

I. The Legacy of God's Word in the Family

My little granddaughter Kinzy was sitting back there, and I wasn't really paying much attention. She had her Bible open, and next to it, she had a blank sheet of paper. She had the date on it, and then she had John 2, and she had "Grandpa East." Parallel, Phoenix High School, Shealkie School, White Coast School, and the Double.

I thought to myself, for you as parents, there is absolutely no greater blessing in the world than to see that the Word of God in Christ impacts your family to the third and fourth generation. It is to know that the Word of God and its promises do what it says it is going to do.

For me, I appreciate all the people that God has put in my world who have gone to Christ and are serving throughout the world. I get phone calls and emails on a weekly basis, people thanking me for this and that. Some of them I haven't heard from for 20 or 30 years. I do appreciate all that, but I am going to tell you right now, the bottom line for any mom, dad, and family is the legacy that you build with your own kids. I thank the Lord every day for that and never want to lose sight of it. I know I didn't see Maddie's or Macy's, but I guarantee you they are doing the same thing, as many of your kids are out there today. They have come to learn today. That is why I work so hard at always having something to give you. Especially on a day like today, you make the effort to be here; I want to make the effort to have something for you that you can learn and grow with.

II. The Revealing Power of Truth

Last week, we looked at one of the most amazing teachings in all of the Bible about our work that we do for the Lord. It was centered around the story of Jesus going down into the temple and purging the house of God, cleansing the temple, overturning the tables. It must have been a sight. He was overturning the tables and driving out the undesirables that had actually polluted the nation of Israel and most certainly the congregation of the nation of Israel.

As always, we looked at the parallels. I can never stress enough the importance of learning from history, learning the things that keep repeating themselves. The spiritual condition of God's people at the first coming of Christ, the great lesson is that it is just as it is today with Christ's church at the second coming of Christ. The spiritual condition of God's people was a complete breakdown of any real spirituality or biblical work.

I think the greatest lesson for me, and I would think and hope it would be for you, is this: there are always things you hear, things you write down in your Bible, things that are important. But for me, I usually try to find one thing that I hang my hat on. Many times, there will be multiple things, but I try to come away with whatever I hear with one thing that, no matter what I do with everything else, it permeates me to the point in my mind that I will never forget it. I think the greatest lesson in all of this is to see how that when truth showed up—and that truth was Christ, but we know that He is the written Word—when the truth showed up, it really revealed what was

really going on. I think that is the greatest single thing that I personally would take away from last week's message.

Receiving God's truth, John 8:32 tells us that it sets us free—free from sin, free from everything that puts us in bondage. But rejecting that truth will put you under that bondage. In either case, whether a person accepts it or rejects it, it will always expose who we really are. I have watched people all my life because I have dealt with people for the majority of my life. I watch how people in any given situation or circumstance will embrace or reject truth.

It is true here with people that you work with. You will see people. I know I have had people that I have seen headed down the wrong road for a disastrous life. They are headed for a dead-end street that is going to probably cancel them out from ever being whatever God wants them to be. I know that you guys have done the same thing. You work with people, you disciple people, and you try to sit down and tell them. Many times, you try to lay out what your own experience was. I know I do that. It is always an amazing thing to me because, believe me, in any given situation, you always want the truth of God's Word on your side, whether you do not like what it says to you or whether you love what it says to you.

Not everything in the Bible is going to be pleasant to you because we, as human beings, in most cases, do not do everything right within the Bible. But you have to come to the place, as the Bible says, "he that loveth a honeycomb, even the bitter things are sweet." We have to come to the place that when it is truth, and the truth is real, and the biblical principles are clear in the Bible, there is no way around it. It has always been amazing to me to watch what people will do. Some people will embrace the truth, and some people will reject the truth. It is so important because without the truth of God in any situation, you really do not have anything. Once you let the truth of what the Bible tells you about life, relationships, people, yourself, and circumstances that you get into—once that truth goes out of your life, you have nothing. Now you are left to your own devices. Now you make life up as you want it to be.

I have seen it all my life, and yet, people like that are in churches every Sunday. They sing the hymn just like we did here a few moments ago. They carry the right Bible to church. On the outside, they have all the right answers. But the real downside of their life is they have been faced with truth and they have rejected it. We saw last week in Hebrews 4:1 that there was no truth with Israel. There was no mercy, and there was no knowledge of God in the land.

I try to tell you all the time, it is not just that you have the Bible. Every Christian has a Bible. Maybe not most of them, but many of them have the right Bible. It is not about whether you believe it or not, but it is understanding that when push comes to shove in your life and you have a circumstance, a situation, a relationship, anything in your world, truth will sort out any issue for you when you allow it to do the work that God intended for it to do. But many of God's people today that you will see and work with and try to help, they will never embrace the truth of the reality of their circumstances or their life's issues. It is just easier to do that. It is just easier to move down to Egypt and build a little cabin along that river that was the main river that flowed through Egypt that is so pertinent to God's people's lives who reject truth. You build a little cabin by the denial and you live there. You justify yourself. You bring in all the support of people who

are just like you, who have rejected truth, and you try to really convince yourself that you are okay. It is always easier for all of us to blame our problems on somebody else than to take responsibility for them ourselves.

That great teaching goes all the way back to Genesis 3 and 4 with Cain and Abel, and all the way back to Genesis 2 with Adam and Eve. When Adam and Eve fell, Adam wanted to get out from under his responsibility, and when the Lord said, "What did you do?" he made it very clear when he said, "Well, Lord, the woman that you gave me." People today continue to live in a world—a Christian world, I am not preaching about unsaved people today, we know where that is at—a continuing life in a world, a Christian world, just like it was with Israel at the first coming of Christ, a world without any real truth. They have lost—Israel has lost—their perspective. I preached about it many, many weeks. They have lost their position, and they have lost their purpose. They too, like Israel, Christianity today has a form of godliness. The people that I am going to preach about today that many of you work with, because the story today is about ministry, they are in churches all across this country. But when truth shows up and God, as we saw last week, overturns our tables of life, they do not like it.

One of the greatest things that I did not preach on last week, because I was going from another direction, but I am going to hit it today in a practical sense: people will always, when they do not want truth, when they do not like truth, they will always go back to what they were actually doing and slide right back into it. That is what Israel did. That is why He has to kick them out of the temple two times. They did not learn a lesson the first time when He kicked over the tables and He threw everybody out with a scourge. Do you know why? Because they did not like what He said. They did not like what He did. They rejected Him as truth. So what? Three and a half years later, they are right back at it again. Boy, if that is not God's people. That is why God's people's lives become so completely powerless and they get destroyed, because they just keep making, like Israel, the same mistakes over and over and over and over and over again.

The Bible does not give me this bit of information, but I am a pretty fair guy with human nature. I would say, I am not sure what day He kicked them out of the temple. Let us say it was Friday. Let us say it was Good Friday. They all had fish, and then He went down to the temple and He turned over the tables and He kicked everybody out. I would probably bet by Monday, they were back in business. They certainly are when He shows up again. Do not kid me that it just happened before He came back that next three and a half years. Let me tell you something. When God's people, the nation of Israel, parallel to you and me, when you reject truth, the Bible says it in Proverbs:

Proverbs 26:11

As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

The pig to her wallow. Oh, great principles.

Then we looked at the concept of Christ's hour, that great phrase, "Mine hour has not yet come." I showed you how that is used several times through the Gospels, and I defined that for you as the hour of His crucifixion, His finishing the work that God had called Him for and sent Him to

do that was up against the specific hour. When He is on the cross and He finished that work, He said, "It is finished." That hour of His work is a picture, as I took you to Matthew 20 and showed you that great analogy of our hour to do our work within the church age. Just as assuredly, as I told you throughout the last couple of months, God had a work for His Son. Philippians 1:6 says that He has a work for you and for me. His hour was His work on the cross that He finished that work. What He did by that is He set up our work, my work, to finish my work through the cross. Then I talked to you about 11th-hour Christianity, how we are right up to the end of all of this.

III. The Jews' Demand for a Sign

With that in mind, I want to close out chapter two today and I want to look at verses 18 through 25. Let us get into it, let us read it here.

John 2:18-25

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,

25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

Let us pray. Father, help us today within this body of people here and the people that are listening to me today, a great host of men and women who have committed themselves to this church. They did not let the pandemic stop them. They did not let the fear of the world being upside down and being on fire stop them. They understood that we had a job to do and we were going to continue to do that job until the day of Jesus Christ. They work with people. They work with me in ministry. They work by my side. I give people to them to work with. People ask for them. They do a tremendous job in doing what, Lord, I started out doing all by myself. I learned a long time ago that the key to a successful ministry was me investing in people to teach them to invest in somebody else and multiplying what one person was doing in any church. So help them learn today the lessons that I have had to learn. Help us to gravitate to the truth of Your Word and to really just embrace these things. Lord, help me to say it clearly, cleanly. Lord, I thank You for the Word of God that You have given to us and me particularly. Help me declare it today in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it, Amen.

IV. Understanding the Patterns of Human Nature in Ministry

To me, this passage has always been a help to me in ministry. I have told you folks in our people ministry, also in Bible history, and I have said it on Thursday night and said it many, many times: the key to people is understanding the patterns of human nature. The world likes to get us to believe that everybody is so different from the other person that there is no real way to track them. That is certainly not true. Everybody looks differently and everybody has different personality traits, I get that. But we all have an old sin nature and a human nature, and that follows a pattern. When you understand the patterns, then it helps you understand people.

For my work here and my hour, we will see as we develop the book of John that all Christ's ministry, He met and faced opposition. I do not think there was a day in His life that He was free from somebody not liking what He was doing. It has always been an amazing thing to me. Jesus Christ is the only man in the history of the world that when He came, He never did anything wrong to anybody, never did anything bad to anybody, never did anything but want to help somebody. Yet nobody wanted anything to do with Him. These are lessons you want to keep close to your heart in ministry. We will see and develop that as we come through here.

If you study deep enough, you will see that the Roman Empire was in power at this time, and certainly the greatest enemy of Christianity was and is the Roman Empire. But you will see and hopefully understand that His real opposition was never Rome. The real opposition that He faced was His own people, His own nation, the very people and nation that He came to save. The Bible says the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. That is not you directly. Now later on, it becomes inspirational, but at the time that said, it is not the Son of God, it is the Son of Man. He came to seek and save Israel. Yet, as we know the well verse, John 1:11, that He came unto His own, did He not?

John 1:11

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

All He did was bring them the truth of God's Word. That was His crime. The only crime that they could ever pin on Him, and they tried everything. But the only true crime that He committed as far as the world was concerned and His people were concerned was that He brought them the truth of the Word of God. He did not come to destroy them. He did not come to hurt them. But He came that through truth to make them better, through truth to get them back to God, which is where they needed to be, because we can see the disastrous situation they were in. They hated Him for it. They plotted and planned against Him. They plotted and planned against Him to discredit Him, to destroy Him. They lied about Him, and they totally rejected Him. In time, they made their alliance with Rome, and you know the story, they crucified Him. The great cry that is one of the great statements in the Bible to their demise is God's people, whom Jesus Christ came to give the truth. The greatest statement they ever made in His coming was, "We have no king but Caesar."

Going back to last week's message, I want you to look at verse 17. I did not preach on this last week. In fact, I read it, but I just basically ignored it because I wanted to use it today. It says,

"And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." That is a quote, if you do not know that already, from Psalms 69:7-9.

Psalms 69:7-9

7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.

8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.

9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

This is a reference to the Jews, the nation of Israel, rejecting Jesus Christ, and the zeal they have here is not to follow Him. The zeal they have is to destroy Him, devour Him, eat Him up. I do not know if you can see this or not, but let me point it out to you. There are two rejections here in this Psalm. The first rejection is His own personal family. Matthew 13:55-56 tells us that Jesus had at least six brothers and sisters. The idea that the Roman Catholic Church teaches that Mary was a perpetual virgin and she never had any more kids is just one lie and a bunch of lies that the Roman Catholic Church puts out. What is even more interesting is when He says here, "an alien to my mother's children," as far as you can tell from the Bible, His own brothers and sisters rejected Him. The only one who did not, that we have a record of in Acts 16 and then in 1 Corinthians 15:7, is James, who was His brother. All the rest of His brothers and His sisters wanted nothing to do with Him.

That in itself brings up a tremendous principle because truth can separate you from your own family. It did here. I am sure when His brother—and you know what an amazing thing to stand at the Great White Throne Judgment knowing that you were a brother of Jesus or a sister of Jesus and you rejected Him. I cannot even get my mind wrapped around that one. But I am sure to justify themselves, just like people do today, this would have been hard, but I am sure they tried to do it, that they blamed the rejection on Him. "Oh, He is so holier now. Oh, He always thinks He is right and everybody else is wrong." The standard arguments that we are going to get today when God's truth divides a family is the same argument that He got back then. Only stupid people fall for it.

Sometimes your kids will not do what is right. As a mom and dad, you want to hold the line, and you have to drop the hammer, and that truth of that daughter or son not doing what the Bible says—and let us face it, most parents do not have the guts to do this. That is why they lose their kids. They think, "Well, I cannot do that, I do not want to lose her." You already lost them. You are just too stupid to see it. There are times that kids will not do what is right, and the truth that a mom and dad try to hang on to will divide that family. Now, there is a process that you can do to reverse that; it just depends on how long you wait with your kid before you try to do it.

On the other hand, you find parents that will not do what is right, and their kids want to do what is right, and that truth divides the family. I have known kids that saw their mom and their dad as absolutely ridiculously the worst example of what Christians should be. The kids really want to take a stand for the truth and do what is right, and mom and dad are just always dancing around it and playing the game, and it divides them. Many times, when a pastor or you or a church, any

church, tries to help that, they will get blamed for it. But that is okay, because Christ's brothers and sisters, I am sure, blamed Him for it.

I cannot emphasize to you enough how truth will always reveal what the real bottom line is. This is why when people have issues with each other, they will not sit down and go to the Bible, which would solve every issue. Do you know why? One of them, sometimes both of them, the farthest thing they want coming into their scenario is truth, because it reveals things. These are great lessons that you have to learn if you are going to do ministry.

The second rejection here was His own nation, His brethren. Going back to John 1:11, His own people, the nation of Israel, rejected Him. This would be Psalms 69:7-9, and many other places. You find that all through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. You find that all of His earthly ministry, there was an element of His own people, the nation of Israel, that was against Him.

V. The Anatomy of a Church and Its Opposition

Most of you work with me in ministry. You are headed for that in my ministry. You are being disciplined right now. You are really moving along. You are in the Bible. You are doing really well. It will be a natural process of you being rooted and then built up and then establishing yourself, and you will be there. One of the reasons I started the Bible Institute, one of the reasons why I started the people ministry. This story that we are reading here today, I am going to talk about, will be an excellent example of where many of God's people are at. I want to leave you today, those of you—I have always looked at you who work with me in ministry as equals. I looked at you as someone who loves this church as much as I do. You love the people in it as much as I do. You give sacrificially of yourself way over and above to deal with people. I want this story to be an excellent example of where many of God's people are at today. I want you to learn some very important keys in dealing with people. It will help you keep your perspective of people and your ministry to them. These are the same things that I do. I told you last week, I think it was last week, that I am in the process of putting a book together for pastors. There are about two or three chapters of that book in this sermon this morning.

You come to the point that when you, for God, when He came and truth came, He certainly turned over some tables in God's people's lives at the first coming of Christ. Let me stop here. Tables in the Bible will be defined as fellowship, Revelation 3:20. It is also defined as study, back there in 2 Kings 4:10. You study at a table. So when He upset the tables here, they were fellowshiping with the wrong things. So now He has purged His church. It is no different than He is today. By what is going on in our own country with what we are facing, forget the world, American Christianity, all across this country, it is very clear that God has entered into His purging of His church, which I might add is probably only the beginning.

I look at this and I am thinking if God's people cannot stand through a little pandemic, what are they going to do when it really, really, really comes to the point of getting bad? All that He had to do by shaking up our little comfort zones. That is all He did. You stop and think about it. That is all He did for God's people. I know there are people that died, and I get that, and I do not want anybody to die, but we are all going to die sometime. We as God's people have removed the

afterlife in heaven and going to be with the Lord so far because we have our comfort zone right here. I hate this cold weather. Barb asked me what I wanted for Valentine's Day. I said, "Just take the dog out." That is all I want. I have a dog that has got to sniff everything before she decides she is going to go to the bathroom. I thank God every day there is only one fire hydrant on our block. I am up there and it is cold. The wind is coming out. Do not put gloves on. It is terrible. This last week or so, it has been terrible. I know people live in places in Alaska and all those, I get it, I get it. But that is your problem, not mine. It is cold. I get up in the morning and you are in a nice toasty bed. It is very comfortable. I am laying there thinking that I have got to get up and go down because the dog is already barking. Her little Timex is telling her it is time to eat. I know that one more day I have got to put on all those clothes, put on boots, put on a hat, put on a big heavy Arctic pants and top and go down there. It is just not the comfort zone that I really want.

That is what this Christian world is up against. God came down and threw a little icy weather in our life, did He not? I am not talking about the weather. We all got out of our comfort zone. You have to wear a mask. You have to social distance. You have to come to the place where now not everybody can go to a football game or a ball game. You have to go to restaurants. You have to wear it until you sit there. Now they are saying you need to wear two masks. We as God's people, we get so comfortable with life. God help us if God would ever call us to be missionaries to Africa, India, the Philippines. We are in our comfort zone, and what has really happened? Do not tell me about the pandemic. Do not tell me about the shock. I will just tell you what happened. God rattled our comfort zone by truth showing up. The truth that showed up showed us exactly how we operate for God when we get out of our comfort zone in the face of adversity. But here, God's people just gave up across the country. I talked to a guy today; he had not been in church for a year. What bothered me more is the fact that I do not think he cared.

You and me, we are faced with the work in the midst of opposition. This has been a real defining moment. I told you when we got into this, nobody believed me. People said, "Ah, yeah, yeah, right now." Well, the longer we go, the more defining it becomes. Because you thought this thing was going to be over in six months and then you could come back and regain your spirituality. It is never going to be over. Either we find a way to minister through it, or we just all surrender to the fear that it brings. But either way, truth has defined us. I am sure there are people out there shutting me off right now or cussing or doing this or giving me a thumbs down instead of a thumbs up on that little thumb thing you got there. It does not matter, I always give myself eight or nine of them. But the reality of it is, we have been defined. We have been defined. I am not saying you do not do stupid stuff. I am not saying you go out and do stupid things. I think that it is whatever. I think that Mary Slessor, when she was a missionary to the Leper Colonies, I do not think she probably stayed in her homes at night. But she was a missionary for over 30 years. As time goes on, it becomes more clear every day how God's people are not able to adapt.

These eight verses here will show us a great lesson about ministry and dealing with God's people just like Christ had to deal with them. Let me be clear, and I know you know this, but just so I get it off my chest and be clear about it: the ministry is people. The ministry is flesh and blood people. When we started our ministry for you to help me in ministry, I could have called it

anything I wanted to call it. I just kept it simple: the people ministry. Because the ministry is people. In that, I wanted to teach you and train you, and then we added an institute to it, because I want you to be part of what I am doing. I want you to work by my side. But you have got to understand how ministry works and what ministry is; it is with people.

I guess, I know this is true for me, I guess the greatest example of all Christ is going through and what you and I will go through in dealing with people would be a study of the leadership of the man Moses. He is one of the greatest studies of leadership in ministry and the opposition that we will face. He faced it, Christ faced it, and you and I will face it. Moses, as a pastor or a leader, will, to his people, represent God's truth, the law. The truth of God is always equated to Moses. He was a pastor to God's people, the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, as you find in Jeremiah 3:15. There is more written about Moses in the Bible than any other man except the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses is one of the 21 types of Christ in the Bible. Christ had Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that laid out His ministry. Moses has Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy that lays out his. See how it works?

For sure, the whole world at that time was run by Egypt. That would be Exodus 1-13, was against him as Rome was against Christ. But as with Christ, as with you and me, the real opposition and issue with him came from within: God's people, not the world system. When Pharaoh was after him back there, he just turned the water to blood and did all these things. When Pharaoh chased him after Egypt, he just opened the Red Sea, he got across, and then swallowed him up, end of Egypt. The enduring opposition through his ministry was the very people he came and God sent him to minister to.

In my book, *The Pastors*, I have a chapter called "The Anatomy of a Church." My anatomy of a church in the New Testament is based on the anatomy of the church in the Old Testament. You will know from Acts 7 that the nation of Israel is called the church in the wilderness. You know that, of course. You will find that if you want to study the anatomy of what a church is today as a pastor, go back and look at the church pattern model back in the Old Testament with Moses. You will find that when Israel came out of Egypt, there are three parts to their anatomy. You will find in the Christian church today, in the true biblical church, you will find that there are three parts to its anatomy.

When you lay it all out, you will find that everything that the nation of Israel did centered around the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant. That was where it all centered from. That ark is a type of Christ. That tabernacle, we have studied it many, many times. It is a great picture of lots of things. But the center of the nation of Israel was the ark.

Now, the first ingredient were three families. Those three families, their job was to take care of everything with the tabernacle and the ark. They were the ones that were the closest to the ark in the Old Testament.

➤ **Three inner families:**

These three families ministered as close to the ark and the tabernacle, and they had responsibility of taking it down, putting it up, putting it together. It is incredible. The family of Gershom took

care of the skins, the covers of the curtains. The Merarites took care of the boards, the sockets, and all the other aspects of it. Every family had their job. They picture for us the inner circle of every church. They picture for us the families in every church that are as close to the ark as they can get. They do the job of ministering around that ark, and they are the core people of the nation of Israel, and they will be the core ingredient in any New Testament church.

Then you had a second group of this anatomy, and that will be the 12 tribes themselves. When they camped, the ark was in the center. The three families were taking care of that. Then the 12 tribes pitched their tents in a circle around that ark. This is all laid out for you back in Numbers 4.

➤ The 12 tribes:

You will find that the 12 tribes represent for us the common, ordinary people who make up most churches. They are there every Sunday. They would not think of missing church, but there is no real investment in the ark. They come to get what they need to get out of it. They come to get what they want out of it, but they are not like the three inner families. They do not invest themselves on that level. They are good people, but they just do not ever get to that point where they want to get that close to Christ, the ark.

Then in Numbers 11, you have our third group of the anatomy of a church based on the anatomy of the ministry of the nation of Israel.

➤ The mixed multitude:

These will be the people who camped at the outermost parts of the camp. They wanted to get as far away from that. Hey, they came out of Egypt, they are at church every Sunday, but they wanted to get as far away from that ark as they could. They are called in the Bible, the mixed multitude. They were in the outermost parts of the camp. Yet they are still part of the congregation and the church, Acts 7:38, "church of the wilderness." Now they are there every Sunday, speaking of today.

This is always where the opposition starts. When you go through, you will find that the mixed multitude had a great impact on the 12 tribes because you will find that every time Moses has—now this is stuff you learn, man—you will find that every time there is an issue with the nation of Israel, that is where it starts. The mixed multitude gets into the 12 tribes, and then the 12 tribes get split on the thing. This is why they wound up making a golden calf not 30 days after coming out of Egypt. This is why when they were out in the wilderness and there was nothing to eat, they were not satisfied that God was going to send them supernatural food. He did. They wanted to lead a group back to Egypt where they could eat all the garlic and the leeks and the melons because all they had was that dry, boring King James 1611, the supernatural manna from heaven. Oh, they did not die out back then, are you kidding me?

Now you study this anatomy, you are going to find that the only group that these outer people never penetrated was those three families. Do you know why you listen to gossip? Do you know why you get messed up with stupid stuff on the internet and all the Facebook and all that stuff?

Do you know why you get caught up in that and you fall for it and you believe it? It is very simple, because you have got nothing invested in church. You have got nothing invested in the ark. You do not have to be somewhere on Monday night to teach somebody the Bible or Tuesday night or Thursday night or Wednesday night or be taught by somebody. You have got nothing invested. These three inner families, they had everything invested. So the outer camp, the mixed multitude, could never penetrate. Just like telling the pastors now, and just like that in your church, you get a strong core of people that are your inner core people. You are always going to have the anatomy breaking down into three. You are always going to have that. The key is you want to have your core people bigger than the mixed multitude, but they are not going to go away. They may play havoc with the stupid people out there that are not really invested in anything. They will never get to the core, never. Do you know why? Not because they are so spiritual, though they are. Not because they do not do dumb things, they do. But do you know what the main ingredient is? They have invested themselves in something. It makes all the difference in the world. You are sitting there on your couch this morning with your bag of Cheetos, invested in nothing except the orange stuff on your fingers from the Cheetos.

Understanding people is understanding how to do ministry. There is an anatomy to the church based on the anatomy to God's people in the Old Testament, and Christ faced the same opposition that Moses did, and you and I will face the same opposition that both Christ and Moses did too. In our study today, I want to show you, out of this chapter in John 2, as we close it out, three things that we need to know, you need to know about the people that you are going to minister to if you ever get to that level.

VI. Characteristics of Opposing People

The first thing is found in verse 18.

➤ 1.) They are always looking for something new from God.

It says, "Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" That is the first thing you want to always mark down about these kind of people. They are always looking for something new from God. They have never learned to rest in the principles or the promises of the Word of God. They do not know squat about anything that God. All they are looking for is a sign from God, something new. They are like the Athenians in Acts 17:21. They wanted somebody to tell them of some new thing. The translation of verse 18 is simply, "How do we know that what is happening is really of God?" You see, that is the biggest problem that they all have. They have no spiritual discernment. They cannot discern what God is in something or when it is not. Obviously they cannot because of the friends they hang out with. They cannot see God in anything.

Honestly, the Jews are told to look for a sign and to receive a sign because that is proof of the authority of the leader. Deuteronomy 18:17-19. In 1 Corinthians 1:22, we are told that the Jews require a sign. We are told in 1 Corinthians 14:25, I think it is, that tongues at that time was for a sign. We go back to the beginning of those signs in Exodus 4. I have talked about that before. Now, here they are, the opposition, the people that have rejected truth, the people that want

nothing to do with Christ but under the facade of pretending to be spiritual. "What sign do you have for us today?"

This is the same bunch that had the signs in Matthew 12:38, just to keep the record clear here. This is the same bunch in Matthew 12:38 that when He did all of the signs there, they said that the spirit by which He did them was the spirit of the devil. That is this crowd. "The spirit by which He does these things is by the spirit of Beelzebub." Again, we see in John 6:30, they are asking for a sign again. These guys have more proof than they can handle. There are more signs in their life than going from Kansas City to St. Louis on I-70. Look right in at our text, verse 23. "And many believed in his name when they saw the miracles, plural, he did."

God's people today that you are going to work with, that you better understand what you are working with or you will quit before you start. They are just like people here. They cannot see what God is doing all around them. Listen, when you start to deal with people, God's people, you are going to hook up with some of the most self-centered, self-righteous, all about themselves, people you will ever meet. Nothing about Christ's work, just the drama that they go through in life every day. You see it on Facebook. I do not know if it is on Facebook, but everybody sends me these screenshots, thank you. I just assumed, reading some of them, sent me whiskey shots. I do a lot better with it. But anyway, it is unbelievable. The drama. Nothing about Christ, nothing about "I am working with so and so," nothing about "so and so, God saved, yes." Wah, wah, wah, wah. For a while, it is for coughs, excuse me.

God is doing some incredible things all around them. They cannot see it. People getting saved, lives being changed, opportunity after opportunity of taking God's truth to people, and they cannot see anything that God is doing. Years ago, I had a guy, he complained about everything, and he was complaining about something that was really stupid, and I asked him, I said, "Let me ask you something." I said, and we were going through a great time right then as a church, people were getting in shape, and I asked him, I said, "Let me ask you, in the last 30 days, we have had nine people saved. Who are they?" He did not have a clue. Do you know what the bottom line is? It is hard to see what God is doing in the lives of others, even in your own church, when He is doing absolutely nothing in your own life. It is hard to see a miracle of God and understand it when you have never had one yourself. I mean, come on, you are at another church now, really? You are not doing anything there any more than you did here. Come on, when are you going to get it through your head that you are the problem? I am just telling you.

In ministry and dealing with people, you will need to remember that. The outer camp, the mixed multitude. They wanted as far from the ark, Christ, as they could get. This will always be the base and the form of opposition that you will get from God's people. It always starts with that crowd, and they will infect the others. The job of a pastor, I am telling you pastors right now, the job of a pastor, keep that crowd as low as you can. Do you know how you do that? Preach truth. Preach truth. Truth is like going into your kitchen in a dirty house and turning on the light, and there are 28 cockroaches on the floor, and when the light comes on, they all scatter under the cupboard. That is what light does to the mixed multitude, scatters them. Like the religious leaders of Christ's day, they will be against anybody that is doing the work of God that they are not doing. It is a pattern of human nature. It never changes, from Genesis 3 to Revelation 20.

Now the second thing. You will need to know this too when you work with people. This will be another chapter in the book.

➤ 2.) They cannot get anything out of the Word of God on their own.

You will need to know when you give them the truth of God's Word. That is what the job is. Paul said it better than I could ever say it in Colossians 1:25.

Colossians 1:25

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

That is the job of the church. It is the job of a pastor. It is the job of you people here working with me in ministry. Our job as ministers is to fulfill the Word of God in somebody's life. How is that working for you? What do you do with that?

The second thing here will be, and you will need to remember this, that not only can they not see what God is doing right under their noses, but they cannot get anything out of the Word of God on their own. Look at verses 19, 20, and 21.

John 2:19-21

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

He just gave them one of the greatest spiritual keys of who He really was through all of the signs that He had with all the Old Testament prophecies, and they cannot get it. Which is, by the way, from Matthew 12:40, the only sign they needed was the sign of Jonah the prophet. That is a picture of the resurrection. That was written back there during the captivity. These people, God's people, from the Old Testament scriptures should have known exactly who He was and what temple He was talking about and were going to raise up from the book of Jonah and certainly from the book of Daniel. I mean, come on, the wise men in Matthew 2, they got it, and they were 600 miles away.

Just like God's people today, the scriptures are closed to them. They cannot get anything out of it. They pretend like today that they are spiritual, that they love God and they honor God, but you put an open Bible in front of them, and the proof of their phoniness is they cannot get anything real out of the Bible. They have to get it from somebody else. In ministry, for me, my ministry, I stand amazed at people many times, and I have seen it all my ministry and all my life, almost 50 years now. I say this, I know that many of you, you are learning your Bible right now, and what I am about to say, I am not talking to you. You just got saved or you have been saved for a long time, but were not anywhere to learn the Bible, and you have come to this church and you are being disciplined or going to be disciplined, or you are in some form of learning, you are in an

institute, you are this, and you would not miss it for the world, and you are grabbing everything you can, I get that. So I am not talking to you.

But I have seen some of God's people who come here into this church and know absolutely nothing. I mean, you are going to come to the Bible, you only know nothing, you are so stupid, you do not suspect anything. Yet in a year or so, boy, you are well on your way. You are learning your Bible. You let none of His words fall to the ground like young Samuel. I have watched you start out by being discipled and putting it all together, and now you have continued on with the same group or another group, and now you are well beyond that and you are helping other people, and your whole life is just moving forward in that establishing yourself as being rooted and built up. You are by my side, you are helping me. You are doing what I cannot, as one man, do. You have your little groups, I will tell you, those, what are those groups we do on this? Those Lifeline groups? I guarantee you, when I started that, not many, but a lot of God's people said, "Wow, what is he doing that for? Is that just something else to do?" Well, now you see how stupid you are by making that statement. It is impacting people everywhere. It is going across this country. People are gravitating to it, and it is now filling a void. Do you know what it was? It was just another opportunity that we could not do our prayer groups. In fact, I do not know that I will ever go back to the prayer groups ever again. Do you know why? We are getting more done this way than we did up there. It is about in the midst of any adversity, folks, realizing that God does not shut it down, but God's people do. You just find a way.

I have had people that come into this church not knowing anything. In a year's time or so, boy, they are going to town. They are growing, man, they are doing things. Some of you young singles, that is why I created the singles ministry. That is why I gave you the Timothy thing, and that is why I work with you in Bible Institute, along with so many other, you moms and dads and people who think it is worthy for you to be there. Because that is where it all comes together. I watch you begin to teach and work with people. I watch you, I find out what you are doing, and then I keep adding people or adding things to you to help exercise your spiritual gifts even a little bit more.

Yet I say that I have had others be under my teaching for 20, 30 years, maybe more. Today they have absolutely nothing to show for it. They are back, they are still at the Bible basics, man, when it comes to understanding and unlocking the scriptures. They have been under my teaching for 20, 30, 40 years, some of them. They still cannot put the Bible together. They are still at a sub-basic level. Then you actually wonder why God is not using you. You are outside the mainstream. You are not in that inner circle around the ark. You are hanging out with the mixed multitudes. That is God's people. You will have to understand it to deal with it. In John 2:18-25, it will answer a lot of questions for us.

We have babes in Christ. Every church should have a spiritual nursery. Every church should have a place where I have had people that were with me back in the day that never did anything that have come back now. They are on fire. They are helping, doing whatever they can do. They are here, I am just getting it where they can. That is what it is all about. But every church is going to have a spiritual nursery. It should. I am all for that. We have a physical nursery back there. Well, we do not, but we do kind of. But it is a thing where you go back there and you have little cribs

and you see the little babies in there with their bottles. Nobody thinks anything of it. Well, would you think it was weird if you went back there some Sunday and there was a 40-year-old man in there laying in one of those little cribs with his big hairy legs hanging out over the end of it with a bottle in his mouth, "wam, wam, wam"? Would you think that is a little out of place? You see, you think it is that way back here, but you do not think it is here because you stay spiritual babies all your lives. It is okay. Christians who refuse to grow for 20, 30 years and stay a baby, they will be the first ones when the opposition comes that they are going to struggle with it.

Go back and look at Psalms 1:1-3.

Psalms 1:1-3

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

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

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

Once you start walking, quit walking with God, then you start walking with the ungodly. Counsel of the ungodly. When you start walking with the counsel of the ungodly, pretty soon you are not walking with Him anymore. Now you are sitting, now you are standing in a way with sinners. Now you are developing a sinful way. Then pretty soon you are sitting in the seat of the scornful. You are scorching everything about Christ, the church, everything that people do for the ministry, just like they did in Jesus' time. It is not a hard process.

Then the third thing, you will need to know this too when you deal with people. I think this is one of the most important things you will ever learn when you deal with people.

➤ 3.) Jesus knew all men and knew what was in man.

It is found in verses 23, 24, 25.

John 2:23-25

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,

25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

Boy, if you are going to work in ministry, you better learn those two things. You better know and understand all men. Back in 2 Kings 4, I have given you the study before of how you learn how unsaved people think the way they think, do the things they do, and say the things that they say. In John 2, you have it for New Testament Christianity. In verse 24, He says He knew all men. In verse 25, He says He knew what was in man. Boy, those are the two things you better learn or you will be out of this thing called ministry before you ever get in.

Remember the anatomy of a church. 50 years ago, in fact, it will be 50 years this April, maybe May, I cannot remember, I think it was probably end of April, first of May. As a young guy who just knew that I was not where God wanted me to be, I went forward that night in church and gave my heart and my life to the Lord. Almost a half a century ago. Back then, I was pretty naive about a lot of things. Back then, I thought all God's people were angels. I thought they just tucked their wings in under their shirts. If you would have told me back then that women in a choir were bad-mouthing other people and gossiping and spreading this and spreading that—did not have Facebook back then, but it was all done on a telephone. In fact, the joke was the three forms of communication: telegraph, telephone, and tell a woman. If you would have told me that there were women in the choir, they were sitting up there singing those great songs that were doing all those ungodly things. If you would have told me that there were men there in the church service that night that were deacons and whatever, that were smoking cigarettes or carousing or drinking and doing all these things. If you would have told me that people in that church were backbiting and gossiping, lying and cheating on all these things. I would have punched your lights out. But boy, did I get a broad awakening of what really goes on in Christianity.

That was in April and May, and three months later, thereabouts in July, I went to my first camp as a worker. I wanted to do whatever I could do with God, and Dr. Ruckman was preaching at senior camp that year. I had heard him preach before, but I never got to spend any real time with him, and this is where I got to know him a little better when sitting up in his cabin. We talked about war stories and things like that. I will never forget that one night he preached on the whole armor of God, and I will never forget it. He is up there, you know how he draws things out, and he is drawing that thing up there, and he turned around and he says, "Kids, let me tell you something. If you ever decide to serve God and do not compromise when you are tempted to compromise and do not quit when you are tempted to quit," he says, "I am going to tell you something, the battles you are going to get in are going to make all the battles of life look like a bunch of kids shooting marbles." He turned back around, and he started drawing that soldier again. He said, "I am telling you, you get and serve God and you do what God wants you to do. The battles you are going to get into are going to look like the Civil War and the Battle of Armageddon and Shilo and Okinawa and Iwo Jima and Bastogne look like a bunch of kids just fooling around and having fun." When he said that that night, I honestly did not believe him. I thought to myself, "How could that be?" Boy, I believe him now. He was right. Most of the battles and the opposition will come from God's people who, like in Christ's day, had rejected truth as far as following it. They will not grow or they stop growing, and yet they are in church every Sunday.

Bob Jones Senior said one time in dealing with people, "The more I deal with people, the better I like dogs." I get it. All it takes to fix any issue that comes up in any scenario with any people, church or whatever, just like John 2 with Israel, all it will take is just to bring the truth in to any given situation and find out who is right and who is wrong. But as I always said, the ministry would be a breeze if it was not for people.

Verses 24 and 25 said, "Jesus knew all men," and then it says, "and he knew what was in man." Yet the ministry is going to be people. If you are going to do God's work, you had better learn what I am about to say. Folks, we may be saved and on our way to heaven, praise God, glory to God. But you and me still have that old sin nature. That old sin nature is as far from God and Christ as the mixed multitude was. As God's people, you can do and be everything—listen to me—as a child of God, you can do and be everything an unsaved man is except go to hell.

What Jesus knew about man is what I had to learn about man. You are going to have to learn about man. That is, our heart is wrong.

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Our heart is wrong. They say in life that the number one killer of people in America is heart disease. Well, I will tell you right now, it is the number one killer of God's people too, spiritually.

The second thing Jesus knew about man was our imaginations are all wrong.

2 Corinthians 10:5

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Not God, but God's truth, the knowledge of God. Do you see that?

Not only is my heart wrong and my imagination wrong, but our righteousness is no good.

Isaiah 64:6

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

It is not any good.

Then you get into Romans 3:10-18.

Romans 3:10-18

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Romans 3 tells us that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none that doeth good, no, not one. When you and I got saved, He paid for our sin debt and washed you clean. That was your soul, but your flesh is something else. A child of God can live after the flesh. You cannot live in it, but he can live after it. All his life, many of them do. He did not take your flesh away, He just gave you a truth that you could keep it under control. When you are a wicked, lying, deceitful Christian, and truth shows up in your life, you hate it.

Then He says He knew what was in man.

Romans 3:13 says that our throat is an open sepulchre.

Romans 3:13 says that our tongue is deceitful.

Romans 3:13 says that under our lips is the poison of asps.

Romans 3:14 says that our mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

Romans 3:15 says that our feet are swift to shed blood.

Romans 3:16 says that destruction and misery are our ways.

It caps it all off, and Romans 3:18 says, "and there is no fear of God before their eyes."

And they are in church every Sunday. I am telling you, you are going to get into ministry and you are going to work with people. We are going to see where this new horizon goes, and we are getting plenty of opportunities with new people that are coming into the church. I have set several of them up in the last weeks, people are working with them. I am telling you, the greatest opposition Jesus faced was with His own people. When you do a ministry, the greatest opposition you are going to face will be God's people. Before you decide to enter into the work that God has for you, you better sit down and count the cost.

VII. Counting the Cost of Ministry

People talk about leadership today. You have guys that do seminars on leadership and what needs to be a leader. I am telling, I have said before, everybody thinks that, "Well, he has got the ability, or she has got the ability to be a great leader." Leadership is never about ability, never is. Leadership is about responsibility. Leadership is about accountability to truth, at least in the Bible. Because when you are a leader, when it comes to the Word of God, that truth is going to separate you sometimes from your friends, your boyfriend, your girlfriend, or your bosom buddy that you thought was your friend, or even a family like it did for Christ. Your friends will leave and forsake you, believe me. They will tell you one day or for 10 years how much they love you, and when push comes to shove, they are gone like the wind.

Do you know what I have learned? I have learned that friends will forsake you. You better learn this. Sometimes your friends will forsake—oh, I get it, sometimes you have people who die with you. That is a great thing. But that is not the exception to the rule. I am telling you right now, your friends will forsake you, but truth never will. Truth will stand by you when nothing else or nobody else will. That is why you never embrace people without embracing the truth first.

Here is probably the greatest thing that I have ever learned about ministry outside of salvation. I want you to know right now, I have been in this thing almost 50 years, and I would have gotten out of this thing a long time ago. I would have said to myself, "It is not worth it." I would have said to myself, "The idea of no good deed will go unpunished is so true in ministry." I would have been out of it a long time ago if it was not for this one thing. I leave you with this, because this is where you have got to get to. Even though Jesus knew all men, and even though He knew what was in man, He still loved him enough to come down and in spite of man or our indifference, He died for man on the cross of Calvary.

In ministry, even though man's old nature can make him a horrible Christian, you always do what Jesus did in His ministry, His work, and His hour. You stay with it and do not take it personal. Realize what man is all about, realize what is in man, and you simply stay faithful in taking the truth and helping as many people as you can. That, my friend, is a biblical ministry based on the Word of God. Jesus loved me in spite of who I was. In spite of who I was, I will love God's people in spite of who they are. But in both cases, it has to be based on truth. Remember, you are doing God's work for Him, you are not doing it for yourself. You are doing His work. We bear His cross. We suffer His shame, knowing full well that Jesus, as I said, He came and not one time hurt anybody. He only did for people what was the best, and He always wanted the best for them, and yet nobody wanted anything to do with Him. It will be the same way with you in your work and your ministry. As I said, no good deed will go unpunished.

The ministry is putting yourself out to people without guile, without any preconceived notion or idea, without any judgment, without any agenda, allowing them to receive truth and grow or to reject it and stay where they are and even blame it on you. That is exactly what they did with Christ, and that is exactly what they will do to you. Just make sure in ministry that truth is always on your side, that when you do sit down and open up the book, that the truth will take its own stand. Those kinds of people will always be in God's rearview mirror in the ministry of life. Make sure that you and I do not wind up in God's rearview mirror. You stay current with Him and the Word of God in the book, and you follow ministry just like He did. You learn the patterns. You see in the Old Testament why unsaved people do the things they do so you can better work with them. In John 2 at the end of this chapter, you see why God's people do the things that they do and where the real opposition to Christ was will be the same opposition that you and I face. But that is just the way that it is. You have to find a way around every opposition that is going to come through life to you to do the work God called you to and saved you for.

We will hold up there. Let us have a word of prayer. Be careful going home. I am sure we have 20 inches of snow out there by now. Be safe. Do not forget Thursday night. Send your questions in to me if you have any this week. Make sure you sign Wes's card back here that we get that out

to him this week. You have all the information for the funeral this week. Sign up for the food back there. You know all how it is going. Let us have a word of prayer and we will be dismissed.

Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Lord, I thank You personally for this chapter. Lord, it has meant so much to me over the years, and it was good for me today to give it to the people here that work with me by my side. Lord, I know that some of them are still learning. Some of them are growing. Some of them are still finding their way. Boy, I am excited about that. Let them know that I am personally here to help them however I can. But I thank You for the ones that have crossed over. If they are doing the work, their week is filled with people that they are investing their lives in in this church. They are not sitting on a couch someplace or behind a keyboard criticizing everything that God is doing because they are upset that He is not doing anything in their lives. They are actively investing in the lives of people. Lord, I thank You for that. Help us to always build more people toward that end. Lord, we do love You. Thank You for all You do. Give us a safe trip home. Give us a good week. Lord, we thank You and praise You for all You do. In Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.