and if you have one when you get up there, you will sell it or lease it out because you are not going to need it.

This place is not heaven because it is not to me in any way, shape, or form. What we are dealing here when He says in John 14 the "place," we are dealing with Proverbs chapter 27:8. God giving Israel a place, Jerusalem, and then them wandering from that place.

Hebrews 11:16

But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Now that is Israel and God preparing a land for them during the church age while He is up there separated from them. That when He comes back at the second coming of Christ, He gathers them back together and in the millennium they are never separated again and He comes for them.

If that was not enough for you, sometime you have a rainy afternoon with nothing to do, turn over to Jeremiah chapter 33 sometime. The whole chapter is dealing with the second coming of Christ and Israel's being reinstated in the millennium which is laid out in Ezekiel chapter 40 through chapter 48. When you look at Jeremiah chapter 32, lo and behold in verse 10, He says God has a place for them. In verse 12, He says He is going to do something with them in this place. Verse 13 says that place is Jerusalem. So this place is not heaven for the Christian in John

chapter 14. He is speaking to the nation of Israel. Remember He has already come to the nation of Israel in Matthew chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. In chapter 12 and 13 they make their official rejection of Him and now He is telling the apostles who represent the nation of Israel obviously that let not their heart be troubled that He is coming back and He is going to prepare a place for them that they are wandering from and He is going to establish them in that.

Hey, we saw it. How many times have we laid out through the history of the nation of Israel? We saw in 1900 where God began to do this very thing. He has been up there in church history. Do you know what He is doing during church history? He is preparing a place, that place that He gave Abraham as a promise. The place that He is going to reinstate them in the millennium. For the last 2,000 years, He has been preparing the land here for them. What happened in the 1900s, around 1888? You had the Zionist movement and the Zionist movement was God beginning that movement to bring that Jew, getting him ready to come back to the land and then what you have. You had World War I. What did World War I do? World War I got the whole land over there ready for the Jew and at the end of World War I, England, where you got your Bible from, has Jerusalem. In World War II, we got the Jew ready for the land and in 1948 they became a nation. Matthew chapter 24 says when that fig tree buds, put forth its leaves and you see the fruit, it is coming. God has got that place ready. Hey, do you not read the 6 o'clock news? Do you not see the 10 o'clock news? What is going on in the Middle East? Do you know what is happening over there? God has got that place prepared for them. A place for them. This place and that place is Jerusalem. It is a literal place on earth because God has given them a literal kingdom, the kingdom of heaven. John chapter 14:3 says while the church age is going on, He is preparing that place and then He will come back and they will be with Him in the millennium in this place that He has prepared. Proverbs chapter 27:8 says that right now Israel has wandered from that place. She is not where God intended her to be. Oh man, nothing like a King James Bible to clear up a seminary education.

I just say this in case you are not hitting on all 8 cylinders this morning. This, I just gave you two or three baskets you could take home with you. For the next 20, 30 years, go to work and find out why you and I do not need a mansion. Find out what Isaiah 9:6-7 really figures into you and me and why you do not need a mansion. Find out what God is going to do in the millennium with the Jew and you and why you do not need a mansion in that. Find out God's plan after the millennium for the Jew, the Gentile and you and me, the body of Christ, and you will realize why you do not need a mansion. Rather, that is a full basket, take your wallet and chew on that food.

IV. Practical Application of Proverbs 27:8

From a practical standpoint, this verse is a great piece of advice for all of us. We see doctrinally how it fits with the nation of Israel and it is not a very good funeral message. But from a practical standpoint, this verse is a great piece of advice for all of us. The last couple of weeks we have been talking about that God has a purpose in life for you and for me. God saves you for a reason. God did not save you so you could just live unto yourself. God has given us a purpose in life and with that purpose there is a true calling and the Bible says in 2 Peter chapter 1:10 that we are going to make that calling sure.

The word "wander" is a good word if you want to do a word study on it. The word "wander" would imply that somebody has no fixed structure in life, no fixed destination in life, no direction in life, no purpose in life. You are going to find again going back to the Bible that every man in the Bible who ever did what God wanted him to do, behind what he did there was a purpose in what he was doing. Back in Genesis chapter 6, 7, 8 and 9 you find the story of Noah. Noah built a boat. Noah had a purpose in why he built the boat. That purpose is laid out for you in the New Testament. Abraham when God called him out he was not called out to wander. He was called out to sojourn. Hebrews chapter 11:10 says that Abraham in his sojourning, in his journeys, he was not just out wandering around trying to find where he should go. The Bible says he was looking for a city whose builder and maker was God. He was looking for that place that God told him about. Paul did not wander aimlessly starting churches and say, "Oh yes, he is going to flip up here. Where am I going to go this week?" He had a direction and he had a purpose and the letters that he writes to the churches, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Thessalonians, Colossians, it shows that purpose.

Yet today God's people will be in a constant state of wandering. The nation of Israel originally was called out in Exodus chapter 12 with a purpose and a direction to go and do you know what happened? Because they got out of the Bible they started going after other gods just like a lot of God's people today. Do you know what they wound up doing for the next 40 years instead of getting to the place that God wanted? They wandered. Some of God's people have been saved 25 years ago, 30 years ago, 10 years ago. Do you know what? You are still wandering. Wandering from church to church. Some of you wander from relationship to relationship. Some of you wander from marriage to marriage, place to place, job to job. God's people today never have any clear direction in life. They never had any real purpose in life for God and they will never just clear off a spot and build anything on their life.

When I deal with people, and I have people in all my ministry come in and they have got issues in their life and they want to get the issues fixed and I believe them and many of them have. A lot of you were like that when you came in. But do you know what you have got to do? You have got to quit wandering, man. You have got to find a place that is going to give you what you need and then you take and you clear off the foundation sometimes all the way down to your salvation. You have got to get the junk out of it. You have got to get some friends out of it. You have got to get all the garbage out of it and you have got to clear that thing down to the base foundation where you got saved and then when you clear up that spot, now you have got to begin to build something. But I will tell you, you will never do that until you quit wandering.

The Bible, the foundation for everything that we believe for all truth will be as we know the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven to Israel in a literal sense, the kingdom of God to you and me in the church age, it is a spiritual sense. One is physical to Israel, the other is spiritual to you and me. God has a place for each of those. Israel was the land, Jerusalem, the place that He said in Hebrews chapter 11 that He prepared and John chapter 14 says that He is prepared and He is going to put them in. Absolutely nothing to do with you and me. For us, the place will be God's church, His structure, Acts chapter 11.

The Christian will be, just like the nation of Israel will be absolutely nothing without the city Jerusalem. They are nothing. The city of Jerusalem to them was everything that they needed that God was going to give them through that city. By the same token, a child of God without a Bible believer, Bible preaching, Bible teaching church, you are absolutely nothing without it because that is the place that God in the New Testament God designed for us. We see it in pastors. People wander from church to church and never accomplish anything. They will never build anything. They look at churches like stair steps of success. "Well, I started out with a church of 50, then five, six, seven, eight years later I got called to a church or I worked a deal, got a church of 200, then about four, five years later I got a church of 500," and they never, never just stand and build anything for God. You cannot build anything with God in four years, five years. It takes a lifetime commitment. But it happens over and over again. Nobody ever gets built. Nothing ever happens.

Proverbs 31:16

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

That great chapter on the virtuous woman will have a lot of good time when we get to that point. It says in verse 16, talking about this virtuous woman, "She considereth a field, and buyeth it." When it comes to the ministry, that is what you have got to do. When I left Canton, Ohio, 1975, into 75, 76 and moved to Kansas City, I bought the field. This was my field. This is where God called me and I stayed with that field. I realized that it takes a labor and he says, "and with the fruit of thy hands, created the vineyard." It is something that you have to stay with. You have to realize that this is the purpose. This is the direction. This is what God wants you to do. In each of your lives, God has a purpose and a direction for you. When you find out what it is, you stay with it. As the bird wandereth from his nest, so the child of God wanders from the place that God has for his purpose in life, just like the nation of Israel did.

V. The Sweetness of Friendship and Fellowship (Proverbs 27:9)

Look at verse 9 back in Proverbs.

Proverbs 27:9

Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

Here is a great principle for all of us why we should never wander from the place that God puts us in as a New Testament Christian and stay in place. For all of us, the strong, solid, positive relationships we need to have with other Christians. Ointment and perfume in the Bible will always represent the sweet smell of our relationship with Christ. You go back to the Song of Solomon in chapter 2, in chapter 4, in chapter 5. He likens, in the book of Song of Solomon, it is basically Christ looking at the church and then describing what He sees in you and me and how we are the love of His life. Then it shows what our relationship should be when we look back at

Him. In both cases, it is like a garden. It is like spices. It is like things that smell wonderful and beautiful. It is like walking through a garden.

I have been off the coast of the Philippine Islands years and years ago at night on a ship. You were maybe two or three miles out, but yet you could actually smell the fragrance of all the flowers drifting across the water. In the Bible, our relationship with Christ is like that garden. In fact, I will tell you if you want to know, back in Genesis chapter 1, 2, and 3, you have the story of the Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden was a perfect place. There was no sin in it back then. Everything was perfect. You did not have to wear any clothes. Everybody ran around naked. Adam and Eve were the only ones, but they ran around naked. You did not have to have any clothes. It was a beautiful garden. You could pick roses all day long and never prick your finger on the thorn bush. There were no snakes. There were no garter snakes. There were no spiders. There were no mosquitoes. It was absolutely perfect. It was not the fact that, "Oh, I am naked and it is nine o'clock and there is a chill in the air." It was not like God had a hand on the thermometer, man. It was perfect controlled weather. I do not know what you are laughing at. You all want that. You say, "How do you know that?" Because you were born that way. Did anybody come out with a three-piece suit on? Man has always tried to go back to that. Why? The most beautiful paradises on this planet are over in the South Seas. Do you know what those islands are called? They are called the Solomon Islands. Do you know why? Because the greatest time on this earth that was like that period of time was when Solomon was on the throne. Man has always looked for that paradise. They wrote about it. Plato wrote about it. Aristotle wrote about it. All those great philosophers. Aesop wrote about it. You have got to watch him. He is kind of hard to swallow sometimes. But they all were looking for this perfect utopia.

You can run around naked. Nobody says, "Ha, ha, ha, you are naked." Nobody cares. That is the way it was. The smell was beautiful. Oh, it was wonderful. The Bible says that God came down and fellowshiped with them. It was an incredible time. Somebody says, "Boy, would it not be great to have that today?" Hey, you do. Because that Garden of Eden back there and that relationship with Christ is what your garden with God ought to be today. The relationship between you and Christ ought to be one of innocence. Now you may be laughing about my talking about naked. I stuck with that for a few moments because I want to make the point now. Here it comes. When it comes to your relationship with Christ today in the garden, everything ought to be naked and open under the eyes of Him. Shall I set you up on that? Okay. Transparent. Your walk and your relationship with God should be just like the Garden of Eden. The sweet smell. In fact, the Bible says over there in Corinthians that when you talk about Christ, His death on the cross to save people or lost people, the Bible says it is a sweet smell in the nostrils of God. That is why when in the Old Testament, when he burnt that sacrifice, there was something about that flesh fat burning in that fire that that aroma appeased God as far as dealing with any man's sin. That ointment and perfume will always represent our relationship with God.

Right now, if you are not living in the Garden of Eden and your relationship with Him is in that sweet smell, that everything in that little world with Him is absolutely fine, it is either the Garden of Eden or you are living in the city dump. One or the other.

Psalms 45:8

All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

The smell that you have in your relationship with Christ, oh, here it comes. The smell that you have in your garden with Him is not just for you. It gets into your garments. The people around you smell it. They are either going to smell like the garments of God or the pack of cigarettes you just had. Ever notice how you can always tell a smoker? It gets in your clothes. I got people across the street who smoke marijuana, wacky tobacco, and they get into it. I come out of my house some nights and there is a cloud over their house. Not only in their clothes, but it is in the neighborhood. What I am saying is this, when your personal relationship is like the Garden of Eden and you have that sweet savor of the perfume and the smell of the beautiful things between God, it does not just stay with you. It gets into your clothes and everybody smells it.

Oh, now where are we going? Oh, here we go. Here is the verse. This is what real Christian fellowship and friendship is. Two Christians will have a bond together to help each other. It will be spiritually a blessing to God because the smell of your relationship and your garments and the smell of a relationship and nobody else's garments together. The sweet smell of our fellowship toward the Word of God and God and everything that He is doing in our lives. The two great qualities, as far as I am concerned, that make this church what it is, had nothing to do with me. The two great qualities that make this church what it is is one, the Word of God and two, the bond that we have with each other. They are unshakable.

I will tell you, Bob and I pitch for the girls so we can keep the game going. I am not sure how much we are helping, but I am going to tell you. I am sure I can speak for Bob on this because I know Bob. But I love it. It is the greatest thing I have ever done. I used to play with the guys for years and years and years. But do you know what? Guys are all about guys and winning. Do you know what I love about pitching for you girls? I do not care who you are playing. You are rooting for the other person to hit the ball. When somebody else, they had a gal last night, a couple of them, he hit the ball for the first time. Both teams were cheering. It was not like, "Oh, she hit the ball. I wish she would have broke her leg." It was not any of that. That is what the guys do. I have done a lot of guys' games and I have seen fights break out and they go crazy. I have never seen that happen with the girls. Maybe you do it in the parking lot when I am not looking, but I am telling you. There is a bond there. I love it. I feel it. You can see it. Do you not agree, Bob? It is right there. I just enjoy it. I enjoy pitching to you and you never get mad. We do not do a very good job sometimes. You do not get upset. You do not get mad. You are coming out. I walked more first game of the season. I walked more people last night than I ever usually do. I am sore this morning and all that. The other team coming out there saying, "You are doing a great job. I appreciate it. I love you so much. Thank you." Nobody cared. So I thought, "Do you know what? Let us make this game interesting. I am going to walk everybody." Almost did as a matter of fact.

But anyway, I watched that bond. I know the guys have it too. They do. They will take in new guys and I am not slitting them at all. They really do. Our leadership with the guys up there is impeccable. They will take the new kids in and they will help them. But they are just not like the girls. The girls get giddy when another girl hits the ball for the first time. Guys just say, "Good

job, man." That is it. "Good job." That is all you get. It is a thing where the girls, they are going, "Oh, yeah. She hit the ball." It did not even matter that it only went three feet and somebody caught it and she is out. It is just the fact that they hit the ball. The bond of the relationships we build with each other that will lift us up when we need it. That will encourage you and me. That strengthens us by our relationship of that sweet smell of each of you having a garden with God separately. And then putting a beautiful bouquet together.

You see, when a child of God wanders, he does that alone. In time, he starts to wander with the wrong crowd.

Psalms 1:1-4

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

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

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

The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

When in your place, when you are in your place in the New Testament church, you build that bond, it will form an accountability relationship that you help each other and it will never be broken. That is really the key to a strong, solid New Testament church. It is that band of the brotherhood between us and the Word of God. In Zechariah chapter 11:14, when the devil wanted to destroy the nation of Israel, do you know what he did? It tells you right in that chapter in verse 14. He broke the bonds between Judah and Israel. He broke the bond. Because nothing will hold a church together and get it through anything than the bond that we have with each other through the Word of God that He has given us. We are not worried about our own selves and how great we are. We are worried about lifting up the other person or being there for them, helping them.

VI. Loyalty and Proximity in Relationships (Proverbs 27:10)

Look at verse 10, Proverbs 27.

Proverbs 27:10

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.

Now again, doctrinally here, this day of calamity we all know will be the tribulation period. We know that in the tribulation from Matthew chapter 10, Matthew chapter 24, many other places, we know that families turn against each other. So we understand how that fits doctrinally. But inspirationally, what a great truth. There are a couple of things here.

First of all, he says, "Thy own friend and thy father's friend forsake not." I cannot tell you the impact in a person's life of the longevity of a relationship that is built around the Word of God. Solid friends going back through the years that you know where they are at, they know where you are at. Through that time, God builds you in a spiritual sense as a family. I always tell, I have been preaching at camp, and I will be preaching again this year. I always start out at some point in the process of telling these kids how much they mean to me because of how much their mom and dad means to me. I try to hitchhike off of our relationship that we have had for what, 10, 15 years, many of you 20, 30 years. I try to hitchhike off of that to letting them know that just as I am your mom and dad's friend for all these years, I am also your friend. Though I may say some things this week that may be hard that you do not want to hear, it is because of the fact that I want to give you the truth. Because of the importance of a longevity in a relationship, solid friends going back through the years, not only with you but with your families, that you know where each other is at, the importance of knowing who you can trust, the importance of a long-lasting relationship with God's people that God has blessed your life with, and realizing how important that they are. I think many times we lose sight of that. Always being there for each other, always being there to help each other, always being there to protect each other, always standing together with others in a life when they are going through a tough time, being there to help somebody, never to hurt somebody.

Paul talks about it in 1 Thessalonians chapter 3:2, and again in Philemon chapter 1:2, when he calls them and he mentions some of the names, he says, "my fellow labourers." They were laboring together because of the relationship that they have.

Then the second thing I want you to see in verse 10 is, he says, "neither go to thy brother's house in the day of calamity, for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off." Now, inspirationally, we are not talking about physical distances here. I want you to firstly understand that. In the world, they have a saying that says, "Blood is thicker than water." That saying is dealing with the bloodline of a family and their closeness. I understand that, and certainly in an unsaved world, that is true. But in Christianity, it is not true in that same sense. The term "blood is thicker than water" from a Bible standpoint would be that we are all washed in the blood of Christ. So therefore, the bond that we have will be closer than any physical bond you will have with any human being on this planet. Now, if they are saved, obviously, that is fine. But if they are not saved, you know what I am talking about.

Many times, and you know this to be true, I know that many times your very family, your moms, your dads, your brothers, your sisters, they are not glad that you are dialed into the Bible the way you are. Sometimes they are not even glad you are dialed into a Bible believing church the way you are. We know from Genesis chapter 1:4, we do not go full verses in the first chapter of Genesis, that the Bible says that God divided the light from the darkness. The Word of God divides. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 10:35, He says, "You got it wrong, guys. I have not come to put everything together. I have come to rip it up." He says, "father against son, mother against daughter." That sounds so foreign to what we all hear today. But I am telling you, truth will divide you. Matthew chapter 10:36 says, "a man's foes shall be of his own household." He says in Matthew 13:57 that "a prophet hath no honour in his own country." Many times your own

family, moms and dads, your brothers and sisters who are so busy wandering and have no purpose in life, they cannot stand for anything. The fact that you do, it is going to cause you some problems.

I know somebody says, "Well, family is number one." No, truth is number one. Anything in life you have without the truth, you do not have anything. Also, you will see brothers and sisters in a family when I have dealt with this all my ministry. One will do right and the other will not. It is going to cause some issues. I do not know how that surprises any of us because I mean, look at Cain and Abel in Genesis chapter 4. One wanted to do right and one did not. You go over here in Genesis chapter 37 through Genesis chapter 50. There is a story of Joseph and his brethren. Joseph was the favorite of his father. He got a coat of many colors. That coat of many colors represents for you and for me all the blessings. The father saw in him and loved him and gave him. It is a picture of the blessings of God that God is giving you that maybe somebody else is not getting because they are not doing what they need to do. Do you know what? It caused some issues, did it not? How about Esau and Jacob? We saw that Thursday night in the blessing and the birthright. Genesis chapter 27. Ishmael and Isaac in Genesis chapter 16.

Hey, you want the classic example? Mark chapter 6:3 and John chapter 7:5. Jesus had brothers and sisters from Mary and Joseph. Most of His own brothers and sisters did not believe on Him. Can you imagine being at the Great White Throne Judgment and standing there and Jesus, now the glorified Son of God in an earthly sense, was your very brother? Wow, that is a rough one. I know it is a terrible tragedy and the Bible will put distance between you and them. I mean, it comes down that you have different values. When you love truth and love the Word of God and somebody else does not, it is "how can two walk together except they be agreed?" I have seen it happen. You actually will lose your physical family. I mean, you still have them and you still respect them and you do not ever forsake them. They forsake you, but you never forsake them. But God gives you a new spiritual family to do what your real family cannot or they will not do. This is the real issue. You appreciate truth and you have found your place and they still want to wander.

I say this because without a doubt, families are the key to the ministry in the Old Testament and the New Testament. In the Old Testament, God told Abraham very clearly that all the nations and all the families of the earth were going to be blessed through him and his nation of Israel. That is what God intended. There is no question about it in the New Testament. The New Testament local church is the venue by which God is going to reach families, going to reach people. I get it. Many of you who never had a mom and dad who loved the Word of God, never taught you anything, you came in and you got saved. Now you found the love of your life. You are married or you are going to get married and you obviously will have kids. You have a great advantage now because you are the first one in the maybe in the long history of your family tree to break that cycle and begin a family that is going to, from this point on, be everything that God wants him to be. It is going to come back to the bonds that we have together.

But sometimes, many times, I am sorry to say that does not happen because you who love the truth, who desire the truth, the truth will divide you from people in your own family sometimes. When you do get together, you know this is true. You get together for somebody's birthday or

somebody's wedding or some grandkids birthday. It is all surface talk. You have got some great things that God has done in your life this week. You saw some great things into the Bible, but you cannot share with anybody there. So you talk about the Royals, talk about the sports, talk about, "Boy, your kids are getting big. Boy, you are putting on some weight, are not you?" You talk normal stuff. It depends on how you want to get back at them. A lady says, "You know, how do I look? I have lost, I lost 30 pounds." And you say, "Where at?" No, I am just kidding. But there is nothing there. You get around here, "Let me show you what God gave me in the Bible this week. Let me tell you, boy, I am going to get a blessing." I have a hard time getting to anywhere to do anything because all you want to keep coming over and tell me about what God has done in your life. I am all for that. We will put everything else on hold because those are number one. We do not talk along about the Royals here, the sports or who won this or who went that. We do. But at the end of the day, we are all about the one book that changed us. Because nothing else in this life would change you like that book changed you. Then add insult to injury or blessings to blessings. He gave us each other. We as a church want to be that garden that wherever we go, when God looks at it, God takes a whiff of it. He smells the garden of fellowship and relationships that pleases Him. So God will fill that void with a spiritual family and friends that will like Christ stick closer than a brother who a brother that is born for adversity.

It says a faithful friend who will encourage you with hearty counsel, hearty meaning from the heart, Biblical based counsel that comes from the heart that is hearty, that is true, that you need when you have to go through something in life. Then the last part of verse 10 says, "for better is a neighbor that is near." I said, it is not a physical distance near the book, near the God or close to you than a brother family member who is far off. He is wandering and has no purpose, no real relationship with God. So honestly, there can be no real relationship with you either side the family. You talk about sports, kid jobs and all that thing, holidays and all the things, but nothing that has to do with the Word of God.

VII. Conclusion: The Importance of Place, Purpose, and People

In all of these principles, we see the great truth that when we do what is right and follow the book and we give ourselves to change through the faithful wounding of the Word of God, which impacts our lives, God only now gives you what you need on a daily food to sustain you. But through the people and friends who love the book, who love you, He will always give you over and above. There will be baskets left over, more than enough.

I have always looked at Matthew chapter 14:17 says there were 12 baskets left over and over there in Matthew chapter 15:34 that says there were seven baskets left over. I always looked at that and thought to myself, "There it is. 12 baskets." It was true in the Old Testament. 12 tribes. Seven true in the New Testament. Seven periods of church history. Taking things for granted instead of seeing all the things that God has given us. God's people will take the Bible for granted and they will lose their perspective. They will take the church for granted and they will get mad over some stupid thing and lose their perspective. The place that God has for them. But

more importantly or maybe not more importantly but certainly within these three they will take each other for granted. That is what we cannot do. You have got to realize that God puts you here. God brought you here. You are here for a purpose to find your direction and purpose in life. No man is an island. We need each other. We need to be in the right place at the right time with the right book with the right people with the right preaching to accomplish what God has for us. These very core three areas of our Christian life and we lose sight of them and we start to wander. It will be the wounding of a faithful friend and the hearty counsel based on the Word of God and the blood bond that we have that holds us together. Gives us a purpose through the Word of God through the structure of God that we never just wander in life.

I told the people yesterday in Bible Institute. We got a guy in our neighborhood. He is probably 25, 28. I live at Woodson Drive which is right there. I think he lives all the way down west on 83rd Street probably almost to Reetown Road down there. This guy is really spooky. You will see him wandering up and down the streets. He is just wandering. He walks. He walks more miles a day than I do. I guarantee you. I have seen him all the way down 350 all the way to the Hy-Vee. I have seen him all the way up and he comes up our cul-de-sac. I have taken the dog out at 11 o'clock at night and he is standing down at the corner just looking. You drive by and his eyes, they are the scariest eyes on the planet. This guy is demon-possessed. He is missing the best chance he has had all week. He just looks. No face, expressionless. Just looks at you. He walks. He stops. He walked up our cul-de-sac the other day and my neighbor who just moved into the house about three or four months ago comes over to me. I was outside and he says, "What was this with this guy?" I said, "Well, I do not know. He wanders all over the place." I said, "I think he lives way down here." I said, "I see him all the time, night and day." I said, "He just wanders. He wanders everywhere." I said, "But I think he is harmless." He said, "Harmless? He says, he knocked on my door last week at three o'clock in the morning. I came down and asked him what he wanted and he said he was looking for a woman." I wish he would have come to my house. I said, "Barb, go answer the door."

I say that because this guy is weird. You have seen him, Troy? You have seen him, have you not? Somebody else told me that they have seen him and lives in a big circle of my house. You have seen him? Yeah. He is weird. He just, he just walks, never says a word. I saw in my front of my house, I saw a car stop the other day and he was laughing, the kid. I thought the guy was, knew him. But then I saw when the car drove away, that was not the case. This guy was confronting him. He was just because he was going down the street, he was talking to himself all by himself. I thought to myself, every time I see him, I feel sorry for this guy. Nobody obviously is caretaking him because he is, I mean, I do not know who, let us let him walk around. He does it in the rain. He does it in the snow. He does it all night long. It is a thing where, I just, every time I see him, I think to myself, I know a lot of God's people like that.

You see, his body that he has will get him wandering wherever he wants to go. He has got the body to do it. Problem is, he has no mind to figure it out. I know lots of God's people that are in the body of Christ, but you do not have the mind of Christ. So just like him, all your life, you will wander from neighborhood to neighborhood, from place to place, from things to things. Just like that guy, I mean, he, I would not want to tangle with him at night. He is built pretty good for,

I do not know what he does. Maybe he has been in prison and he pumped a lot of iron. I do not know. But he, he, he, I would not want to tangle with him. Just the fact that he is scary. I mean, I will fight you, but put a mask on so I do not have to look at those eyes. It is scary. I think to myself, that is just like so many of God's people. He has the body, but he has no mind.

Two things you have got to have, not to wander as a child of God. You have got to be in the body and you have got to have, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." You can have one and not the other and you will wander. You have them both. Your wandering days are over, but so many of God's people are just like this guy. No mind, but a strong body. He walks. No purpose, no direction, no nothing in life. I see God's people just like that. You are in the body. You are saved. But you do not have God's mind for any purpose or direction in life. Proverbs chapter 27 talks about us wandering from the place that God has for us. When God puts you in a place to accomplish that purpose, that is where you need to stay unless God moves you someplace else or comes down and changes the dynamics of it. But that is the key. That is the key for Israel. That is the key to us. The bond that we have together in my own personal humble estimation is what sets this church apart. It is the fact that you truly do love each other, that you are truly there for each other. That Bob and I can pitch the worst game in the history of softball and you still love us because you love each other. More important than winning or losing and all of the things around us is the relationship we have together through the Word of God for the purpose God has saved us for.

Every head bowed, every eye closed. Father, we do thank you today and we praise you for the Lord Jesus. I love you. Thank you for these good people.