

I. The Virtuous Woman: Historical, National, and Inspirational Context

We remember we started our final study in the book of Proverbs, in Proverbs 31. In laying it all out, we now historically understand that Solomon, who had a thousand wives, was looking for one who had the virtue that he was looking for, and he only found one. Similarly, we know that what we are looking at here is the nation of Israel, where in Psalms 135:4 they are called a peculiar treasure. So we know that God looks at them that way.

But then inspirationally, and that is where our interest truly lies, it would obviously be any good, saved woman who has the qualities of Christ in her life. Also, along with that, it would be us, the body of Christ, who is Christ's bride, His one and only bride, who the Bible makes it very clear that we are His virtuous woman, designated as a virgin in the Bible.

II. The Significance of Song of Solomon

In the book of Song of Solomon, we talked about this: Solomon finds that virtuous woman, and he writes the whole book about her. We talked about it last week in chapter 1 that she is a black pearl. Her price is far above rubies. We talked about the pearl concept in Matthew 13:45-46.

Matthew 13:45-46

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Then he writes about her and gives us an incredible picture. Several years ago, on a Thursday night, which is obviously on the website, we also have a book on it back there, I went through the book of Song of Solomon verse by verse. We did it on a New Year's Eve, I believe. I wanted to do that because that probably is the one book that every child of God, once you begin to get the Bible down, you really need to get yourself acquainted with. The book is incredible because it does two things.

First of all, it shows us how Christ looks at us, and many times we do not understand that. Many times we think that Christ is just waiting around the corner to nail us on something that we did wrong, and of course, that is not true. The book of Song of Solomon shows us in exact, incredible detail how Christ looks at us, what He thinks about us, and how He longs to be with us. It is one of the most incredible insights into Christ's mind as He looks at the church.

Then the book also turns around and shows us how we should love Him, how we should view Him, how we should understand what He is and what He does. It is an incredible book. I would say that probably we all have a relationship and fellowship with Christ in some form or some level, but I would be safe in saying that you will never have that level of relationship that is truly

meaningful until you understand the book of Song of Solomon and how it portrays both parties in that.

III. Defining Our Identity and God's Work

As we continue to move through Proverbs 31, we want to keep before us what this great chapter does for us, among many things. One of the central things it does is it most certainly defines who we truly are as Christ's bride. It shows us exactly who we are because we, as God's people, lose sight of that. We really do. We lose sight of a lot of things, and it is books like this, Proverbs 31, as we come through this chapter, that we truly understand the love that God has for us. At the same time, as we do that, it will completely define for us, based on that love, the work that God has for us that He began in us the day we got saved.

You want to remember everything that we are going to look at in Proverbs 31 is going to be built around a verse in Philippians 1:6 that simply says:

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

He has begun a good work in us the day you got saved. Most of God's people, we have talked about this the last couple of weeks, never realize that work; they never accomplish that work because there is a process that you have to go through.

What we have been doing as we move through Proverbs 31, and we have only been in a couple of verses, but in the past, we got the instructions in the first nine, is we have seen the importance of defining some things. The first thing we looked at was defining God's will versus God's plan last week, and how absolutely vital that is. Understanding that God's plan is what God wants you to do, but God's will is what He wants you to be. You will never do what God wants you to truly do until you first become everything that God wants you to be.

We talked about that. We looked then in Romans 12:1-2, an incredible set of verses, the process of once we get saved and He begins that work in our lives for Him. There needs to be a perfecting of that work. He does not just put you on the job and walk back to the office. No, He trains us. He gives us the tools that we need, and in all of that, He perfects us.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We saw in Romans 12:1-2 that it says that we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. I broke that down for you within a biblical context. The good will be the day you got saved, the good work that He started in you. The acceptable, once you move with that

and you begin to put those things into your life in the church, like we saw with Paul and Barnabas and Timothy, we begin to see that you become acceptable. Then once you get to that point in your life, God perfects the will of God in your life through the New Testament local church, which is God's structure. It perfects us under the work of the ministry, as I showed you last week in 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Then we talked about our transforming of our life. This is part of the process; this is what He does through the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. A transforming process begins in our lives. It is through the renewing of our minds that He talks about in Romans 12:2.

Romans 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

I have told you this many, many times, and it is so true: when you look at the world, the world will do some things for you, and it is not all bad. Some of it you have to have in life to keep your job or to be successful with whatever you do. But the world will conform you, and He said, "Be not conformed to this world." So the world will try to conform you. The world will try to reform you; it will try to change who you are. Of course, we saw the great example of that in Daniel chapter 1 with the three Hebrew children and how Nebuchadnezzar tried to reform them to the way of the Chaldeans.

The world will inform you; it will give you information, and some of the information is good stuff. Some of the information is stuff that we need, and it is stuff that will help us in our daily work or our daily life or whatever. It is not all bad. But the world system will also misinform you. You do not always get the truth of everything. So where the world will conform you, the world will reform you, the world will inform you or misinform you, only the Bible can transform you.

It is through a process. As I showed you last week in Ephesians 4:15, it is growing up, not "unto him" as the verse is sometimes or mostly quoted, but the Bible says:

Ephesians 4:15

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Growing up into Him, into a perfect man, to the stature of Christ. That comes simply down to the transforming process. It is simply you and I becoming more like Christ every day in what we think and what we do, and how we look at things, and how we understand things, and how we approach life, and certainly, most certainly, how we approach the work of God in our life.

One of the great keys last week, if you remember, was found in Matthew 20. I showed you God's twelve-hour workday. It all comes around and back to the second coming of Christ, and He sends workmen into His vineyard. I showed you that doing the work of God has called us to finish God, as I have said many, many times. I want to keep all this stuff before you because I do not want this chapter to give you one week and then you forget about it and give you something else. It has all got to go together. So we are going to continually build new, add to what we have already learned, or we are just kind of wasting our time here.

I have told you many times how Christ came to this earth. He was here for thirty-three years. Only three and a half years of that was a public ministry that He truly did the work. Then He went back to heaven, and we know now why that is: because God, when you and I got saved, Christ became the image of Christ, born into that image. Now we finish that work that God started for us.

I showed you how in Matthew 20 that He sends workers into the vineyard. They go in in the morning, that is 6 a.m. They go in at the third hour, the sixth, and the ninth hour, and then the eleventh hour, the last workers go in. I showed you how that that was right around 1830, 1840, somewhere in there. We today, 2020, are at the end of the last shift of workers that went in. There were no more workers put in after that. We are the last ones, and we are at the end.

IV. The Virtue of Ministry

Then we saw the number one key ingredient that every child of God should have in their life, and this is where we got into last week, and we began to develop that, and it is the aspect of virtue. I said last week most people do not know what virtue is. Most people just think it is good qualities or this or that. They do not really have a biblical definition of it. He starts out by saying, "Who can find a virtuous woman?" and that "her price is far above rubies."

We talked about what virtue is: the character qualities of Christ that as you go through this process, as you allow God to transform you, as you begin to perfect yourself, as you prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, then the character qualities of Christ get built in us through the forming of the Holy Spirit of God bringing those qualities into our lives. We build inside of us our spiritual strength and stability that we give to others through ministry.

Last week and this week, probably for me anyhow, I cannot speak for you, but I think that for what it has done, for what I want to do for you, is define what ministry truly is. We do a lot of ministry here. We talk about ministry a lot. I always put ministry as the forefront of why we are even here. Last week we simply, clearly, and plainly defined what ministry is: it is simply giving what God has given us that we have built in ourselves to help heal other people and give to them in a time of trouble whatever they need.

You remember several weeks ago I remarked that a real leader is not somebody who uses other people to make himself strong. A lot of guys do that, but that is not really a good leader. A good leader is not somebody who uses other people to make himself strong, but rather someone who gives his strength to other people to make them strong. That is the key. That is what ministry

truly is, and that is what leadership in ministry does: giving what God has given to us to help get them to the place where they need to get past whatever they are getting past.

I do not know if you ever noticed this. It is things like this that I see in the Bible. Maybe it just comes with being old and being in the Bible for a long time, but things will pop out at me that I will just look at and I will say to myself, "Wow, I never saw that before." It usually carries an amazing concept with it. Did you ever notice this: that when Christ was on this earth as the Son of God doing the work of God, two things were prevalent?

1. Nobody ever stayed dead.
2. Nobody ever stayed sick.

Every time there was a dead person and He showed up, they came back to life. Anybody who had an infirmity that came into His presence got rid of that infirmity. I look at that and I think to myself, "Wow, that is a great concept." In the presence of Christ, nobody ever stayed dead, and in the presence of Christ, nobody ever stayed with the infirmity that they had. They all got healed.

I look at that and I think, as we finish, as Christ's body, the work that He started, we will do the exact same thing. We will continually give life to dead people, and we will heal them of their spiritual infirmities. How do we do that? The same way He did: through the virtue that He had. When you put that same virtue in your life, in my life, you too will hardly ever find somebody staying dead in your presence that you have the ability to win to Christ. I know everybody does not get saved, but you have the ability to give them life from death. You have the ability to heal their spiritual infirmities, and it is an incredible concept.

V. The Charismatic Deception

Having said that, do not tell that to charismatics because that is the New Testament form of healing right there in the church age. We have talked about this pandemic defining all of us. It truly has. But I want to tell you, if this pandemic has defined anything, it has defined the charismatic churches. Let me show you how absolutely blindly stupid people are.

You see it on the news every night. I do not remember all the names of the churches; they are charismatic churches. That is probably a good thing I do not, because that would be tempting to say something, and I would not want to embarrass anybody. But the bottom line is this: on the news, they tell you that this church, a charismatic church, a big one, is having drive-up testing where you can drive into their parking lot, and the city is going to be there. They are going to test you for the virus. This charismatic church is setting up for you to go through and get tested.

I have a question: if you truly believe what you are preaching about healing, why are you messing with the testing lines and not putting up the healing lines? Nobody seems to ask that question. You have 2,000 people who go to that church. They swear by that church. They love that church. They love the pastors. They love everybody that they do, and they believe that people get healed. If that is truly true, and you truly believe that, and it truly worked for you, what are you doing setting up a testing site? Why are you not getting the lines up with everybody, and your own people do not need to use masks?

It is absolutely how blindly stupid people follow something that they just do not think. They are not in the Bible. They do not know the Bible. They buy into what the person says when they cannot even find it in the Bible to begin with. When a real issue hits, it is fine when you are on TV in a tent someplace, and you can fake it all. But when a pandemic hits this world, and people are dying by the millions, and you claim to have the ability to heal, and you do not do it.

I know all the answers. I know they will say, "Well, a person cannot get healed if they do not have faith, and those people, they would not have enough faith to get healed." Let me ask you a question: Jesus healed dead people. How much faith can a dead man have? It is ludicrous. This time that we are living in will define a lot of things, but it will change most people because most people are so caught up in what they want to believe that they do not care anymore what the Bible says, or how ludicrous in a time of crisis, when if you had what you claim you had, you would be the heroes of the world. But you are not. We have got to rely on Trump.

VI. Key Words of Proverbs 31:11-12

Today we are going to look at our next couple of verses here. I do not know how far we will get into this. I am not in any hurry because I told you I am not going necessarily verse by verse, but concept by concept, one at a time. All of this, week by week, as we look at it, I want to build together for you probably the greatest time we have ever spent together as a church, understanding who we need to be with Him, why He saved us, what ministry truly is, and what are the character qualities that as a Christian we truly need to have.

This chapter will break itself down around key words. I just saw that this week. It is going to break itself down around key words, and so I would suggest that you mark these key words as we go through them.

So far:

- The Woman (wicked or strange, takes strength from a king)
- Strong Drink (the world system)
- Open Your Mouth (for the little guy, for righteous judgments, to give truth)
- Virtuous (character qualities of Christ, spiritual strength and stability)
- Price
- Rubies

Today we are going to add four more key words to it, and here is the amazing thing: not only are they key words unlocking the chapter, but every one of these words you could take and do your own study on. That is how incredible it is.

Here is what it says: "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." Now today, verses 11 and 12, and I am not sure we are going to get to 12, but I will read it anyhow:

Proverbs 31:11-12

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

It starts out saying here in verse 11 that "the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." There are three key words here that we want to look at, and we are going to build these verses around these three words.

3. Trust
4. Heart
5. Safely

Those are the three we are going to start with, and then we will get a fourth one here as we get a little bit farther down here. These three words are not true; I am going to teach them in the order you find them, but you will understand. This whole chapter, as I said, is built around key words.

VII. The Core of Trust

It says, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." In life, you are going to find this to be true. You probably do not have to live many, many years to figure it out, but you are going to find that there are very few people that you can truly trust in life. You are going to find that by the time you get 60, 70 years old, maybe, my favorite phrase is, you could count them on the hand of a man who lost three fingers in an industrial accident. There are not a lot of people you can trust.

Trust will be the bond that holds every relationship together. Trust will be the bond that holds this church together. Trust will be the bond that holds our people together. When as Christians, it comes down to our own salvation, the word trust and the word heart are absolutely essential. Our heart is the gateway to everything with God. When we got saved, it was with that heart that we trusted what He said.

He said in Romans 10:9-10:

Romans 10:9-10

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

It is the heart. Romans 15:12 says:

Romans 15:12

And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

In His name shall the Gentiles trust. When we got saved, we trusted in our hearts what He told us about salvation. In 1 Timothy 4:10, it says:

1 Timothy 4:10

For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

We trust in the living God. In Proverbs 29:25, it says:

Proverbs 29:25

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe. Then it says in Titus 1:2:

Titus 1:2

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

In hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie, promised before the foundation of the world. So the basic concept of trust starts in us the day we get saved, in our hearts. You did not get saved if in your heart you did not simply trust the promises of God.

People have fear they can lose their salvation. That does not mean you are not saved. It just means that that trust that you exercised when you got saved, you never developed to the point where it covers the next aspect of our Christian life, and that will be trust after we get saved. For that, the famous verse that everybody probably has memorized or knows and marked in your Bible, Proverbs 3:5-6:

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding, and in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Trust is the key. Trust will be the fundamental key that we have to have to get saved, and then we have to develop that trust after we get saved. When we got saved, God gave you just enough faith to be able to trust what He said about salvation. That is why 15 minutes after you get saved, you should never tell somebody, "Well, God is going to use you to be a missionary." You do not have enough trust for that. But God gave you a measure of faith to trust Him in what He is talking to you about salvation. Then as you grow, as you go through the process, that trust develops; it gets deeper. It gets to the place where you can trust Him, or you should get to the place where you can trust Him for just about everything in your life.

VIII. The Challenge of Selfishness and Fear

Having said that, let me just say this: if I have learned anything in all my years about myself, myself first, and about God's people, it is most certainly how selfish we all truly are. Life will, in most cases, always be about us. From the most simple things in life to the major issues of our day, we struggle to trust God. We refuse to trust God. I have seen many, many people, sometimes they used to come to this church, that were great people, and they were nice people. But they no

longer come; they no longer care about the things of God or are back out in the world. They have a pretense of Christianity in their life. If you would ask them, they would tell you. If you would say, "Where do you go to church?" they would probably say, "Oh, Path Baptist Church." They have not been here for a year and a half.

The real fundamental problem is, somewhere along the line, they started trusting the things of the world instead of trusting the things of God. Now, their whole life is cluttered with things, and there is no room to trust God in it. We all are that way to some degree, and it is a fight for all of us. I am not just singling those kind of people out. We all struggle with that. I have known people that have lost their jobs, and they struggled, "What is going to happen to me?" If you are truly a saved Christian, what is going to happen to you? This is going to be tough now. God is going to take care of you. But it is scary when you are in that, is it not?

We have children, and we have to trust God with our children. It can be scary sometimes. We have finances; we all have bills we have got to pay. Sometimes it gets scary with the way the economy is. You have house issues that you have got to trust God with. You have family issues. I have known people, young guys and gals, moms and dads, who struggled all their life with losing their salvation. It is an aspect of trust.

The issues that we all have to face in life and a lack of trust will always produce fear. Fear will always defeat you. That is why the Bible says, "Perfect love casteth out fear." Your love is not perfect, and I do not mean perfect, I mean it is not daily perfected in the sense of the Bible. Right now, in the midst of this pandemic, this problem that we have, most people, and again, I have told you, you do not do foolish things. You have seen by what I am doing in our own church, I am trying to walk very carefully through this. There are things that have to be done, but you do not just throw caution to the wind.

But I am telling you, in the midst of this, most of the people in America are just hiding under their beds. I am all for wearing masks if that is what you need to do, but I have seen people jogging wearing masks. You are going to die of a heart attack if you cannot get enough air in your lungs. I have seen people driving their cars wearing a mask. If you go into someplace where there is a lot of people, I have no problem. I carry two masks in my bag, just in case I have to go someplace and it looks scary or someplace where they say you have to wear a mask. I am not against it. But I will tell you what, you do not have to wear one while you sleep.

God's people are afraid today. I call it, even in Christianity, a groundhog Christianity. You come out and you see your shadow, you go back down in a hole for six months. It is simply because during this time, they are afflicted, they are going through some tough times, and they cannot trust Him to get them through it or get their family through it. I want to tell you, I am not one of the, I am going to tell you straight up, doing everything that you do, doing everything that we do, trying to be as careful as we can, there is no guarantee that somebody is not going to get it.

I do not trust Him for me not to get it, though I do as much as I trust Him if I do get it that He can use me with it. Let me ask you a question in general. If as a child of God, as a Christian, if you are listening to this, and we have 400 or 500 people that are checking these sermons out, and that is great, but let me ask you a question. Here is the bottom line: if you getting the virus would

allow God to use you in a ministry way to somebody else's life, would you be okay with that? That is a hard question, but it is a very real question. Our first response is, "No," but let me ask yourself, "Is God in charge or is He not?"

Years ago, you all have the haunted houses that you go to at Halloween time. We do not go to them. They are too much money; they are like \$50 to go through one. But the original haunted house, I am telling you, this is the absolute truth, the original haunted house started back in Canton, Ohio, with our youth group, Mel Sabaka. We did the first haunted house when there was no such thing as a haunted house. We only ran it for one night. Looking back, we should have ran it for a couple of nights, but it was first class. There was this old abandoned house that they let us set it up. People were not afraid of the lawsuits back then.

It was a big old house with two, three, four stories in it. We worked on that thing for about four weeks before we opened. We had the manpower and the brainpower. Our Frankenstein room had the lady laying on it with the wavy hair, and one of the guys had one of them Jacob's Ladders things that shot up electricity. It was first class. It was incredible. We were working it, getting it ready, and we were working late one night. It was dark in there, and there was a lot of stuff. Barb stepped on a nail and ran it up on her foot. We took her shoe off, and it looked just, it was a puncture wound. We did everything you are supposed to do on it.

We went home. At four o'clock in the morning, she woke up in such pain; her foot had swollen three sizes bigger than her foot. So we took her to the hospital. She wound up spending five days in the hospital trying to get that under control. People would look at that and say, "What is the deal, man? Here is that word out there trying to do God's work, trying to do this, trying to do that, doing for a good thing." We actually had a lot of people come to church, and some got saved through it. We passed out tracts and all that stuff. People would ask the question, "Why would that happen to somebody who is just trying to do it?"

Here again, she was in the hospital for five days, and she won the girl in the bed next to her to the Lord. Sometimes God will use bad things in our lives to get the message to somebody else, and that is the only way that He can do it. Now, the question is, are we okay with that? How far do you take, how far do I take the concept of a living sacrifice? Truly? How far do we take that? How far do I truly believe and trust in Romans 12:1-2? Do I just take the word "living sacrifice" for things that are comfortable for me? Or do I look at the whole thing?

Nobody wants the virus. I certainly do not. I am not saying to be spiritual, you have got to go out and kiss somebody who has got it. But what I am saying, not just with that, but with everything in life, is God in charge or is He not? If He is, I am not saying you do something stupid, but I am telling you that in the world that we live in, there is no guarantee that one or all of us is not going to get it.

I think many times, is there anybody better in the Bible than Daniel, Ezekiel? Daniel is likened to the Holy Spirit of God. He is an incredible study in the Bible. Here is a man that when he went down to Babylon, he took his stand for God. He took his stand in a way that put his life in danger several times. Here is the deal: he did everything that God wanted him to do. He obviously was, if you read chapter 1, he had a great handle on God in the Bible. He had a great relationship with

God to the point that God could use him. But the bottom line is, with all of that righteous stuff that he had, he still went into the captivity to the most ungodly nation the world has ever seen.

We would think that because he was so godly, God would keep him from going down there, but He did not. God allowed him to go down there because He knew that He had a job for him to do, and Daniel trusted God enough. It says, "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat." He trusted Him. That is the real question: Can you trust Him? Can I trust Him? For most of us, it is just all about us. It is. We can talk it while it is all good. We hear that. "Yeah, yeah, it is coming." But when it actually hits, where are we?

One of my favorite stories, and I have told it to you before, and you probably already know it, but do not get bored with it because I love to hear it and love to tell it. Years ago, there was a man by the name of Manly Beasley. Some of you remember him, and Manly Beasley was a great Christian. He had about four or five diseases that were supposed to be killing him. He was sick. When you saw him, he looked like he was dead six months in a casket. He was terribly pale, chalk white, but he never stopped preaching no matter what he went through.

I heard him preach one time, and he used this illustration. I have used it a thousand times because it is so true. He was speaking to a bunch of people, and it was kind of an informal thing. He asked a question. He says, "Let me ask you a question. What do you get when you squeeze a lemon?" Of course, three or four hands went up, and they thought they had the answer, and somebody said, "Well, lemon juice. They make lemonade." He kind of smiled and he says, "Well, that is not always true."

He told the story that he was from Atlanta, Georgia, and he said somebody was going into the grocery stores and secretly injecting a poison into the lemons. You know how they are all just separate there? They were injecting poison, and people were buying the lemons, going home and making lemonade, and dying from it. He told that story. He said, "You would think that when you squeeze a lemon, that lemon juice comes out, but what we now know is that when you squeeze the lemon, what is really on the inside comes out." Then he says, "What do you get when you squeeze a Christian?"

You think that you get the godly character of Christ when a Christian gets squeezed. But he said, "When you watch a Christian get squeezed, what is really on the inside comes out." That was one of the most profound things I have ever heard in my life that is so true. When we get squeezed, what is really on the inside of us is what comes out.

IX. Can God Trust Us?

Trust. "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." Do you know how I know that what I am saying is absolutely true about us, and all about us, and our selfishness, and not caring about the things of God? I will tell you. In all my ministry, I have dealt with hundreds, thousands of people. I have dealt with them from every angle, from every issue, from every problem, almost 50 years of it, of people who struggled in trusting God's promises one way or the other. In all those years, not one time did anybody ever come in to see me being upset because they were afraid that God could not trust them. It was always, "Well, I just cannot trust God." It is all about

us. It is all about us. Never one time did anybody ever come in upset because they thought that God could not trust them.

The real question today is a simple one. It is not, "Can you trust Him?" He has proved Himself. But rather, "Can He trust us?" That is the question. Have we proved what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God in our lives, that living sacrifice concept? This is why people do not like my preaching. I get it. You have some guys, you kind of say, "Yeah, yeah, he is okay." That never happens with me. You either love me or you hate me. I am really good with that because I always like to know where we all stand. You either love me or hate me, and some people just love to hate me, but that is the way it goes in life. I am good with that.

In most preaching, I always wanted to do this. From day one, I always, in my preaching, because I know preachers, and I know preachers can get an agenda outside of just preaching, I always wanted my agenda to be that whenever I preach, no matter what I say, I leave you no place to hide. I leave me no place to hide. This chapter we have all waited for, "Oh, chapter 31!" This chapter will gut you like a fish because it defines what we truly should be. Are we that living sacrifice? Are we willing to trust Him through anything? Are we truly?

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

That book discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. When you open it up and you start to go in it, as I have said many, many times, the Bible is the only book in the world that when you begin to read it, it begins to read you. We fail to trust Him to work through any situation that will come up in our life. We just do. Today, stick your head out from under the bed for just a minute here. Today, He cannot trust us to finish the work that He started in Philippians 1:6, and that He saved us for, because we are too busy, afraid of everything in life, and not having the ability to trust Him. God's people ought to be ashamed of themselves today.

The question today is a simple one: Can God trust you? Can He trust you? Get off the idea, "Can you trust Him?" The question is, "Can He trust you?" Can He trust you with the things that He gives you? Can He trust you with the money that He provides for you, with the job that He has given to you, with the relationships that He has provided for you? Can He trust you with your family? Can He trust you with His ministry, with the Bible, or dealing with the tough things in life when they come your way? Basically, can He trust you with the work that He has for us to do, that He began in us the day we got saved? Can He trust you to be that living sacrifice to finish that work? Can He trust me? It is not a question of me trusting Him. He has been there for me every time of my life. But I can think of a thousand times that I was not there for Him.

People dream of winning the lottery. I have not heard much about the lottery in the last couple of months. I do not think they are doing it anymore because of the virus. But I will tell you, that sucker was up. Can you imagine winning \$800 million on a ticket? I know Christians buy lottery tickets. I am not fighting it. Somebody said, "Well, I will tell you what, it is a good, I have got to

preach on preach." If people in your church bought one and won \$800 million, you would not complain if they tithed off. I would, I guarantee you. But the truth is, you know what the real truth is about buying a lottery ticket when it jackpots \$800 million? You never think about it. You know what the real truth? God could have you win it tomorrow. But you did not win it, did you? You know why? Because He cannot trust you with it. Now, do not get mad. I am not winning either.

My dream is not about winning a lottery because I do not really think about things like that. My daydream, my night dream, my dream is that somebody out there on YouTube is a multi-billionaire. He tunes into our YouTube, and he says, "I have never found anybody that truly teaches the Bible." And here it is. This guy is worth billions of dollars. So he calls me up and he says, "I have never found anybody in the world that teaches the Bible as good as you do." He is a very perceptive man. He says, "If I would fly into Kansas City in my jet once a month, would you allow my chauffeurs to come and pick you up and spend a day teaching me the Bible? We will just stay on my plane. It is beautiful. We can have lunch, dinner, whatever you want. Just let me ask all kinds of questions about the Bible and just teach me the Bible. Would you be willing to do that?"

I would say, "Absolutely." I would say, "In a heartbeat I would do that. I would love to do that." I would just go teaching the Bible. I do not want anything from it. I just want to teach him the Bible. If he wants to learn and he is going to put out that effort, I am going to do it. So here I am, his chauffeur picks me up, drives me in a big old limousine, drives me out to KCI. He is parked down the end of the runway there, and meets me there. He says, "Man, I am so glad to meet you." I said, "Well, I am glad to meet you too." He said, "I have been following your website. I have so many questions about it." I said, "Well, come on, let us get to it." It is up in the plane. Beautiful plane. Really nice.

So we spend all day in the Bible. We do that for four or five months. He comes in every month. Then he starts coming in twice a month. He is calling me on the phone with Bible questions. I just let him have at it. I am good with it. I am having a good time. He is a good guy, wants to learn. I love people like that. After about the sixth or seventh month, I would show up out there. At the end, he says, "Look, you do not know how much I appreciate you giving me the Bible." I said, "Hey, that is what I do. I really appreciate you. I know you are a busy man. I know you have all kinds of things you are running around the world, but yet you take time to come in here for me to teach you the Bible." I said, "I would love to do it. I am glad to do it." He said, "Well, I want to do something for you." I would say, "Well, you do not have to. I am great." But I did not do it. He said, "It is not about that. Here is what I want to do. I want to open up an account, and I want to put in \$100 million. I want you to do it for ministry anywhere you want to do it. When that \$100 million runs out, there will be another \$100 million. I want to fund everything in these last days. I want you to get to everybody what you are giving to me."

I will tell you what I would do. I am going to tell you exactly what I would do. First thing I would do is go out here and buy about a thousand acres someplace. I would put baseball fields on it, soccer fields on it. I would put it, we would go back to the old time where we made that in the ministry where we gave a Christian environment for sports, to families. We would put a big

building on it. We would do our volleyball. We would reach this city through athletics. I have the horses to do it. I have the people to do it. We would absolutely reach this place and just spend the rest of our life until Jesus comes, using every avenue. We would build a home for homeless people. I would build a place for kids. We would do everything we could. We have the people to staff it. You do not have jobs now. We would even, we do not have a place to work, and we would just run the whole system, and we would do it all together. We would spend the rest of, but you know what? He is probably not going to call. You know why? Because now this is the hard confession for me, but obviously God cannot trust me with that. God knows my heart. I would open up a home for unwanted Jeeps. It is a thing where I am not holding my breath. Every time the phone goes off, I do not run over and pick it up. But we all have things like that that we think, but God cannot trust us. It is just that simple.

X. The Danger of Spoiling God's Work

To God, the two most precious things that He loves will be the Word of God and His work through the Word of God. Listen to me. He will never trust us with it, the work or the Bible, until we first love that book and the work as much as He does. It is just that simple. We always approach the Bible from an academic standpoint or from what I can get out of a standpoint. I had a guy one time years ago, he asked me, "Bobby, what is the key for me to truly learn the Bible? I guess I just have to really study it because the Bible says to study to show yourself approved. Is that what I need to do?" I said, "Well, you need to study it, but that is not the main ingredient." He says, "Oh yeah, yeah. I probably have to really begin to read it, reading it, letting it into my heart and into my mind. Is that what I need to do?" I said, "Well, you need to read it, but that is not the most important thing." He went on with several things that he thought he had to do. I just said, "Every one of those," I said, "No, that is not it." He said, "Well, Bob, what is the key? If it is not reading, if it is not studying it, and even putting it into your Bible, if it is not going through and studying everything you can, what is the key to learning the Bible?" I said, "The key to learning the Bible is loving it. If you do not love it more than anything else on this planet, you will never learn it."

You will never learn to trust Him because the two things that He loves above everything are His Word and His work. You and me, it will be part of that. The Bible, after salvation through that process, will build virtue in you. That virtue, you give to others who through ministry, you help, you heal, you encourage, and in a lot of cases, you bring them back to life out of the darkness into the light.

In all my years, I have learned a few things. I try to observe around me, learn from around me, people, places, situations, and things. I try to learn from everything and everybody. I see a lot of people that think they have a great Bible knowledge, and they know some things about the Bible, but there is no virtue in their life. There is no grace in their life. There is no work in their life. I have very little respect or even less time for somebody who is not involved in a local church, is not under the authority of some pastor, but wants to come in here on a Thursday night or a Sunday morning and say, "Look at me. Look what God gave me that He gave nobody else." Give me a break. I am telling you, I am so lame. You are going to the wrong guy because I understand

that that is not how God works. Just because you have some knowledge about the Bible, but there is no virtue in your life that you are in ministry, changing somebody else's life, you are just going around, showing everybody how much you have learned and what you know. Let me tell you something. Those kind of wannabes have been in my world, and I just have absolutely no use for them.

Proverbs 26:4

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

"Answer not a fool, according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." I am not looking for your Bible knowledge. I am looking for the virtue that you have in you, that because of what God has given you, you are willing to give to somebody else to help them. I am not interested in what God showed you that He showed nobody else. What circus did you come out of? I am interested in virtue. You come through this whole chapter, you do not see anything about anybody's exuberant knowledge. It is virtue. The first thing that she had was virtue, and everything else that comes in her life came out of that virtue. I am not interested in what you know about the Bible, what you do not know the Bible. Is there virtue in your life that you are willing to give what God has given you to somebody else? Or are you just flitting all over the place as the shining star in your own world, being the legend in your own mind?

Verse 11 says, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." Here is the next word: safely. In the military and combat, when you were in an elite group, an elite unit, you put your life in the hands of another man, and that man puts his life in your hands. If you are in a two-man foxhole all night long, and the enemy is all around you, neither one of you gets to go to sleep at the same time. You are on four-hour shifts or two-hour shifts. Somebody sleeps for two hours where somebody watches, and then you shift off. You know how easy it is for somebody who is in combat and tired to fall asleep, and both people in the hole fall asleep, and that is the last thing you want to do. You will not wake up, but your throat will be cut by morning. So you have got to put your, you have got to trust the guy next to you.

We trust in Christ for His work in our lives, and we trust that God is going to give us what we want. But can He truly trust in us that we are going to give Him what He wants? If you ever want to study that, you will find that there are three main men in the Bible that truly lay that out. One of them is Job. I always looked at Job. Job trusted God, and God trusted Job so much that when the devil himself came up, it was God that brought Job's name up because He knew what Job was going to do. He got Abraham because somebody asked him about Abraham. He says, "I know him. He will do what is right with his family. He will do what is right with this kid." God trusted him. How about Noah? For 120 years, he built an ark in a world telling people it was going to rain when they did not know what rain was, and God trusted him. I am telling you, the key to God having His trust with us is our heart and our trust, and then can He safely trust us to do that?

Our next key word here is the word spoil. It is profound and yet a simple concept. Our lack of trust in God's promises will produce a relationship where God cannot trust us with the most precious things that He loves, the Word of God and ministry. When that happens, then we, in our

life, in our lack of work for God, we spoil. We spoil the work of God. You leave meat out too long, and it spoils. You have a surprise birthday party for your wife or your husband, and you tell everybody, "It is a surprise, do not tell everybody," and then you tell me, and then I said, "Okay," and then it is this afternoon at four o'clock, and your husband is walking out, and I said, "Hey Jim, I will see you today at four." I just spoiled your surprise. When you are shooting and you are a target shooter, you want to get your group as tight as you can, so you will get five or six shots within a tight group, and usually you will have one that shoots outside that, that is called a spoiler. Spoiled your group.

That is what happens. That is what happens when we, as God's people, are so selfish, and it is all about us, and our comfort level. We talk about loving God, but we always do it on our terms, and we wind up spoiling the work. We claim that we trust Him, but only when it does not threaten our little world and our little comfort zone, and the work of God gets spoiled. Listen, we will either allow God to spoil us with His goodness and His blessings, so abundantly you cannot count them through the promises that we trust in, or we will not trust in those promises, and we will spoil for Him the very work that He desires us to do and needs us to do and saved us for. Remember, it is not about what time we went to work. Matthew 20. The real question is, were we on the job?

So now, so far we have 10 key words.

- The Woman (false religions, takes our strength)
- Strong Drink (the world system)
- Open Our Mouth (with righteousness, for the little guy, to speak righteous judgment)
- Virtuous (inner strength given to others, built through relationship)
- Price
- Rubies
- Heart (heart attitude)
- Trust (believing in Him and Him believing what you say you will do for Him)
- Safely (resting in promises, God feels safe trusting us)
- Spoil (our lack of trust spoils God's work)

My worst fear is the last one, spoil. I do not worry about getting beat up for all the stupid things that I do in life because I deserve that, and I fully understand that that is just going to come down the road. What bothers me more in my relationship with Christ than anything else, and maybe this is what drives me to the intensity that it does, I do not know. I know I am going to get beat up for a lot of dumb things, and that is okay, we are all going to do that, but the thing that I cannot stand, and I just will not, it scares me to death, is to have God want to use me in a situation and I failed Him. I was too busy doing something else to see what He wanted me to do. The fact of letting God down in that work is more terrible to me than anything else in my life because of the fact that I know how He depends, I know why He saved me, I know what He wants me to do, I know what He has given me to do, and the thought of Him not being able to trust me in that is sometimes more than I can bear.

I always want to be there when He needs me. I always want to stand up for Him when He cannot stand up for Himself. Somebody shoots their mouth off about His book, I want to be there to take His place and say it for Him. I know I do not need to, He will probably kill them in a week. I know I do not need to, but I think I need to simply because He has always stood up for me, I want to stand up for Him, and I want to be there when He needs me to be there. Just like I want to be there for you when you need me to be there for you. Greater than that, I want to be there for Him when He needs me to be there for Him. I never want to put my tail between my legs and not take my stand for Him. Cowardice in the ministry is something that I just, I cannot even tolerate, I can hardly even say the concept of the word. We as God's people need to be strong, we need to stand, and we need to speak for Him when He cannot speak for Himself other than through the Word of God. I know He does not need that, but I need that because He has always been there for me, and the thought of me not being there for Him is more than I can fathom. We will hold up there. Each week we will define.