

I. The Reality of the Judgment Seat of Christ

If you have your Bibles this morning, I invite you to turn to Proverbs chapter 31 again. You will remember, so we can kind of tie everything together here, last week we saw one of the most sobering truths anywhere in the Bible dealing with our relationship with Christ, we as God's people losing touch with reality when it comes to the things of God. Once you go through all of Solomon's Proverbs and his principles for life, as you read them, you get a great insight into the way that God looks at things.

I talk a lot about reality checks, and last week we talked about dealing with reality. Reality simply is our ability to see everything the way God sees it. God sees it through the eyes of truth, and we see it many times through the eyes of what we want to see. Proverbs has always been the one book that if I could have total recall, I would choose. Most people do not know who Jack Van Impey was. Jack Van Impey was an evangelist back in the late 60s and 70s. I think he is dead now. He was called the Walking New Testament. He had hooked up with a guy by the name of Fred Brown, who was another great evangelist, an old school evangelist. Jack Van Impey had completely memorized the complete New Testament. I mean, memorized the complete New Testament.

I remember hearing him preach back in the 70s when I was still in Ohio, and he would just be able to quote anything out of the New Testament, just total recall. I have often thought for myself that is probably more than my brain cells could ever handle, but it is a thing where if I could just have the book of Proverbs, if I could just have the book of Proverbs and everything that I saw in life, everything that I had to deal with, everything that came into my world, I would have the ability of total recall to be able to put the principle to it.

Proverbs is an incredible book. As you can well see now, we have taken a long time coming through this book, and now we have hit chapter 31. Chapter 31 is kind of like the consolidation of everything that we have seen up to this point. In chapter 31, it lays itself out of what we really, as God's people, should be to Him, not what we think we ought to be. If there is ever a reality check for us as God's people of what we need to be, it would be Proverbs chapter 31. It lays itself out in the most incredible way.

Every Christian ought to be farsighted. That means you ought to look farsighted to the fact that someday we are going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Loss of reality for us is going through life every day doing what we do and forgetting the fact that someday we are going to give an account for it. That is the basic reality that all of God's people, we all struggle with: that someday we are going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. When you come through Proverbs chapter 31, you see that this woman, this virtuous woman who is a picture of what you and I should be, it is very clear that every day of her life she is making her clothes. Because the Bible says in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, in that great chapter along with 1 Corinthians chapter 3, that there is going to be some of God's people who will wind up naked. The thing that determines

whether we do or whether we do not is what clothes we are making right now. What clothes we are making right now with the things that we saw last week and again the things that we are going to see today.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verses 10 and 11, the judgment seat of Christ is called the terror of the Lord. I know that we read things like that, and because we have got so many things in our own world that take away the fear of God, and we see things on television that are so graphically, people being murdered and cut up in pieces and attacked together with chainsaws, that we just get desensitized to the fact that there are things around us. We just cannot understand or get a reality of how that day when we stand before the Lord is going to be a terror for us.

For most of God's people, probably everybody here if you are saved this morning, and I am pretty much sure everybody is, for most of us today we would say that the greatest day of our life was the day that we got saved. That is so true. The greatest day of our life is the day that we got saved and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ and came out of the darkness into the light. But I can also tell you, based on where we are at in Proverbs chapter 31 and 1 Corinthians chapter 3 and 2 Corinthians chapter 5, the day of our salvation may be the greatest day, but the most terrible day for us after that day of salvation will be the day of the Lord, the judgment seat of Christ, or the day of Jesus Christ. We simply will, because that will be the great reality check.

It is hard for me to grasp because that day should never overtake anybody. There is no reason for the day of Jesus Christ, or the day of Christ as it is called in the Bible, should ever sneak up on any of us. Because right now we have everything in the Word of God, everything within God's structure of a church, if it is a Bible-believing preaching church, everything that we need to understand where we are at, what we should be doing, and then get the help to be able to do that. But that is just not reality, is it? The judgment seat of Christ will simply be God's great reality check. It will be the end of all the games that we as Christians like to play. It will be the end of all the excuses that we have of why we do not do what God wants us to do. It will be the end of all the things that took God's place in our life, and most terribly, most tragically, and most finally, it will be the end of us as self. No longer will we put ourselves in front of God. No longer will we look at our lives, what we have, play the games that we play, circumvent all of the preaching that we hear and everything that comes right down the line to us the day you and I finally see it all from God's perspective and God's understanding.

Your salvation, your life, your family, your job, the ministry God had for you, the work God has for you within that ministry, your church, and the plan that God had for you and for me that we thought was so unreasonable for us to be that living sacrifice that God wanted us to be. You will then understand the great concept that I laid out several weeks ago: God's will versus God's plan. Years ago, when I was just a young Christian and I had not been right with God probably more than six, seven, eight months, Mel and I were going someplace with several of us, and they began to talk about a preacher who had passed away. I knew nothing. I did not know who this guy was. I do not even remember his name now, but he was somebody prominent, and they were talking back and forth about it. I said, "I am just new to this," and I said, "Hey, Mel, did he believe the book?" His answer was classic Mel, and he simply grunted out, snorted out, "He does now." I thought to myself, "Why does he now?" Because when we go home and face the

judgment seat of Christ, it is the great reality check of life. We do not play the games anymore. We do not circumvent all that God wants us to do. It has now come to the place where suddenly, suddenly the reality sets in. Suddenly all the reasons why we do not want to be at church, all the reasons why we do not want to serve the Lord, all the reasons why...

Most of God's people, we talked about opportunities last week, the last couple of weeks, and I told you the majority of God's people never miss an opportunity to try to miss an opportunity. Suddenly, in that day, the reality based on God's work that He did for you and me to be saved, He becoming our sacrifice, and yet all our lives we just kept it all for ourselves and ignored the work that He started in us. God's people, I am not talking about the worldly people out there that are saved and living like the devil and living in the world. I am talking about, like last week, God's people who are in church today, maybe some of you that are here today who have left your Bible, you have left your church, at least mentally, some of you physically, and you have lost your relationship, and yet all the time you play this game, you play this game that you are okay. The great reality check is coming, and you are like the church, we are like the church of Ephesus in Revelation chapter 2, verse 4, we have left our first love, and our first love was the Word of God.

Suddenly now, in an instant, in a twinkling of an eye, where in one microsecond we are all playing the game and think it is fine, in a millisecond, in a twinkling of an eye, we stand before God with a glorified body and now have the mind of Christ, and for the first time in our lives we now see and fully understand all that He did for us. The great reality check that all that He did for us and then all that we did not do for Him. I understand why it is called the terror of the Lord, because it is going to be the finalization, the finalization of every one of us who thumbed our nose at the very things that God died to give us, and now suddenly here we are. No place to hide, no excuses to give, simply for the first time in your life standing there reasoning and understanding fully and completely everything that He suffered for you and for me. If He would just come right now, in your last week of your life, the last month of your life, how would that stack up to what He has done for you and for me?

Week after week, this has been an incredible chapter. Week after week we just get a little deeper into God's mind, and I guarantee you, with the judgment seat of Christ, there will be God's people. I hope none of you, but there will be some, there will be many of God's people that will get on their knees and beg to go back into the church age in time for just five minutes to serve Him, but there will be no going back. As we come through here, we see a picture emerging. We see a picture emerging that to many of God's people is one of the greatest things that you will ever study, but to many of God's people it will be the most terrifying thing that you hear.

We had trouble with our internet this morning and were not sure we were going to get live on the broadcast. Let me just say this, probably Aaron, it would have been a good morning to pull the plug, because if you have not figured it out already, it is going to be rough this morning. If you have not come to terms with it already, this would be a great time to take an hour coffee break, have a sincere case of nausea. I am telling you, as we see this picture emerge of what a man and a woman should be when that transformation actually takes place in their life. If there is one phrase that comes out of Proverbs chapter 31, and I will be honest with you, honestly, I have been through Proverbs probably a hundred times. I got my notes in from 31, and I have got to be

honest with you, I really thought that this would be a pleasant journey. I had no idea that once we began to pull the layers back of where this thing would go. It is all built around one concept:

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:

Boy, that is a killer verse. Most of us have probably read that verse many, many times, but I am telling you, after Proverbs chapter 31, you will never read it the same way again.

II. Doing God Evil

Last week, just to kind of put a cohesiveness to it, we looked at verses 12 and 13, and it says there, "She," you and me, the virtuous woman, "will do him," God, "good and not evil all the days of her life." I showed you what it really means to do God evil. We now have a better understanding of that, because when you would just read that, you would automatically associate that with the worldly, godless Christians who live in the world and do nothing for God, and you would never suspect for a moment that it would be talking about church-going people every week who carry the right Bible, who sing the loudest in their churches, who tithe to their churches, who go to church, who never miss Sunday morning, Sunday night, or Wednesday night, and they are just as absolutely worthless as the ones out there. In all their lives, they do Him evil.

Do you know why? Because doing Him evil is not based on not going to church. It is not based on what Bible you have, though it is important. It is not based on all the things that we do. It is simply based on, did you recognize and understand that the day He saved you, He began a good work in you? Do you understand? Has the reality set in that you and your family exist for one reason, and that is to carry on for Him what He started for you? By the way, He paid the price for it.

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:

There are God's people who never step out by faith. It is like their lives get so complicated because of bad choices, the people that they marry, the stupid things that we all do, and they can never get to the place in their life where they can never step out to be that living sacrifice. Now, I am not saying you have got to quit your job and go put on a robe and go to the airport and pass out tracts. I am not saying you have got to do that. What I am saying is that your life becomes so dialed in to what He did for you that wherever you go, and we deny that work that God had started, and we actually allow the devil to take us right out and do Him evil. I know that is so foreign because you are in church this morning, you have got the right Bible, and you are sitting there, and you are smug and satisfied, and you could never grasp how the devil could use you to do Him hurt.

Then in Matthew chapter 16, verse 23, Peter, one of the inner three, when the Lord was talking about going to the cross, tried to stop Him, and Jesus Himself looked at him and said:

Matthew 16:23

But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

There, Satan tried to use Peter to keep the Lord from going to the cross, and it can happen to any of us.

Then last week we saw verse 13: "She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." I added some more key words to where we were at: good and evil. Wool and flax: the wool coming off of a sheep as a sacrifice, us as a sacrifice; the flax being made into thread from a plant that we actually take the wool and make clothes. Those coverings start with the garments of our salvation, but wind up being the righteous robe at the judgment seat of Christ. "Seeketh" and "willingly." If you ever want a good example of that, just go to Proverbs chapter 2 and read the first five verses right there. "Worketh" and "hands": the work that God has for you and your hands by which you will do it with. Us doing the work of God that He saved us for and called us to. I showed it not only in Philippians chapter 1, verse 6, but I showed it to you in Matthew chapter 20 when the hours dawn through the church age that we went to work. We now know completely, we are in the 11th hour Christianity. We are right before the Lord comes back.

There is a book that is being circulated by some guy out there that looks at the coronavirus and looks at the world the way it is, and he actually thinks that the coronavirus is going to bring about a great revival across this world. People are buying them like hotcakes. It is called something like "The Last Great Awakening" or something like that. I look at guys like that, and I am not doubting his sincerity. I really am not. I think he is probably as serious as a heart attack and probably believes what he writes in that book. I am not doubting his sincerity. I am doubting his insanity. I mean, you have got to be absolutely brain dead when it comes to the Bible and know nothing about history, know nothing about the seven great awakenings that we have already had in our country, how God brought those, and what the real key is to any revival or any awakening in any country anywhere in the world. When you lose sight of that because you have lost reality, then you come up with goofy books like that, and it is a thing where it just is not going to happen. The great awakening that is coming will be the one the Antichrist ushers in under a false pretense of Christianity, and you might as well get set for that.

III. The Merchant Ship and Food from Afar

Today we are going to look at two more verses and begin to tie them into what we have seen thus far. It says in verse, this will be verses 14 and 15:

Proverbs 31:14-15

She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

Now, let us look at verse 14: "She is like the merchant ship that bringeth her food from afar." We are talking about this virtuous woman, and now she is paralleled or likened to a merchant ship with food from afar. I do not know what you know about Bible times back then, but in Bible times, the cities, the nations, the communities, they were dependent on the trade routes that came in from around the known world, both by land and by sea. We know of the camel caravans that were trade routes, but ships crossed the sea. When Paul writes, he writes some of his letters, at least two of them anyhow, from these metropolitan cities that are the center for the ships of merchandise and merchants to come into port. One of them is when he writes the book of Colossians. Colossae was a major trade center for everybody around the known world at that time. Another one was Corinth when he wrote 1st and 2nd Corinthians. Corinth was a major city that had harbors on both sides, and it was a chief city of the Roman Empire for trade during that time. The cities would wait for those ships to come in with all the goods that she would bring them from far places: spices that they could not get, clothing material like silk and perfume, exotic foods and animals, and all of the things that were rare items that they could not get in their own country.

Back in Solomon's day, which is around 1000 BC, Jerusalem is the epicenter of the world at that particular point in time. You do not get that in college, you do not get that in high school, you get that in the Bible. All the world looked at Jerusalem for those 40 some years when Solomon was on the throne. We know that there are nations coming in and bringing in, it was a hub for trade. Solomon knew about the trade routes; obviously, as I said, Jerusalem was the center of it. He is making a parallel by seeing the rarity of the goods that are coming in. Remember, he has a thousand wives, and he probably got most of these wives not out of Jerusalem. They came from around these countries and around the known world at that time. So he is looking at all of the rarity that is coming into Jerusalem from all these other places. He is looking at the women that have come from all these places, and he likens the one woman that he finds, her virtue, to like the rare commodities that these ships are bringing into Jerusalem. It is her virtue.

You find this, Paul does the same thing here in Ephesians chapter 6 where he tells us to put on the whole armor of God. Paul is living in the first century, and at that time in the first century, the greatest military power the world has ever seen was the Roman Empire. Every place that Paul went was garrisoned by Roman soldiers. So he saw them 24/7. They marched up the street, they were staying in guard, they were in the cantinas, they were eating there. He saw them everywhere. Paul knew that the Roman soldier had literally conquered the world and was the greatest fighting army that the world has ever seen. Probably still holds that title today because of many of the things that they teach up at Fort Leavenworth and at the college for the generals and for West Point, Annapolis, the battle tactics go back to the Roman Empire. They were very sophisticated. That is why they took over the world. Paul is sitting there when he writes Ephesians, he describes what Christians ought to be based on the armor of a first century Roman soldier. I know what he is thinking. He is thinking to himself, seeing the greatest military army the world has ever put in place, he is saying to himself, "If I could get God's people to stand and

fight for Christ like these guys stand and fight for a pagan god, Christianity would be something special." So he uses it.

Solomon is looking at all these ships coming in, bringing all these rare things from a far place. He is saying to himself, "I have a woman in my life who is just as rare as that because she too comes from a far place and she has virtue." For us in the ministry, that is a great illustration. For what we have to give people when you work with them, when you help them, when you disciple them or work with them through whatever structure we have here, what you are giving them is certainly from a far country. It is the Word of God from heaven. It is the Bible. It is the AV 1611 in particular. It is God's supernatural gift to man from a far country. It is called the bread of heaven in the Bible. It is called the bread of life in John chapter 6. In Psalm chapter 78, verse 25, it is called angel food. In Exodus chapter 16, when the children of Israel were struggling in the wilderness with nothing to eat, God brought down the manna from heaven. The supernatural food that God brought down to feed His people that nourished them and got them through the wilderness. The world that you and I live in is no less a wilderness. The world that you and I live in is filled with the things of this world that will destroy you. The only way we could ever get through is God supernaturally gave us the manna from heaven, our food from afar.

IV. The Bible as a Living Book and Survival Kit

Like this church or Christians, it is a pearl. It is alive. The Bible, I know, is written with ink and paper, but it also is alive. In our country, our countries have gone so far, and what we are seeing now around today, I know we want to blame it on everybody and everything, but where the blame needs to go. It all goes back to this country leaving the one thing that they had that was absolutely perfect for what we needed to do with our lives, and that is the Word of God. Our liberal friends look at our Constitution, and yes, your Constitution is under attack today. They take the position that the Constitution is a form of a living document. By that, I mean that they think that the Constitution changes with society as it changes. This is why you are seeing your attacks on your First Amendment, your Second Amendment. They are now reinterpreting that the Founding Fathers did not mean that you could have a gun in your house to keep you from being protected from a tyrannical government, because when they wrote that in there, that is exactly what they had just gotten out of, Great Britain. But you see, you lose all that. They think now that it means something else. This is why that 50 years ago, gays and lesbians were looked at for what they really are. But now it is no longer a sin. Now it is an alternative lifestyle. We have lost all of those things that our country was once founded on. Of course, our country was not founded as a democracy, which it is today, but it is founded as a republic. When you go to school and said the Pledge of Allegiance, it was to the republic for which it stands. A republic is a Bible-based institution that is completely different from a democracy. This country was founded as a republic. Our Constitution does not change with society. Our Constitution fixes how society should be all down through the history of the country, based on the concept of a republic.

Yet we see the same thing when it comes to the Bible and modern-day Christianity with pastors and churches. The liberal Christians, just like the liberal politicians, they too think the Bible is a living book. Let me clarify this. The Bible is a living book, but not the way they are trying to

portray it. They think that the Bible, like our Constitution, should change as society changes. This is why you find women pastors all over the place. You will find gay and lesbian pastors. You find same-sex marriages now being accepted. You find everything. This goes back to around the beginning of the 1900s, as I have told you before, with the neo-orthodox movement, whose understanding was to bring and society changes, then Christianity and the Bible changes. Then you add that, the neo-evangelical crowd, whose goal was to take the Bible from the common man and put it back in scholarship, and voila, this is why we have got what we have got. Now stupid Baptist preachers and Baptist churches and stupid Christians fall into that. Of course, that is not true.

The Bible is alive, according to Hebrews 4, verses 12 and 13, but it is alive as absolute truth that never changes. It is God's truth from a far country, and never should it be brought in line with the world, but in reality the world should be brought in line with the Bible. That is living truth that never changes. The Bible is a living book that changes us. It does not exist so we can change it. The Bible never changes. It just fixes and defines for us what we should have in our life. When our founding fathers put out the Constitution, this is why they wrote God into it. This is why the first time when Thomas Jefferson sent it back, they said, "This is not good. We only got one mention of God. We need some more because we can never forget what God has done for this nation." But we have lost that today. Do you know why? This country has lost the reality of how it was founded. Before we are too hard on our country, let me tell you why you are in the sad shape that we are in today, because you and I have lost the reality of what God did for us on the cross.

God's people are in church today without any purpose. They are like a dog who you put in your garage, one of those doors that they can go in and out of the weather. If you put a lock and a handle on it, they could never use the key or open it. They have got to have a flap that they can go in and out. They do not know why they are going in and out. They just know it is time to go in and out. God's people have no purpose. They could not open up their Bible, have no keys to it. They get into it. They just go like that dog through the flap every Sunday, every Sunday night, and every Wednesday and have no purpose to why they are doing it. We in ministry today, we labor to unload this book in people's lives. It is just that simple. You have food from a far country. I do not know if you know it or not, but the Bible is supernatural food for you and for me.

In the Bible, there are seven food groups that the Bible is likened to:

1. It is likened to milk in 1 Peter 2:2. You give milk to babies. When we get young Christians here, we start you with milk, discipleship 1.
2. It is likened to water in John 4 because like the woman at the well, we get thirsty and dusty and hot in this old world. We can drink all what the world has for it, and it will never satisfy that thirst that only when you drink the everlasting waters that that thirst gets satisfied.
3. It is likened to meat in Hebrews chapter 5, verses 13 and 14. Meat will be doctrine.
4. It is likened to honey in Psalm 119:103. Honey gives you what you need in your life.
5. It is likened to apples in Proverbs 25:11.
6. It is likened to bread in Matthew 4:4.

7. It is likened to vegetables in Psalm 78:24, a complete diet spiritually.

All that is food that God sent to you and to me from afar. When you eat the drink the milk and eat the water and eat the meat and eat the honey and the apples and the bread and the vegetables, it will be something that you have never tasted and anything like it on this earth. Not only that, in Jeremiah chapter 8, verse 22, in case you get sick, the Bible is likened to medicine, the balm of Gilead.

We live in perilous times. Steve back there runs the Blue Steel Gun Shop. This is a plug for him. He does not have to pay for this. Every day I see him, I say, "Dad, did you have a good gun day?" His answer is always the same: "Every day is a good gun day." Some handguns you cannot buy. You will get in \$20,000, if I am wrong, you can correct me, Steve, you will get in \$20,000 with ammo, and it will be gone in two days. People are stocking up on it. Do you know why? Because they are afraid of what is out there. You have got the people who are thinking that they are going to come away and take all of your guns, and so you are going to get them and hide them, and you are stocking ammunition someplace and all that stuff. You think that the anarchy is going to break into your neighborhood, and maybe it will. But the bottom line is you are buying all this stuff and guns and ammo, and I am not saying you do not have a right to protect yourself, but let me just tell you this. If they ever decide to roll over your house, they will be over it in 15 minutes, and you and your wife and your three kids will not stop them. If you want anything at all, you better get the old idea, you better get what we used to call in the military a bug out bag. You need to have it stashed someplace with enough food, ammunition, and whatever you need, and you bug out when it happens and then you fight a guerrilla warfare. While they are going through your house, you seal all the doors and set it on fire and stand back and wave at them as they burn to death. Things like that. Fun things of life.

But it is a thing where people are afraid today. They are scared today. Yet, I am going to tell you, not only does the Bible give you the food from afar, but the Bible is the greatest bug out bag you ever had in your life because it is a Christian survival kit.

- If you have got to fight for yourself as a Christian, the Bible is likened to a sword in Hebrews chapter 4.
- If you are out there in the middle of the night, it is likened to a light in Psalm 119:105.
- If you have to build something with something, it is likened to a nail in Isaiah 22:23.
- If you have to build something and pound the nails in, it is likened to a hammer in Jeremiah 23:29.
- If it gets cold at night, it is likened to a fire. Hebrews 12:29, Revelation 19 and 20.

All you need to survive, and it all comes from afar country. I do not need to depend on the things here. I have got everything I need that came in from afar country, and it is good. With all this, you can survive anything that will come your way, even the coronavirus. But many will not.

I am going to tell you something right now, and you might as well forget everything else you wrote down or are going to write down, just write down this one: things are never going back to normal. This coronavirus is not going to ever go away. Our country and our society are depending on it not to. It is a situation where it is going to be around forever, and everywhere

you go, you have got to be six feet apart from people. You are going to see football games now that stadiums are only half full of that. You are going to go to NASCAR. You are going to watch NASCAR races with nobody in the stands. The new norm is so far from the old norm, and nothing is going to change. You are not going to have a time when we go back like what we once did. It is not going to come to the place where this country cannot agree on anything. The state and the cities and the city governments could not even agree on a plan. Are you kidding me? This group is going to say it is okay to do this. This group is going to say, "No, you are all going to be wearing masks." I already got mine. I got a big old World War II gas mask. It just goes on with a long hose and a canister, and you wear it around your waist, and it is great. You cannot hear anything, cannot see anything. I am already in that problem. I guarantee you, if it will keep out mustard gas, it will keep out your coronavirus.

I am going to tell you right now, I have said this all along, this virus in one sense has been a good thing. I know a lot of things. 100,000 people died in America alone. I am not happy about that, and that is just, I understand, but I will tell you what it did for Christianity. It defined Christianity. I am telling you right now, churches across this country, probably our own church, we are all terrible people that will never come back to church again. I told you when it started, when you had a nominal, no-count relationship with God, it meant nothing to you before it hit. You actually think suddenly Christianity is going to mean now something to you when it has hit. God's people ought to be ashamed of themselves. You can trust God to get you through everything in life, or so you say.

There is a book back in that bookstore you had to pick up. We only got, sorry John, we only got about probably two or three copies back there, but it is called "The Life Story of the Waldensians." You ought to read the chapter of what they put up with to go to church, because the Catholic Church at that time had outlawed every Baptist church on this planet, and anybody found with the King James Bible was executed in the most horrific way. Of course, they went out just to kill you. They were out to convert you. Their form of conversion was to pull out your fingernails one at a time. It was to take your little kids and throw them in front of you into a pig mire and watch the pigs eat them while your little kids cried out, "Mommy, Daddy, help me." They took men and filled their mouth with bags of gunpowder and put a fuse in and lit the fuse and blew their heads off. They impaled women with hot iron. They put your head in a bag full of rats. Do you know how they got away with doing all that with hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people? Because God's people would not stop going to church. They realized the sacrifice that He made. If a bag full of rats, if my fingernails pulled out of gunpowder in the head, was what I could do to be a living sacrifice, then I am going to church. Do you know what we all need? We need a reality check, pal. There will be God's people who will never come back to churches because it has not gone away. At some point, you have got to just say, "God's going to get me through it." And if I get it to the glory of God, I will get it. We are so far from that one.

V. Rising While it is Yet Night

Proverbs 31:15

She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

Now, this will be a great time to have computer trouble. This will be a great time to switch over and see what is playing on your favorite YouTube channel because, brother, I am telling you what, this chapter is much more than I ever thought it was going to be. I make no apology for it. I should have just said, "Hey, let us just stop at 30 and do something for another 10 years and then come back and finish it up later and hope the Lord would have come back." I am sorry I did not do that, but I am the kind of guy that if it is here, I am going to preach it. I have never in my life sidestepped anything in that Bible that had to be said, and I am not about to stop now. I am telling you, God's people, you ought to be ashamed of yourself after what He did for you. You are going to let a little virus, you are going to let it cancel out whatever God wants to do with you. You are going to put your tail between your legs, get under your bed and hide until it goes away. It is not going away. You are going to be six feet from people. You are going to have to wait at restaurants. You are going to have to do this. It is never going to go back to the way it was. This is the beginning of the New World Order. The greatest thing about it, it defined you, sir. Ma'am, it defined you, Dad. It defined you, ma'am. We all know where we are all at.

In verse 15, there are some incredible things in this little verse. This is one of those verses that will leave you no place to hide. I am not kidding you. I wish at times like this today, just a little bit, I was a liberal. I wish that I just could get up and talk to you how nice God's people are and how God, when we got saved, what God did was take us as ugly ducklings and turn us into beautiful swans. I wish I could say that. But He saved us. We took His salvation. He did a good work in us. He became our sacrifice, and we said, "No, thank you." We live our lives the way we want to. On our terms, we get our nose bent out of joint when it does not go our way. This is one verse that will simply leave all of us, you and me, no place to hide. It is powerful.

Now let us look at a few words here as we move into this thing and hopefully just stall a little bit. Maybe the Lord will come back and I will not have to finish this this morning. The first word will be the word "night." In your Bible, the nighttime will always be a picture of the church age. Daniel chapter 7, dealing with the Gentile nations in the church age, Daniel had a vision by night. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 7, it is called children of the day and not of the night. In Romans chapter 13, verse 12, it says the night is far spent. The day is at hand, rapture. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light.

In Mark chapter 13, I have told you before, a couple of weeks ago I showed you in Matthew chapter 20 the hour system of figuring out approximately the return of Christ. There is also a day system based on the seven days of creation. There is also a three-day system based on the three days in the New Testament when it breaks. Then here there is the watch system. This watch system starts around 60 A.D. and moves right on through the time. Here is what it says:

Mark 13:32-37

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:

Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

When you lay this thing out into a four-watch scale for the New Testament, which runs, we know of 2,000 years, the fact that God is counting it differently or however He is counting it, whenever He comes it will be 2,000 years in His mind. That would put the even from 60 AD up to about 500 AD. That would put the midnight from 500 AD to about 1,000 AD. That would put the cock-crowing about 1,000 to 1,500, and the morning from 1,500 to 2,000 when it starts to get daylight, time-wise.

The church age is likened to the night. So over there in Genesis when God created two great lights, He created the lesser light to rule the day, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. In Malachi chapter 4, verse 2, the sun as we know it, in the verse there for the second coming of Christ, you would think it is called the Son of Righteousness. You would think it would be spelled S-O-N of righteousness. It is not. It is spelled S-U-N like our sun of righteousness. Of course, He is showing you that the Sun is the type of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving us a complete understanding of Genesis 1:16. He made the greater light to rule the day, second coming, the lesser light to rule the night, church age.

When you go over to Job chapter 25, verse 5, you find that the Christian is likened to the moon. Of course, the parallel is that the moon is a lesser light to rule the night, church age. So when you go out on a night like tonight, the moon will not be quite full yet. It is heading that way or it is heading off of it. I am not sure which is waxing or waning. But anyway, when you see it, it gets brighter and brighter and brighter. That is a picture of every Christian in this room. When you show up after new moon, new birth, you should get every day brighter and brighter and brighter and brighter until you come to that full moon. Now you are the light, the lesser light that lights the night. But the moon does not reflect by its own light, Job chapter 25, verse 5. The moon reflects the light of the sun. So you as the child of God, us as the child of God, the light of the night, we do not shine by our own light. We only shine by the light that we reflect from the Lord Jesus Christ, the day star. Of course, it is one of the most beautiful illustrations anywhere in the Bible. You and I should be lighting the night right now.

But you know as well as I do, some nights you go out and the moon is full, it casts a shadow on this ground that is so bright. That will be your life and my life. But there are times when you go out and there is no moonlight, yet the moon is full. Do you know what has happened? The clouds of this old earth are rolled in and blocked out the light. There are many of God's people this morning that the clouds of this old world are rolled into your life and it has blocked out the light. Then every once in a while you have one of those scientific phenomena of an eclipse. An eclipse

is when the earth comes in between the sun and the moon and it shuts down the light and the light of the moon goes out. Somebody says that is an eclipse. No, that is a picture of what happens to every child of God when the world comes in between you and the sun. Your light goes out and you no longer are the light of the night.

So you have got four watches here. In the back of chapter two, which we have covered extensively before, you and I are told to stand our watch. He says in Mark 13:35-37:

Mark 13:35-37

Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:

Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

How is that watch going for you today? How is the watch working for you? I am just telling you guys, honestly, hang with me. This is not going to be pleasant. It says she rises while it is yet night. Mark chapter 13, verse 36, the fear was that He would find us sleeping. She is working while others sleep. She rises. That is a picture of you and me in the church age not falling asleep like everybody else and losing touch with reality but staying focused. Our labor, our work during the church age. We are the only light. We reflect the light of the sun, the Lord Jesus Christ, and through that reflection we light the night of the people around you with the virtue that you and I have got. We are fast asleep as God's people.

VI. Meat to the Household and a Portion to Maidens

It says, "and giveth meat to her household and a portion to her maidens." We are in the middle of chapter 31 and simply defined for us the work of the ministry. This verse is so powerful and so devastating. It is hard to believe that it has never been unearthed, but then that is not true because who would want to unearth this? The next key words, "meat" and "household." Now meat in your Bible will always be Bible doctrine. The Bible says that strong meat belongeth to him that is of full age, who by reason of use, using it, can discern good versus evil. 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 16 says that the first thing that the Bible is profitable for is doctrine. Now the household here will be your immediate family.

The thing that I want you to see in the great question mark of this verse that we are going to answer today is why does he say give meat to your family but then he says only apportion to the maidens? Why do not the maidens get the same amount as your household? Does that ever strike you? Did you ever see that? Did you ever read through that? You guys on Thursday nights or especially on the Internet, you guys here, some of you are great at picking up things like that. You will say to yourself, and that is how you learn the Bible. One of the ways is you ask yourself, you see someone say, "No, why is not that? That does not look right." I am asking you before I explain it to you, I am asking you. Why does it say give meat to your family but you can only give a portion to the maidens? This would be a very good time to have computer trouble, because here it comes, ready or not.

I want to speak in this next section to every young couple in this church that have kids. I want to speak to you singles who maybe you are not married yet but you will at some point and you will have kids too. I want to speak to every mom and dad who has ever had kids, and I want you to understand that the power of this verse is so devastating. It is the greatest single reality check that we all need today. I want to tell you young couples right now, no matter what anybody tells you, do not always look at the disaster examples of moms and dads around us and think that is the way it has to be. You have got moms and dads in this church who their kids want nothing to do with them. You have got moms and dads in this church that their kids are totally out of control. You have got moms and dads in this church that their kids care nothing about the things of God and absolutely nothing about anything committing to spiritual. Yet mom and dad want to pretend that it is okay. Do you know what you need this morning? A reality check. Here it comes.

I am telling you young couples and you young kids that Bible gives you a hundred percent guarantee. I do not care what some pastor or some book tells you. I do not care what some pastor who has already lost his kids will tell you so he can just testify losing his. That Bible gives you a hundred percent guarantee that you do not have to lose your kids to the world. I want you to get this. For some, it is too late. You will remember why your family is under attack today. That is the first thing you need to know. This pie-in-the-sky Hallmark Channel mindset that Cinderella dream is just going to be like life is going to be great after you find Mr. Wonderful and you have your kids and you go down life's road together. That is a pipe dream and it is not reality.

Listen, your family is going to be under attack because that is the program, the structure that God has designed to reach the world. Just because you can have kids, sir, does not make you a father. Just because you can give life, ma'am, it does not make you a mother. You are just two people who produce another litter and a long line of litters of dogs who run the streets. That is pretty graphic, is not it? Well, I am going to write it in my Bible when I am done, so you better think that through for a little bit.

My Bible says:

Psalms 127:4

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.

You will launch your kids to a target. Wherever your kids are at today, and they are 19, 20 years old, 18, 16, 17, 15, 16, they can be doing what a 25-year-old did 40 years ago when they are 14. Wherever they are at today is where you shot them and hit the target they are at. I do not care if you do not like that. I do not care if you do not believe that. That is a reality check you better get.

That Bible says:

Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

You train up a child. You do not grow them up, you train them up. God gave us, you young couples, you the absolute guarantee that if you gave them meat to your household through the work of your hands and your willingness and your labor, always seeking and willing to give

them the meat, and you take those hands and the wool of the sacrifice and the flax in the thread, and you make, listen, you make your kids clothes with the judgment seat of Christ. Now I am going to stop right here for a moment, and I am sure, I am sure, I am sure this will not apply to anybody in our church. You make their clothes at the judgment seat of Christ with your hands and your willingness and giving your household meat, and those clothes either you will dress them or the world will dress them, and it is your choice.

Allowing your daughter to dress when she is 14 like she is 20, are you kidding me? You say that is none of your business. You are right, it is never none of my business till they get pregnant. It is never none of my business till they get out in the world. You are right, it is never none of my business till your failure falls at your feet and an old bum can you help me? When they are 13 or 14 and you allow them to act and dress and look like they are 20, you know what is going to happen in just a short time? They are going to start doing the things that they are doing when they are 20. As parents, we make the clothes for our children. We take the wool, the sacrifice off the lamb, and there will be some sacrifice that you have to make as a parent for your children. I know I talk about the sacrifices you have to make for God, and that is true, but I am going to tell you right now, parenting is not all about you. Parenting is when you have children, there are sacrifices you have to make in your life because your job is greater than anything you want to do. You have got to make sure you are making their clothes. This is a good day to stay home.

You walk those kids one step at a time through the years of those five stages of training them up that I have given you so many times. If Philippians 1:6 is true and means what it says, that God will begin a good work in Christ in salvation, then all those years before that day comes, mom and dad, you young couples, listen to me, all those years before that day of salvation comes, you should be laying the groundwork in their lives and give them the meat of your household, preparing them long before that day ever comes. Most parents never think about their kids getting saved or their kids start getting that age of accountability, and by that time it is too late. You have to have a process to bring them through that you have the reality that that day is coming, and as that day approaches, long before it comes here, you are making their clothes.

I want to tell you, I have seen some of the most horrific excuses for Christian parenting that you could ever want in my 50 years. I am not kidding you. I am just telling you, I confess, I do not, the only answer I have is that we have deceived ourselves. How in the world does a Christian turn out gay children? How in the world do two people who claim to have a Bible, love the Bible, know what the Bible says, how does your child or your daughter ever come to the place that they become involved in that kind of demonic lifestyle that is absolutely connected, as Thursday night, with a reprobate mind that probably is never going to change? I have known pastors that have done that, and yet they want to stand up and pretend like, "Oops, it is okay." We have got to come to the place in our lives where we stop picking and choosing out of the Bible what we want and what we do not want. You either take it all or you leave it all. I have heard them try to justify that, "Well, you know, you do not understand." No, you are right, I do not understand, because my Bible tells me you have a guarantee.

How do two Christians turn out rebellious kids? I had a lady one time, and she said to me, she said her daughter had gotten messed up with some of the goofiest people on the planet that never

should have gotten messed up with, and she wanted to blame it on everybody else and blame it on this. I asked her, I said, "Okay, okay, stop, stop, let me ask you one question: Who taught your daughter her value system in picking men?" Now we are going to deal with reality this morning. If you want every head bowed and every eye closed, I will pray one more time, you can leave here. Father, help us now to get all this thing straight, and if anybody here does not want to be here and cannot handle this, now is the time to get one more time. One more time around the throne, Lord, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you. The book is the book, the book is the book. Hope they got moving fast in the route now because here we go. Amen.

It is time for reality this morning. We are in the midst of a crisis. I know we played along with it for a while and said, "You know what, it will all get better." It is not going to get any better. Your family is under attack. This country is under attack. There is no safe place to go. There is no safe place to be. The only safe place you have got is in this book. You threw that out quite a while ago, did not you? How do Christian parents turn out drunks? Drug addicts? Kids selling drugs back and forth, putting themselves on YouTube, showing everybody how they are a Christian but they smoke this or they drink that. How does that happen? I mean, I do not understand that. I do understand it, but I am playing this out with it. I am still here. How do two parents turn out kids who are perverts, child molesters? How does that happen? How do two parents turn out kids who at every turn they are in trouble for something, their whole life is about doing it their way, making their choices, and defying authority? How does that happen? Whose fault is that? The verse says, "meat to your household." What part of that do you not understand?

Let me say this, I get it. I have couples in this church who I have all the respect for in the world, and their kids are messed up. I work with them on a regular basis, unlike many of God's people, you want to sweep it under the rug and pretend it is not there, but your kids are so stupid they are putting it on social media. How dumb are you? I have these people, and here is their scenario. They are really good people, and they found this church late in life when their kids were already 13, 14, 15, and 16. They were good people who did the best that they could with what they had, but they got betrayed by the pastors and the churches that they went to. They were told one thing when that was not true, and they were told this. You ought to see some of the most godless, horrendous material that is out there that they will give you if you are having trouble with your wife in a married relationship that is absolutely out of the pit of hell, and yet people, because they are good people, because they really want to do what is right, they follow it and their lives are getting to disaster. I take those people, and I have got several of them right now who are working with me on a regular basis, and we go hand in hand through these things because I understand that that is the difference. They are not like most of God's people that have been associated with my ministry for 50 years. How many times have we been through child training? Really? How many times have you tried to be a disciple? Really?

I have had parents get upset with me or people in my church because their kids are bored, they are like the parents. Do you know what my answer to that is? You did not disciple them, we did, because you were too busy doing your own thing. When they had trouble in their life and needed to talk to somebody, they did not come to you. You were out boozing it up, chasing the women.

No, you failed them at every turn, and then you have got to scratch your head this morning and say, "I wonder what went wrong." You went wrong. Reality is a tough thing, is not it? I almost said that other word, I am glad I did not say it. I get it, I am not talking about those people who are trying to do what they need to do and you came into this church and in the ministry and got into the Bible late. I have all the sympathy in the world for you, and we are working through those things on an individual deal, and I get it. I am talking about the ones who have willingly abandoned your kids to the world. You were trained better than that. You are supposed to know better than that. You have been around Christianity and this church for what, 10, 15, 16 years? Like somebody said one time, "I do not go to Thursday night Bible study anymore because they just asked the same old questions." My answer was, "Yes, and you still have not learned them."

I have seen moms and dads lose their kids when their kid was at the most vulnerable time of their lives. They were coming up and struggling with the peer pressure and everything that is coming against them, and the devil had put his crosshairs right on their forehead. You were busy drinking with the boys. You were busy running around doing your thing, and you mom would just roll over. You just let it happen. You had the chance to stand up and say, "I am done with this." Now you say, "Well, they will not listen to me anymore." That is because you never listened to God in the first place. Welcome, your ship has come in.

Galatians 6:7

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Meat to your household first. Dad, get your head out of wherever you have got it stuck. Meat to your household first. Do not run around trying to prove how spiritual you are by ministering to everybody else. Food to your household first. Start you young couples now dressing them with the wool of sacrifice, with the flax made with your hands or your willingness, making their clothes. Start dressing them for the day they are going to meet God face to face. You will feed your child meat at the king's table, or through your example of a worthless mother and a worthless father, you will feed them the garbage of this world. There will come a time when they say, "I am done. I do not want part of this. Your hypocrisy has gone so far."

Do you know what most guys do? I will tell you, I see this all the time. You screw up, you have lost your kid. For 15, 20 years you were never there. Everybody knows you are a clown. Everybody knows you are out in the world. Everybody knows you were doing what you were doing and never cared about them. Now suddenly you are going to be Mr. Bible. Now we are going to have devotion. Then you get mad because they do not want to come. You are absolutely so ridiculously stupid. Get over to Abundant Life. You are absolutely ridiculously stupid. Get over to First Baptist of Raytown. Go somewhere where you can maintain your phony godliness because your kids are a lot smarter than you are.

Let me tell you something. Husbands, fathers, you do not trample your wife under the tarmac and you do not trample your kids and then suddenly have a come to Jesus on Saturday morning, snap your fingers, and everybody is okay. But that is the way we think. I should have done Psalms 119. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." I should have done that today. Meat to your household first. You young couples, listen to me. You have a 100% guarantee that you can

completely control the destiny of your children and their life. By God's design, do not throw it away. Do not get so caught up in everything you want to do. Do not get caught up with who you think you are. Do not get caught up with all the ministry God has called you to do and you forsake the very first thing, the meat to your household first. There will come a time after they have seen your lousy example for so many years. If you really want to know what your Christianity is really about, have one of your kids' friends ask them, "What is your mom and dad really like as Christians?" They may not tell you. I would say ask them, but they probably will not tell you because they know you just get angry and do not come to church anymore. Get mad, quit being a father. But there comes a time, I am telling your moms and dads, there comes a time when it is too late. You are not going to get them back.

I have seen families that come in late and they are good people, and my heart aches for them because they are really trying to do what is right. I wish I could go back and fix for them. But God has got a purpose in it all. They will have four kids or five kids and they will lose half of them. They will have three or four kids and lose one or two of them. I have seen them where they have lost them all. In all of that, I am going to tell you something. Whatever that scenario in your world is, I am going to tell you right now, there is always something you can do. But you know what? The same pride that kept you from doing it back then is the same pride that will keep you from doing it now. It will be the status quo. Then you wonder why your kids want nothing to do with you.

Now watch this. Meat to her household, but only a portion to her maidens, the people you work with. You better get this. This is one of the most profound things you will ever see. You see, you have complete control over your family, but you do not have complete control over the people you work with. You live with your family 24/7. You cannot live with the people you are working with. You grow up with your kids. You cannot grow up with these people like you do your family. I have told you, you give them what you can, but it is only a portion that you can give them. Because your number one ministry is your household first. Then you give a portion to other people, but you cannot control their lives.

I have seen many, many pastors in my world over the years that have tried to do that. I had a young boy in my ministry years ago. He was a good kid when he started out. Grew up into my ministry. I sent him down to a church, and I will tell you something else. You can invest yourself in guys and give them whatever you have and get them ready for the ministry. But I am going to tell you something. You never know what a guy is really made of until he steps out on his own and starts building that church. That is when it comes out. This was a good kid. He is dead now, by the way. He was a good kid. He got in this mindset that he was going to try to control everything in his people's church. He told them what they could read, what they could not read. He told them what tapes that he could listen to, Bible tapes, and what they could not. He tried to get into their world and dictate and predict everything for those people. He would tell them that they should not go on vacation because they need to be in church. He would tell the guys, "You cannot go deer hunting because you need to be in church." He tried to control every facet of those people's lives, and it simply will not work. Because I can only control my family. You can only control your family. When it comes to you folks who I love with all of my heart dearly, and

we have some great times in the Bible together, I can only give you a portion. There have been times when it probably would have benefited a married couple for me to move in for a week or two. But my stripe of the shirt and my whistle was out the cleaners, and I did not have time to get it. But there would be value in that. I even had them, they will come in and she will give me this wrong dissertation of what he did, and she will give me all this. So after a while, I got smart about ten years ago, I would buy them little tape recorders. When it started to go to town, they would just tape it. He started to say, "Well," and she starts to, I said, "Let me have a tape recorder." I just listened to that. That solved so many problems. The stock of batteries went up 100 percent. We should have invested in it, because I used them so many times. I can only give you a portion.

Understanding that concept is why, here it comes, I try to give you and get the Bible to you everywhere that I can. I try to give it, I try to be, I am not saying I am, I try to be good Sunday morning. I try to be good Thursday night Bible study. When I come in Institute, I am trying to be prepared, people in ministry, one on one. Every time we open up the Bible together, I feel it is my job. I can only give you a portion. So here is the deal. The bigger portion I have in myself determines the bigger portion I can give you. I realize that that is a handicap to a certain degree. You have got to do the work yourself. I cannot be like a mom with a kid and say, "Brush your teeth, do this. Did you read your Bible? Did you do your homework?" I am not going to do that. But if, see, a parent has complete control when they use it biblically. They are not out chasing the world. It is the difference, like I said last week, between fast Christians and slow Christians. If I may say so, some of you could go any slower, you are going to go backwards in time. You see the difference between your family and the others that you work with. You understand that giving the Bible to people you work with is one thing. But in a family, you have complete control. Why would you give that control over to somebody else? You say, "My boy is running around with her own crowd." Who allowed that? Who introduced him to that crowd? "Well, my girl is messed up with this guy and he is a bum." Okay. Why did you not take her to Bible school and let her go to bum school? Where does she learn all of that? Whose fault is that? Whose responsibility is that? "Well, I got a boy who does not care anything about church and I got a kid who is doing this and doing that. I got a girl who is doing this and that." Okay. I get it. You know, we are fixing it starts. You are taking responsibility for it. My first question to you is simply this. Have you, for the last 15, 20 years, since you have been married, had kids, have you given meat to your household? When they were in that vulnerable time, when they needed it so desperately, why were we discipling them? I am all for that. We have to do that.

I was talking to somebody the other day. I cannot remember who it was, and we were talking about this very concept. I said to them, "You know what? My whole ministry, I have been parenting somebody's kids." I absolutely know that I am a second rate at that because that is not God's design. But you know what? If that is the way it has got to be to keep them from going to the world, then that is what I will do. But it is the way it is. I have had to do that all my life with people because parents do not care. They do not care till they get their kids get in a jam and then they care, but only for a little bit. As soon as the abortion is over, as soon as the problem goes, as soon as you get them into rehab, you are right back to business as usual, are not you?

VII. The Prophet Has No Honor

This is why, again, a little bit more, this is why it is so hard for us to reach our own family, brothers and sisters, moms and dads. Have you ever noticed that? Jesus said one time in Mark 6:4:

Mark 6:4

But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

That is so true. Many of you have been frustrated trying to win your brother or your sister or your mom or your dad, and you just cannot get anywhere with them. If somebody else went in, you might get farther with them. I am not saying that they should, but I am just telling you why you cannot. Do you know why? Because they know you. They have seen you all your life, the way you are.

I will never forget, and I take this, and I am certainly not mad or bitter about it, but I will never forget when I got out of the Army. I supposedly would say, I guess I was, I do not know, I made sure of it later on, but I will never forget, I went to church that morning because my mom wanted me to go, my dad had just died. I was still in my uniform, and I had just come home, and I went to Mel Sabaka's class. I knew how that they were, and I sat as far back in the back as I could. I was sitting back there, and that morning they had a guest speaker, his name was Tommy Thomas, as you have heard me talk about so many times. They had a pulpit much like this, and I am sitting back there, and old Tommy Thomas was an old war horse preacher boy, ran the Brown Street Mission. This guy could take the paint off the walls. He got up there and he said, "I want to preach to you this morning on the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." When he said that, he kind of slumped over and he grabbed his chest. He started to get down, and he says, "The Lord is coming, are you ready?" Then he was down on one knee, and the last thing he said before he died on that pulpit, went home to be with the Lord, he cried out as loud as he could, "Are you ready?" I am telling you right now, folks, it was pointing right at me. I knew I was not ready. He hit the floor, died right there. Mel Sabaka got up and preached probably the greatest sermon he ever preached, but I did not hear a word of it. All that day, all that night for the next week, all I heard was, "Are you ready?" And that finger pointed me in those eyes looking at me, and I knew I was not ready. So pretty dramatic, huh? Kind of like Paul and the Road to Damascus, I think. Well, God just beat me up that week.

Next Sunday night, main church service, I went down forward. I had had it. I got all my knees down there, and I rededicated my life. They said, "What did you come forward for?" I did not know. Little did I know. I said, "I am dedicating my life to the ministry." I did not know what else to say. I knew I had not done anything, and I knew that I needed to do something. As this word just came out of my mouth, little did I know that God said, "Write that down. We are going to be using that here a little bit later." I said, "I have just come to surrender for the ministry." Well, the next week, I got a letter from the church. My mom was probably like, I was 20 some years old, and my mom still opened all my mail. Did you ever have a mom like that? She opened

everything that came, man. There was no secret. I came home from work, and that letter was laying there, and they had sent me it, because I came to surrender to full-time service. So they are thinking, I am going to go to Bible college. You know, the whole route. So I get this very nice letter from Harold Henniger, who was the pastor, congratulating on me and wanting to know that if I was running the full-time service, and if he can help me any way to choose the Bible college I am going to go to, it is a very nice letter. My mom picked it up and she looked at me and she says, "You are kidding me, right? You?" She says, "Is this a joke that you are going to preach?" She says, "You will never be able to do that." Do you know why she said that? No, I am not mad at her. She had every right to say that, knowing me the way she did. But you know why she said that? Of course she knew me. Now later on she changed her mind and she heard me preach many, many times, and after a while, she would always, my mom was always who she was. I have about 40 sayings that she used to say that I would love to tell you, you would have a rip laughing at them, but there are women and children here, I cannot do it. But you know, that would have defeated most people. My very mom, who I had been a rebellious, wayward son, finally God got a hold of me through the death of my father and the death of that man preaching, two deaths that changed my life. I was a series of heart attacks, and I came home that night and that whole week, I just said, "Lord," and then I get that letter and my mom says, "You have got to be kidding me, you in the ministry?" I just said to myself, "Yeah, mom, me in the ministry." The prophet has no honor in his own country. Your family do not want to hear it sometimes because they know us too well.

VIII. Conclusion: The Clock is Ticking

There are two main rules I follow in trying to help people help themselves. One of them I gave you last week, which was, you only get out of something what you are willing to put into it. We are coming back to church now. You would think we have been off, what, three or four months, people would just be dying to get here. Believe me, they are not. The excuse is now going to carry on for them. I get it. I know there are people who are sick, who are older and elderly that do not need to be here. Dad needs to stay home. The guy we prayed for this morning needs to stay home. There are people who have got some bad physical needs that need to stay away until it is 100% safe for them. But come on. Come on. You know those Waldensians I told you about? You know you are going to stand side to side to them with the judgment seat of Christ someday. There is somebody that had his head blown off with gunpowder, or some lady had gotten impaled with a hot poker iron. Some mom and dad at tears swimming down their face, crying while their little kids screamed for them to help them while the pigs ate them. Yet they serve God faithfully. We are going to stand there and say, "We did not do it because we were afraid we were going to get a virus." That is a reality check.

Number one, I always follow this: Never want somebody to do right more than they do. I do not care if you do not want to come. I am not going to beg you to come. You know what this church is. You know what we have. If that is what your problem is and you have got an attitude, then that is the way it is and that is the way it is. It is okay. The second one is, and boy this is so true, when it starts wrong in our lives, unless something happens and something changes, in most cases, when it starts wrong in our lives, it will end wrong. When it starts wrong with your kids, it

will end wrong with your kids. If it starts wrong with your marriage, it will end wrong with your marriage.

We are like the merchant ships as Christians, moms and dads. We bring our food, the Word of God, from afar. Kids, we feed our household first. Meat. We make them strong. We make them stable. We make them sound. We give them sound doctrine, 1 Timothy 1:10, which will lead to them having a sound mind, 2 Timothy 1:7, which will build into them a strong, sound faith, Titus 1:13, which will give them sound words, 2 Timothy 1:13-14, which will give them sound speech, Titus 2:8. It is all based on sound wisdom and understanding out of Proverbs chapter 2, verses 1 through 5. Strong meat to your household first. That is your responsibility. Then our second ministry will be the maidens. We give them a portion of what we have. As I have already said, it is simple math and it is true. The more you have to begin with, the bigger the portion you can give them. It is hard to fill a 55-gallon drum with an eyedropper.

We do this in the night, the church age. We are the 11th hour Christians, Matthew chapter 20. We are at work in the fourth watch, Mark 13, right before the sun comes up. Boy, this chapter will kill you.

Romans 13:12-14

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Back in Europe after the Reformation, Germany was greatly influenced by Martin Luther. There were parts of Germany that to this day are very strong in salvation that Luther taught. There was a town in Herrnhut, Germany, that all up through the time of Martin Luther, the 1600s or 1700s, like all cities in Europe, they had a night watchman. The night watchman would go around every hour and you could hear him, and he would, the people would hear him cry out, "One o'clock and all was well," and they would know that he was on guard duty in there. But after the great Reformation and Martin Luther's salvation through the Bible and the blood of Christ broke from the Catholic Church, the whole nation, for a period of time, found God and the Word of God. Every night for every year, as the night watchman passed on and another one took his place, all night long, the cry of the night watchman was based on the King James 1611 Authorized Version. Here is what he said, the cry is as follows:

- At midnight, ye brethren, here the midnight clock is humming, at midnight our great Bridegroom will be coming.
- An hour later, he walked through the same town, he would say, "Past one o'clock, the day breaks out of darkness, morning star appear to break our hardness."
- An hour later, "Tis two, on Jesus' wake this silent season, Ye two so near related, will and reason."

- An hour later, "The clock is three, the blessed three doth merit the best of praise from body, soul, and spirit."
- An hour later, "Here is four o'clock, when three make supplication, the Lord will be the fourth on that occasion."
- An hour later, "Five is the clock, five virgins were discarded, when five with wedding garments were rewarded."
- Finally, through his last time through, before the sun came up and the watchman went off his watch, "The clock is six, I go off my station, now brethren watch yourselves for your own salvation."

My dear friends, this morning the clock is ticking, the night is far spent, we are at the very end. Wherever you find yourself, whatever struggle you are in with your own personal life, your family, whatever it may be, I say again, as I have worked in working with so many moms and dads who find themselves in that later scenario, there is always something you can do. You are going to find out very quickly that the problem is not your children, the problem is not the world, the problem is not the drugs, the problem is not the rebellion nor the indifference, you are the problem. Until we fix you, nothing will get fixed. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, give meat to your household and a portion to your maidens. Great chapter, let us pray.

Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus and we do love you so much and we thank you Father for, what a chapter, what verses these are, powerful, important, just absolutely devastating. Well Lord it is what we need. God I would pray that I would not be such a weak pastor that I would allow these people to go to the judgment seat of Christ without a warning. That I would be so timid and so afraid and so cowardly that I would fear the face of man more than I would ever fear not preaching the truth and giving these your people the reality check that you have put in this chapter. Lord, I pray Father that you will use this, make us closer, make us better. Lord, I know there are people out there today that probably are never going to come back. They have not got an attitude about this, they have got an attitude about something else. You know what, that is what has got them in trouble all their life, their attitude. So we will take what you give us and we will, to the last man standing, we will do the work that God has called us to do. We look forward to getting back together, we look forward to being able to do what we need to do and follow the rules and be protected and to do safely what God has called us to do. One step at a time in Jesus name for sake we ask it, Amen.