

I. The Core Issue: Christ's Doctrine and Authority

In John, we covered and talked about the real issue with Christ and His ministry that the people of His day were having an issue with. As you come through the Gospel of John, chapters 6 and 7 have been good in a number of ways, but one of the ways is showing us the key area in our Christian lives of things that we face, and it really answers a lot of questions. Most Christians do not ever get to the place in their life where they really understand how to look at things the way they totally should. Therefore, when they see something, they get confused about it because they do not really see how the thing all lays itself out.

We saw that it was His doctrine—what He taught, what He stood up and taught the people. The doctrine He had in Matthew 7:28-29 was His authority. The scribes and the Pharisees who were against Him had no doctrine and no authority. That is why they had an issue with Him.

Again, I gave you the definitive verse on doctrine in the Bible, Matthew 7:28-29. This is why the leaders of the nation of Israel hated Him and wanted to get rid of Him. Doctrine, as defined in the Bible, will always be equivalent to the authority you have from God to do what God wants you to do. This is a simple, fundamental truth, and it is prevalent not only in the days of the Lord Jesus, but today. We know that authority is the Word of God. Just like in Jesus' day, people who have no authority will always hate those that do. That is just the way it has been from the time of Jesus, right up through church history, right up to the day we live in.

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

II. Building a Rock-Solid Christian Life

I showed you how you build a rock-solid Christian life: six basic, fundamental concepts that, if you begin to put them into your life, will give you a relationship with Christ that will be unequal today. Certainly, it will get you through everything that is going on in this world today, not only in the world, but in Christianity.

It started with sound doctrine. I gave you all the references for these.

1. Once you get sound doctrine in your life, it leads to a sound mind. Now you are looking at things from a Bible perspective, not your own emotional swing into things.
2. That will produce a sound faith. Now you not only know what you believe, but you know why you believe it. Now you are able to explain to somebody, not just throw out the verses, but be able to go underneath the surface and really help them understand what the doctrine is that you are teaching so they can grasp it too.
3. Sound faith will produce sound words—your ability to learn how to speak the language of heaven, to speak through Bible sound doctrine, sound words.

4. Once you begin to articulate those words into discussions, into books you may write, into sermons or devotions you may put together, now you have sound speech.

So we start with sound doctrine, moving to a sound mind, which produces a sound faith, which gives us sound words, which gives us sound speech.

5. The last thing we talked about was sound wisdom and discretion. Ultimately, those things in your life will do two things. First of all, it will give you soundness in your own Christian life. If you are a mom or a dad or you have a family, it will produce a sound family if you bring those things through. Building a rock-solid Christian life will get you through whatever you face.

III. Navigating a Divided World and Sudden Fear

We are going through some very tough times now in America and certainly around the world. I understand, we have talked about it many, many times, how all this equates to the end times and everything. Sometimes, when we are in the middle of something that we are going through, we lose sight of the fact that we are not the only ones that ever went through something.

I was watching a documentary series last night, just of the 9/11 progression, how it all went. Once it got past 9/11, it got into all of the things that our country, our government, was doing illegally in other parts of the world and in here to make sure that under their guidelines, the pretense of national security, but clearly was illegal. Anybody who would watch that would probably be enraged or incensed because they think, "Why would our government do that?" I have news for you: any government. We do not have to just start with 9/11. Let us go back to Vietnam. Let us go back to World War II. Let us go back wherever you want to go. Governments, even though they are ordained of God, are not of God. They are going to do the things that they do to project their agenda.

Sometimes when we live in our own tough times, we think that the country has gotten so bad that it was never really like this before. It has always been like this; it has just been about different things. If the truth would ever come out about everything that has happened, not just here, but around the world and all the governments, you would be amazed. Maybe you would not be. But it is a thing where no matter where you lived in time and history, God's people had to get through whatever they were getting through.

I remember in my day, when the Vietnam War was raging, young men—it was the age of the free love hippie movement. You do not even know what a hippie is anymore; they all died out with the Tyrannosaurus Rexes back in the Stone Age. But anyway, it was a thing where all the young men, everybody was against the war. You would walk down the street in your uniform, people would spit on you. We went way the other way now where everybody is a hero. But in that day, in that war, it was very unpopular. Young men like you guys would avoid the draft, and you do not even know what the draft was. You think the draft today is somebody left the window open. Back in my day, there was a draft. The draft was that when you turned 18, you went into the military. You did not have a say about it; you got drafted. Of course, I was one of the few guys that beat the draft; I enlisted.

Guys were going to Canada, burning their draft cards, because they did not want to fight in the Vietnam War. It was a very tough time. Our country was very divided. I do not think there has been a time in the last maybe 75 years that this country has not been divided. You know me, I am not a politician. I do not care about politics one way or the other. I understand what we have seen in this last week where our country is even now more divided.

President Biden got up last week with his vaccine mandate. What he did is just—here is a guy that said that he was going to bring everybody together when he came into office. All he has done is divide it. Now, after last week, if you do not get the vaccination, you are a bad guy. If you do get it, you are a good guy, standing up there and saying, "This pandemic is a pandemic of the unvaccinated." Are you kidding me? We tell you the truth here. I am not a politician, but I ought to be. I do not want to be assassinated in the first 10 minutes of an office.

It is not a pandemic of the unvaccinated. It is not a pandemic of the vaccinated. It is a pandemic of China. Why do we not find out where this thing really started and work backwards from there? No, no, no. The Bible says, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." That is why God's people today, no matter whatever your choice is, the unity has to hold everything together. Somebody needs to send him a good Sunday school lesson on free will.

This country is so divided, and it is not going to ever come back together. But that is the time that we live in. If you lived back in the Vietnam War, it was divided then. If you lived back in World War II, until it really got going, it was divided then. Everybody thinks about the Nazis and how terrible they were, and they are over in Germany. Most people do not even know that there was an American Nazi Party, the American Bund Society, that in Madison Square Garden, they wore German uniforms, swastika flags, and it was prevalent throughout this country. It was divided then. It was divided on prohibition. It was divided on World War I. It was divided on everything.

The only thing that will bring any country or organization together is that Book. When you lose the Book, you are divided. A house cannot stand that is divided. This is why we as a church, as any church, have the ability to stay unified in the midst of a divided nation or a divided country or a divided city or a divided anything, having a rock-solid Christian life that is built on sound principles.

You will also remember we talked about the key area of sound doctrine will be the fruit of it. Sound doctrine, a sound mind, produces sound fruit. In the Old Testament, Israel was told to bear fruit. You will find that many places in the Old Testament. The easiest one would be Matthew 21:34. In the New Testament, we are told to bear fruit.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

In the Old Testament, they are under the kingdom of heaven, so their fruit was literal. In the New Testament, we are under the kingdom of God, the spiritual kingdom, so our fruit is spiritual. But we are to bear fruit, and Israel had no fruit. This is the problem. Israel, like America, like the world, was a divided nation. You know what divided them? Doctrine. Many of God's people today do not have any fruit either. So we learned some great principles last week to add to all the others that we have learned.

IV. Righteous Judgment: Not by Appearance

Today, keeping a kind of consistency here, I want to continue on in John chapter 7, and I want to look at another great area that he talks about that we need to understand today. So far, we have seen his first coming. We have seen his revealing himself as the Son of God, the Word of God, to the nation of Israel, and we have seen now his rejection on three levels:

6. The leaders of Israel who did not want his authority, did not want his doctrine, and had a problem with him.
7. The nation of Israel itself in a national sense.
8. His own personal family, his brothers and his sisters, other than James. They wanted nothing to do with him and rejected him too.

Then we began to see, last time we were together, the real issue. In any problem you deal with or with any issue that comes up, no matter what, if you are going to solve it, you have got to get to the bottom line of it. You have got to get to the base level of what the real issue is. The real issue, once you peel back all the layers of the first coming of Christ, was his doctrine—what he taught that went against what the scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees did not want to hear. He had a ministry that they never had.

Today I want to look at another great principle found in John 7:24, just one verse. We will have some fun with this today, and you will go out of here maybe a little smarter than when you came in. Not that you are stupid, but it is always good to get a little more information about things, especially with God.

Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We love you. Thank you, Father, for all the good things that you have done in our church, for all the great people that you have given us. We thank you, Father, for your blessing and your hand of protection that you take care of us. We thank you for the unity here around the Word of God, that though the world may split, even Christianity may split, this church will always hold to the truths that hold us together. That is the Word of God that gives us the strength to be and do what God has called us to do. Thank you for the Word of God. Thank you for today. Thank you for those that are here. May you put us under the blood this morning that we may be able to receive all that you have for us. In Jesus' name and in His sake we ask it. Amen.

Last week, as you know, I gave you those six areas of soundness, the real foundation of your spiritual strength. The last one was in Proverbs 3:21, where once you get everything else, it leads to sound wisdom and sound discretion. Now, I want to put that into a context, and we are going to use it today in light of this verse. There are some really great things here in all of this.

Let us go back and look for just a moment at Proverbs chapter 3. I am going to pick it up, our verse is 21, but I am going to pick it up in verse 13 and read it down through verse 26 because it kind of all goes together.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:

So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.

Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.

When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.

For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.

This is one of the greatest passages in the Bible. In the world that we live in, as I said, in any time in Christianity and obviously the history of the world, sudden fear—things that come up, things that challenge your way of life, things that challenge your family, things that challenge a country. Yet the Bible says when the nation fails and you have no confidence in it, when the government falters and you have no confidence in it, when the politicians and you certainly have no confidence in them, our confidence, my friend, needs to be in the Lord.

That is where my confidence is today. I do not trust anybody out there. You tell me it is up, I think it is down. You say it is left, I look right. If it is black, it is white. If it is white, it is black. I just do not believe anything. This world is against us. You have got to understand the big picture here. This is not about somebody taking away your right or your liberty, though that is fundamentally what is going to happen. It is about a bigger picture. It is about world control. It is about somebody trying to stop what God has enabled his people to do. That is all that it is.

You know why you would have sudden fear that would make you afraid? We saw it through the pandemic. Good people, honestly, good people, saved people, someone I had known for 20, 30 years, maybe longer—good people—no longer a part of this church or probably going to any church. You know why? Because a sudden fear came up, and they had put confidence in the wrong things.

I do not know what else to tell you. I am here, I cannot speak for you. I would not presume to speak for you. I am here still with everything that we have been through and everything we are probably going to go through. I am still here because my confidence is not shaken that greater is He that is in me than He that is in the world. I believe that He will get me through no matter what that may be. The problem with God's people is because you have no confidence in Him, you are scared to death of what you just might have to go through. I do not care. What could be worse than hanging on a cross and dying? He did that for me, but God's people today, we are not willing to do that for Him. We allowed Him to bear His cross for us, but we are not willing to bear our cross for Him. You know why? No confidence.

I try to build, and we are going to go through this in leadership training class. My goal is to build confidence in you. I like people that are confident. I like young men and young ladies that have a confidence about them. We have a truckload of people in this church that exude confidence. But that confidence will only come—I do not want it confident because of your abilities. I want you confident because of the Word of God and your confidence in the Lord. Your abilities may fail you someday, but the Lord never will.

If you think the sudden fear is over, if you think we are going to, in this life where we are at in relationship to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, if you think it is all going to be peace and rosy and it is going to be nice and we are going to have an easy time and there is going to be nothing to be afraid about, I have news for you. We are all going—9/11 yesterday, and we are thinking back of all the people that got killed, and rightly so, it was a terrible tragedy. But we are losing sight of the fact that we just gave back to the very people who killed us at 9/11 everything that they need to do it again.

I do not want to be president. I do not want to be a congressman. I do not want to be any of those things. I am much too honest for that. I am a crook. But you would think somebody could figure it out. I know you. I see your head bobbing up like a little bobble-dobble on your dashboard of your car. You get it. You understand it. In New York, you cannot buy a gun to protect yourself. All the bad guys have a gun, but you cannot have one. I did not see what the murder rate was in New York, but it probably was pretty good, left with everybody out on the street. Chicago is the same thing. All the big cities, Portland, all in California, you cannot own a gun. You cannot buy a gun. You cannot have a gun because if you want a gun, can have a gun and get a gun, you are a criminal. But we just gave 80 million dollars worth of guns to the terrorists. Now, was that me? I guess maybe it is.

I do not claim to have some superior intellect. I really do not. My claim to fame is I am the fastest one of the slow class. But I am a reasonably intelligent individual. I do not know. I am not looking for answers. I know nothing is going to fix it, but you have got to realize that the big picture of this, we are going to get hit again. If you think they are not going to come after us, you are crazy. Maybe not this week, maybe not next week, but I guarantee you, they dedicated their brand new government in Afghanistan on the very day of 9/11. What does that tell you?

If you do not get the vaccine, you are a bad person. If you get it, you are a good person. We divided our country, but we put around the Taliban and said they are really cooperating with us.

They are really doing nice things, and they are helping us, and they are very professional. They are very business-like. Yes, and when they put you on your knees and take that dull knife and cut your head off, the last word is the blood flows out, which is how nice they are. Nothing makes any sense, and I am not fighting it. I do not care. I am just trying to get you to see nothing makes any sense in the world. But we are in this world.

You want to know how stupid it is? Last week, if you are a federal worker, you get vaccinated. If you have a business that has 99 or 100 people over it, everybody has to get vaccinated. At Chief Stadium, show your passport. You want to go to a movie theater, show your passport. Everybody, everybody, you need to get vaccinated. And we just let what, 30, 40, 250,000 illegal aliens across the border, and they do not have to be. I am not a troublemaker. I am not. I am the nicest guy you will ever meet, but I am not stupid.

I did not say all that because I am anti-government. I am not anti-anything. I am telling you that because sudden fear is going to come upon us again, and if your confidence is not in the right thing, if you think a year ago when you all panicked because you did not want to get the pandemic COVID-19 and you were all hiding under rocks and running away and doing all these things, if you think that was bad. Where do you go to the mall at Christmas time, packed with people, if somebody comes in with a vest and it blows up and kills 200 people? Where do you get a dirty bomb in some big city that kills 100,000 people? You are not going to stop that. It is already in play that we have nothing in our arsenal that is going to stop that because of who we are.

I am telling you, you better get your confidence in the right thing, and you better quit trusting in whatever you are trusting in, and you better realize and understand that sudden fear is going to come upon us just like it has to God's people all down through history, and nobody is going to stop it, especially now because of where we are at. I will say the big picture of all this is the mystery of iniquity that already works, but a house divided cannot stand. We are a divided nation like Israel. They did not stand. 70 AD, brother, when Titus came down.

V. The Principle of Righteous Judgment

As a child of God, you are going to have to make some choices in life. I have to make choices in life. Life is about choices. Have you figured it out yet? You are going to have to make some decisions, and some of those decisions will be classified as judgment calls—things you have to decide. Some will be rather easy. Some will be hard, and some will be really, really hard, and some of them, my dear friend, will cost you something.

Along with these choices, we have to look at situations and we have to make a judgment call, making a judgment on a value system as to what we allow in our lives. An easy example of that would be the world. My judgment on the world is that I want nothing to do with it in my life; that is an easy one. But in doing that, our verse says that we are to use sound wisdom and discretion. That will be the ability to make a judgment on an issue or something without emotion or prejudice.

Let me just say this: we get emotional, and we make decisions based on prejudice because of fear. I am not saying you just need to cancel out your emotions. I am not saying that at all, but you need to look at things from a Bible standpoint based on the six sound things that I gave you, and you need to be objective in that judgment. Making that sound judgment will always be based on last week, as I just said, the six areas of soundness that we put in our lives, but it will always go back to where it starts in the Bible with number one, sound doctrine.

Our verse today will bring up a couple of areas that we need to look at, and we need to put it into a proper context for you because we already know that sudden fear is not over by any stretch of the imagination, and we already know that the Lord needs to be our confidence. So when it comes to the teaching on judging or judgment, you will find people are all over the place. Matthew 7:1, "Judge not, lest ye be judged." I hear that all the time. Usually that is used because somebody really does not want to do what is right, and they do not want you to correct them on it. So it is, "Judge not, lest ye be judged. Do not judge me." Well, I get that.

But the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 2:15 that "he that is spiritual judgeth all things." So I have heard many, many times where somebody said, "Judge not, lest ye be judged," and I say back, "That is true, but my Bible says, 'He that is spiritual judgeth all things.'" Now, it seems to be a contradiction, does it not? Of course, it is not. To the untrained eye, you are probably scratching your head and saying, "Well, what do you do with that?" But to anybody with just a little bit of understanding, you will see that Matthew 7:1, where it says, "Judge not, lest ye be judged," that is in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5 through Matthew 10. That little piece of advice there has nothing to do with the church; that is dealing within the millennium, in the millennial structure of the Constitution of the kingdom when He comes back in Revelation 19 and establishes in Revelation 20. So that "Judge not, lest ye be judged" has nothing to do with me. That is a millennial context in God dealing with the nation of Israel.

But where 1 Corinthians 2:15, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things," that is a doctrinal statement to the New Testament church. Again, simply rightly dividing the word of truth to get the verse in the proper context. Context will always solve 99% of your Bible questions. Context will save the day. So you see somebody throwing out "Judge not, lest ye be judged," yet the Bible says over here in the church age, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." You can see how where they put into the context.

Now our verse today, John 7:24, it fits in both categories. It simply says that we are not to judge according to appearance, but we are to judge by a righteous judgment. That is going to fit in Matthew 7 because it is certainly a righteous judgment when Christ comes back, and that will fit into the church age in 1 Corinthians 2:15 because we have the Word of God to judge those things as we see them.

You never make your decisions in life based on just what you see on the appearance of something or even what you hear. The old cliché is, "Do not judge a book by its cover." You have got to read it to understand if it is any good or not. You and I will have to judge things as it will impact your life to serve God or the life of your family. Areas or situations that you will decide to

allow or not to allow in your world. There are only two ways to see what is real and divide it from what is not real.

People today will say and give the appearance in all kinds of things, usually to mask and make themselves look better spiritually than they really are. People out there who do not understand the concepts of 1 Corinthians 2:15 clearly get caught up in it because that verse clearly tells me, first of all, it tells me that I am not to judge people. I want you to see that. I am not to judge any individual. If I want to judge anybody in the light of God's Word, it needs to be myself. I have no business judging you as an individual, and people get confused on this, and hopefully I will clear up the confusion for you. God will do that. In fact, in our study on the Bible Institute of the seven judgments in the Bible, we went through that.

VI. Judging Works, Not People

I am not to judge people, but if I am spiritual, I am to judge all things. Not people. God, He judges sinners at the Great White Throne Judgment. He judges His sons, as us, in this life. He judges nations at the Second Coming. He judges the saved at the Judgment Seat of Christ. He judges the unsaved at the Great White Throne. He judges angels at the Great White Throne. He judges Israel in the Tribulation period.

I never judge people in anything that they do. Listen carefully, and the reason why I do not do that—just hear me out now before you start pulling your hair out because you do not have much left anyhow—I never do that because I can never afford not to like somebody. You have people in your world maybe that you do not like. I am just telling you, I do not have anybody in my world that I do not like. I may not agree with them. But I cannot, in the ministry, the ministry is people. The moment I get into a place where I start liking somebody and not liking somebody, I may not like the things that they do, but I can never lose my objectivity. The moment I put people in a category that I do not like them, then I have divided people that I cannot help and who I decide I will not help. Maybe you can do that, and I am not criticizing if you do. In the ministry, for me, I cannot do that because the minute I do that, then if that person down the line ever turns the corner, I have already made up my mind and lost my objectivity, and I am out of the picture.

A lot of people have a tough time with that, and I understand that. I like people. I am a people person. I am like my dad. My dad never met a stranger, and my dad, he liked people. I like people, and the ministry is people. I understand why people do the things that they do. A lot of times when people do things against us, we do not like it, and that is okay. But I have learned never to take it personal because I understand why people do the things that they do. You are an idiot, and I love idiots. I understand why people do the things that they do. So I do not have to take it personal because I understand human nature.

I also understand the principles of the Word of God that when you are in the ministry, you are not going to be popular with everybody. When you are a leader, I do not care what decision you make, not everybody is going to like it. The problem is with most Christians, many, many pastors, you try to please everybody, and you cannot please everybody. The truth has never

pleased anybody. You have got to realize that when you have the truth, the authority, people are not going to always like that, and you cannot afford to take that in a personal stance because the moment you do, then you are going to lose the ability to ever minister to them. You know what? In your mind, you would probably say, "That is good because I do not want to minister to them at all." If that was Jesus' mindset about you and me, where would we be today? Do you know how many years I rejected Him and blew Him off before I finally let Him in? If He would have taken the position that many of God's people take today, where would we be?

I am not trying to be super pious and up here and be super spiritual because I am not. I am just telling you, you cannot afford as a child of God to not like people. Stay with me here. I am going to show you how you can kill them and still like them in just a minute.

"He that is spiritual judgeth all things." I never judge a person as an individual, but I have to make a value judgment of what they do, the things. Do I want that in my life? Do I want that in my church? Do I want that in my family? My biggest frustration with people, being the people person that I am, is seeing wasted potential. I have seen some guys and some gals that I thought had great potential. You see little things in their life, little glimmers of light, that if they just would get their act together, they could do really something great. That frustrates me because nothing is worse in my mind—I do not care whatever sin you do, whatever sin you get in with, whatever your garden variety enjoyment of sin is—nothing is worse to me for a child of God to not fulfill the potential that God has given them, what God saved you for. I see that, and it frustrates me.

We all make mistakes. There is not anybody in this room that does not do dumb things and make mistakes. The problem is many of God's people never learn from their mistakes, and they continue to make the same mistakes over and over and over again. But the most tragic thing in a Christian's life is wasted potential. When I see that in somebody, I never judge a person as an individual. In most cases, I see the potential that they do not. But I do have a right to judge what they do as it pertains to me, as it applies to me. Do I want that part of my life, my ministry, or do I want that brought into my family if you have kids?

You will remember that the Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:22 that you and I are to abstain from all appearance of evil. In the Bible, there is never a verse that tells you about the appearance of truth because truth is self-evident. You do not have an appearance of truth. Truth is there. The appearance of evil is always used to cover the truth that is there. You want to write that down; that would be worth some money someday in your life.

So I do not judge according to appearance, but I judge rather a righteous judgment. That way, it never gets personal in my world. The person may be an idiot. They may be wasting their life. They may be an absolute jerk when it comes to they have pride, they have arrogance, they have all those things that when I look at that and see that, all that does is make me feel bad because I can see past that and see what they really could be if they just got where they needed to be with the Lord. But I do not want that in my life. I do not want that in my church. I do not want that in my family. And you should not either. That means, how does what they do or say or what they

are line up with what I want in my life? I leave my emotions out of it. I base it on a soundness. I base it on this is what is bedrock.

It was already laid out: there are only two ways to see what is real and what is phony. Not by what they say, not by what they claim, or even what they do. A lot of them go to church. I told you about that family a couple of weeks ago, years ago, they go to church, they have the right Bible. They do everything as the appearance. But I want you to know the appearance can be phony. I am to abstain from all appearance of evil.

When it comes to real Bible-based, genuine Christianity and a real walk with God, you cannot fake that. People try to fake it. People give the appearance that they are walking with God, that they love God, that they are in the Bible. How do you separate that out as a judgment against what you will allow in your life? You can fake an illegitimate Christian life, but you cannot fake the real Christianity. But you have to know what to look for. I never listen to what somebody says. I never watch what just somebody does. I have heard them talk about great swelling words about all this stuff. I am to judge all an appearance because there are only two absolute things that you can use to make a judgment for your own life, not against the person. I am to judge all things.

9. The first one will be sound doctrine. Does what they say or do line up with the biblical principles? Let me quantify that. Does what they say or do line up with biblical principles in their family first and in their own personal life in ministry second? There it is. That is a backbreaker. That will eliminate half of it right there, maybe more than half. When you make a statement like that, you know that the sound doctrine, everybody out there, "Well, I believe the Bible. I have sound doctrine." You can go on and on. We need to quantify that. Back to the Bible. What you do and what you say, does it line up to the biblical principles and the first two fundamental things that ought to be in your life? Your family first? Where are they at? And your ministry second?
10. The second thing is the fruit in their life. Their family first as their own personal fruit, and then their personal life, and then, of course, their ministry. People do not like what I am saying right now. I can hear them screaming their lungs out. But your problem is you just got en masse. You have been hiding under the appearance, bolstering your position with all the big swelling words in your ministry and this and that. Now, when it comes down to the real truth of judging things and not looking at the appearance, if you do not have these two, I do not care what you say. I get it. People today, God's people, are the most gullible people on the planet, and they will believe what anybody says. I do not.

Quoting 10,000 Bible verses is absolutely nothing more than a smokescreen and completely worthless if you are like the barren fig tree in Luke 13. What is the point? Your family is a mess. You have no fruit in your life, and yet what? With great swelling words.

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

There is absolutely nothing more to say. You can blow smoke all you want. You can scream all you want. You can point fingers all you want. But when we bring it down to the bottom line, which really defines each of us, "by their fruits ye shall know them." You can fake Christianity, but you cannot fake fruit unless you are going to pay somebody to say that you won them to Christ.

As a good illustration of what I said in the New Testament, we see this in the contrast between Christ and the leaders of Israel. It forms for us a good pattern. The so-called spiritual leaders, the great pattern for all of us today. The scribes and Pharisees, when Christ came to the first coming, they trashed Him. They trashed Him in His ministry 24/7. They tried to discredit Him. They pulled people aside and tried to divide the nation over Him coming. In Matthew 12 and 13, these very same leaders tell everybody that He is Beelzebub, the Lord of the devils. He was not God's man. We saw that in John 6 and 7.

Let us fast forward just for a minute. I know back then things were different, somewhat. They did not have any social media back then, but could you imagine if they did? Could you imagine a Jerusalem Facebook? Could you imagine the camel jockeys and everybody back there, all the stuff that went on and all the—I mean, it would have been absolutely incredible. Look what they did without that. They called councils together. They called meetings together. They plotted how they would get rid of Him. They accused Him of being with winebibbers and doing this and peeling on the Sabbath. They attacked Him and His ministry in every venue they could do it.

But a blind man could see it. The great contrast between Him and them is they absolutely had no fruit in their life. They were the barren fig tree that He is making a reference to. The only people that learned these things, the only people that followed them, were people that were just like them. They had no fruit either. God had done nothing with them. They produced generation after generation of people who were as dead spiritually as any dead man physically. All their gossip and rhetoric and slander provided nothing but people just like them. They are birds of a feather, as Revelation 18 says.

I was thinking as I put this together, he is dead and home in heaven now. But I remember when Dr. Ruckman was alive, and I knew Dr. Ruckman. We go back to about 1972, and I first met him, formally met him, when he came to speak at our church camp. He and I talked several times about World War II things, and he loved that. When we were in New York preaching together, I would pick him up, and we would drive back and forth, and we would talk back and forth and all those things. But I remember that here is a guy who was hated across Christianity. The world did not even know who he was. I remember one time I just Googled in his name, and there were over 80 pages that came up of people that absolutely were against everything that he said and did.

They hated him. They just trashed him every which way they could. Some of them wrote books about him. It was absolutely incredible.

Yet, when I look at his life and the people who trashed him, who people who got on—I do not think it was even Facebook back then, I do not know, whatever their web pages are—the people who would write all these things, they would actually take a picture of a bar with somebody sitting in a bar with a girl and then Photoshop his picture into that picture and then put it out there that he is in a bar with the ladies. It was incredible. There was no end to what they would try to do to destroy him.

Yet, when you use the verse we are talking about today and you do not judge by appearance and you judge by a righteous judgment, just make the comparison. You know how many thousands, thousands of young men are in the ministry today because of him? He reached the world in a way with the right truth of the Bible that nobody other than maybe J. Frank Norris did, which did it another way in the 20s, and we have talked about how that goes together before. Hundreds, hundreds, thousands of young men in the ministry today because of what he taught and what he preached. And the people who criticized him? Two chickens and a duck, nothing. You know why? Because people, listen to me, get this down: people who have no fruit, like the Sadducees and the Pharisees, they will always hate people who do. You can just take that to the bank.

On the other hand, we have Christ, and He had fruit all over the place, did He not? He had the power of God in His life that they did not have. He had the authority of the Word of God. He had the miracles of the Word of God. He was the Word of God, and He had the fruit to prove it. That He was truly God's man, He had doctrine and authority in what He did, and they did not. You will want to stay away—you want a piece of advice—stay away from barren fig trees. They may be nice people; do not judge the people, judge the things. People with zero fruit will always be against anybody who has a truckload of fruit. End of story.

With Israel, by appearance, they looked really good. Right up to the fact that you got past the gas and the smoke. They talked big, they talked loud. They loved the upper rooms of the synagogues. If you would question them on their love for God, you would get a dissertation of how their ancestors loved God, they loved God, they are in the Bible, they are doing this, they are doing that, and oh, how much they love God. They would give you everything that you wanted to hear. But when you really look close at their lives, they were an empty suit. If you just go and judge by appearance, you will be deceived. But if you use sound doctrine and you look at the fruit, you see what you really have: nothing. The truth of God separates them back then in Jesus' time, and it will today. You never go by the appearance. If you do, you are going to be in trouble.

Remember, the Word of God divides. Let the doctrine of the Word of God reveal what their fruit is. You do not judge the person. You do not get an attitude toward them. You do not say, "I do not like that guy." You cannot afford to do that. What if down the line that guy or that gal or whoever turns the corner, wants to get their life back in order and do what is right, you have already prejudiced yourself against them. God's people are much more unforgiving than the world many times. Once we get the mindset that we do not like somebody, we do not like them. As a child of God, we cannot afford to be there. So we judge things.

"He that is spiritual will judge all things," not people. What you really judge is the work that they do to see if you want to be part of that work or you want their work into your work. In our upcoming leadership class, I am going to teach you how to do these things. We are going to use real life examples. This is why it is not going out on the deal or nobody else in the class is going to get. We are going to use real life examples from my ministry that I can get in there and show you where I do not have to talk about the abstract. We can put it right down where it is at.

In the Bible, you have vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. In my way of thinking, you ought to learn from both. People that are a vessel of honor, you ought to learn how to be better. People who are vessels of dishonor, you ought to learn how not to be like it. You do not judge the person. They may be a great person. They may have all the potential in the world if they get past themselves. But when you build your life on sound doctrine, that sound doctrine will build your family first and then your ministry to others through your New Testament local church. It will be a contrast of what is real versus what is not real, like Christ and the Pharisees.

All the garbage that will be thrown at you, and it will come. Once you get into the leadership mode and you start to do something, you are going to find it is going to come your way. It will only be the mask of the lack of doctrine and fruit in their own lives because I am going to say it again: people who have no fruit, people who talk big, talk loud, but yet their life is empty, they have absolutely God doing nothing in their world. They have not won anybody to Christ ever in their life. They have been saved for years and years and years. They are going to reject and resent you having fruit in your life because you rip the covers back. You take away the appearance, and the Bible says, "By their fruit ye shall know them."

You never judge people, but you judge what they do, the works. That is built on sound doctrine. Let me show you. In our study on the seven judgments, you will find two in particular. For us as Christians, it is the Judgment Seat of Christ. We know that someday we are going to all go and appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. You ever get that? Appear, appear, appear. It says we all shall appear. Your appearance is going to show up at the Judgment Seat of Christ. You better watch those words. That is where every one of us, if you are saved this morning, we are going to stand and give an account. For the unsaved folks, you are going to stand at the Great White Throne Judgment sometime later. But in both cases, I want you to know that, and I know we say this a lot, but we do not always articulate it right, God does not judge the person. God does not, in either judgment, He does not judge the person. Watch.

Let us look at the Judgment Seat of Christ first.

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

We have covered this many, many times. The foundation is the day you got saved. The rest of your Christian life, you build three things on that foundation that are right: gold, silver, precious stones. Every man's work, not the man, his work, shall be made manifest. He sorts out your work at the Judgment Seat of Christ. He does not judge you. He died for you. He dealt with you in this life as a son, and He either dealt with you through chastisement or forgiveness. When you get to the Judgment Seat of Christ, it is not a judgment against that person; it is a judgment on his work. Your work, your appearance, is manifested. You do not judge people. He judges their works. He judges the—He makes a righteous judgment on the appearance. He judges things. That person, if he is saved, was already judged at Calvary's cross. When he got saved, now he is judged through as a son through the chastisement, but here he is not judged as an individual person. He judges his works.

Now fast forward to the Great White Throne Judgment some thousand years later.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

It is the judgment of Christ. It is the manifestation of a saved person's works that get judged. It is a Great White Throne Judgment. It is the works of an unsaved man up against the Word of God. Do you see that?

This is what we find in Revelation 19:11 where he says:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

It is a righteous judgment. A righteous judgment does not judge people. A righteous judge judges what people do. When God judges you and me at the Judgment Seat of Christ, it is not going to be a personal thing. It is simply going to be, "What did you do based on what He did for you?" Your work. Did you give the appearance that you did it, or did you really do it? That is how it works. God does not judge the person. He died for the person.

2 Peter 2:1 says that He died for the unsaved teachers and preachers and false prophets. He died for them. They were judged at Calvary as a sinner. When he gets to the Great White Throne Judgment, they are already a sinner. He judges on what degree of hell they get by the works. Just two things: sound doctrine and the fruit of that work.

We have all heard, not all of us, but many of you heard Mel Sabaka preach over the years. We had him back in the day, and many of you find his sermon. Somebody, I forget who it was, somebody sent me a sermon that they found that he preached, had to be a long time ago, but he preached a message on "a work for God and a work of God." I have heard that message all my life from him. I have heard him preach that concept many, many times. He used to say that you will either have a work for God or you will have a work of God. He would say most of the preachers, most churches, most Christians have a work for God, but very few people have a work of God. Boy, there is a big difference.

A legitimate work or an illegitimate work. A legitimate work of God will always produce fruit. Let me tell you a story. I do not want to hear it. There are no exceptions. You are certainly not one. A legitimate work of God will produce fruit. An illegitimate work for God will either produce no fruit or illegitimate fruit.

The reason you should never judge people but things, but not people, is because by their fruit, or by their lack of fruit, you judge yourself. I do not have to do it. I just need to know what to look for. Then I need to make my judgment as a righteous judgment: Do I want that in my world? I love you. You are a nice guy. You are a nice gal. But do I want what you have in my space? You just know what to look for. You have got to get past the appearance.

You know what Paul said? He is dealing with the church at Corinth. He writes two books. He writes 1 Corinthians, and they have all kinds of problems, and he is giving them what to do, going through them and dealing with them. Then they get turned around, and in 2 Corinthians, he really writes a good book, which really forms for us the handbook of ministry. But yet, in spite of that, there were still some holdouts in the church at Corinth that did not like Paul. They did not like Paul just because they did not like Christ. They did not like Paul just because they will not like you.

Believe it or not, when he is trying to help them, I can just see this. A group of them had gotten together, and they really wanted to question Paul: Did he have the credentials to be able to speak to this church? Did he have the authority to correct this church? Did he have the stamp of approval for him to come into this church and to start ripping people apart like he did when he wrote 1 Corinthians in the first letter? Keep in mind, Paul got his gospel straight from God. He is the apostle to the church, but here are the ridiculous, stupid Christians who now are questioning God's man, "Do you really have the credentials to correct this church?" I love his answer. His answer stands for time and eternity and puts everybody in their place.

He answers them in 2 Corinthians 3:1-2.

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?

Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

What he is saying is, "Do I have to again tell you who I am? Or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you?" Other people are saying, "Do you have a letter from God that proves you are the apostle to the church? Could we see it, please? In that first letter, you ripped a lot of people off. You said some nasty things to some people. You called them babies. You called them stupid. You just really ripped them up one side and down the other. You need more humility. Could we see any letters of commendation that you really are who you say you are?" That is what he is saying. "Do we begin again to commend ourselves, or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?"

I love this. Here is the answer: "You want commendation? You want a letter? You want proof of who I am? Go look in the mirror. You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men." You know what he is saying? "You want proof that I am God's man, that God sent me here to this church? Go look in the mirror. You would not even be here if it was not for me." Paul speaking. "You would not even be saved if I would not have preached the gospel to you. You would not even know what Bible you should have if I would not have told you. And now you want to question that the apostle Paul is the guy that can help you. You want proof that God is in my ministry? Just look at my fruit."

You know what? It is you. You are the epistle written in our hearts. Everybody is reading your book. In other words, you would not even know anything about God, the right Bible, if it was not for the apostle Paul speaking. Your family, your children, your life with absolutely no ministry and absolutely no fruit is an open book to everybody around you. You like to give the appearance that it is okay. You like to blow the smoke of great swelling words. Or do you have the hundreds, thousands of people your life has affected that stand as an epistle written in their hearts that is read of all men? You just want to keep your book closed so nobody can read it. I know which way the wind blows. "By their fruit ye shall know them." There is absolutely nothing more to say.

I used to read these guys and hear these guys. When they talked about Dr. Ruckman, certainly they had no clue what they were talking about. 80 pages on YouTube or Facebook or whatever it was. Accusing him of everything. They wrote books about him. They put out tapes on him. They called him the most dangerous man in America. And he was to them. They tried to debate him. You can still get them online where a Catholic guy and Charles Keating tried to debate him. The NIV guy tried to debate him. This guy tried to debate him. That debate was over before it got started. Yet he was accused of everything. He was smashed. He was trashed. They said all kinds of things about him that were not true. They took things out of context.

But I will tell you what, as I stand here today and seeing the fruit of that man's ministry, me included. Mel Sabaka, my father in the Lord. Sam Gibb, Peacock, Joe Sylvester, Jim Lake, Mike Veitch, Pat Deen, Glenn Shunk, Herb Koonch, Dean Hayes. The list is endless. Of fruit that God used that man. Because other people out there had no fruit, had no authority, their families were a disaster. They attacked the one man who was getting the job done.

You are all Chiefed up today. I like that. Everybody has a thing for Patrick Mahomes, do you not? To my wife, he is Tooty Fruity. Do not even go there. I know I have to hear that stuff. It was quiet upstairs yesterday when Ohio State got beat. I will tell you, there was not. Before I went downstairs, she said, "Now there is going to be a lot of thumping and beating on the floor up here," because they were getting ready to kick off, and she was all ready to have her Ohio State shirt on everything. I said, "Okay." I am down there for an hour. I was watching it, kind of dozing. I was watching it. I thought that song out of the movie, *The Graduate*, "The Sounds of Silence."

Today at 3:45, kickoff. They are Cleveland Browns. Tomorrow morning, when I go to the gym, I will hear all about it. All the armchair quarterbacks. Every time there is a game, I will go there, and everybody is changing clothes, and the guy gets out of the shower, and everybody is just talking about what they should have done. Here is a guy that has not seen his toes in 30 years, and he is telling them what plays they should have run. Are you kidding me? If this guy was on that field, he would be dead in the first 15 seconds. Yet they are out there saying, "Well, you know what, they should have played this way. They should have done this. That coach, he is not calling the right play." Oh, really? You ever played the game? You ever stood up there behind a guide, and you know that there are 10 guys going to come and rearrange your molecules here in just a second? You ever snap that ball when it goes so fast, and you have got a split second to decide and look across that thing? Oh, yeah, you are in your armchair, eating your Frito-Lay potato chips, and saying, "Yeah, that was a bad play." Really? Come on, Pillsbury Doughboy. I wonder if you get out there and show us how to do it.

There are people who do the same thing with pastors, pastoring churches. They never pastor a church. They do not know if they have a problem where you have to deal with the whole issue to help people and get them. Their life depends on it. They have never built a church. They never even built a person. You cannot even build your family. But you are an expert. You are an expert just like the guys tomorrow at the gym. They are up there, they will be showering in the shower and say, "Ah, they should have played it this way. That one play, and I will tell you what that coach, they need to get rid of this guy. They need to get rid of that." Really? No, they just need you out there. Armchair quarterback. So quick to criticize, trash when they have never played the game of life themselves. Yet their fruit basket is completely empty. Or in some cases, and you want to read Jeremiah 24:1-10, if your basket is filled with rotten figs.

Folks, you never judge by the appearance of anything. If you learn anything from this verse today that will help you going forward, be smarter than a problem. You need to build your confidence in the Lord because fear is coming, and fear will always get you to the place where you make bad choices. If your confidence is not grounded in the Word of God, if sound doctrine is the basis for everything that you do, you will never produce any fruit. Yet you will see so many of God's people, the armchair quarterbacks. Oh, they have the advice for everybody. They criticized Dr. Ruckman up one side, down the other. They criticized Christ up one side, down the other. They are all in the same boat. You never judge by the appearance of anything. You look at the life and how and what they do. Does it line up to doctrine? Then you look in their fruit basket. Nothing else to be said.

Today, this kind of message would invoke a riot. Simply because so many people do not like the mask being pulled off. They have got so many of God's people believing that they are doing the right thing, that they love God, the Bible, and all this stuff, but yet they are an empty suit. When the Word of God gets into the world, it exposes them. You do not have to judge people. They will judge themselves. Just look at the fruit. Do not tell me about the guys that hated Ruckman versus Ruckman. Just look at the fruit. One of the guys that hated him and wrote a book about him, his son blew his brains out. Pretty good fruit. Hope you had a basket to catch it all. Do not tell me. I have been in this business too long. I know how it works. It started all the way back with the Lord Jesus Christ, with the scribes and the Pharisees. He had authority and had doctrine, and they did not. He had the fruit, they did not. People who do not have the authority or they do not have the fruit will always hate the ones that do.

You are going to find yourself in that boat. You go through the leadership and you get these things, and you see how this thing really goes together and how it really works. Someone will tell you something, and then you put it to work in your life. This church is filled with potential. Absolutely over the top. This church is filled to the brim with young singles, young couples, moms and dads, you older folks that just have the potential. The unity is to hold it all together and be whatever God wants this church to do. You guys are operating on a level that is hard to even fathom, and yet I want to make you better.

This is so true. Mahomes is a great quarterback, no question about it. Probably the best quarterback that ever played. Right, Alex? Alex Mahomes. But you know what makes him really a great, great, great quarterback? Great players around him. You know what makes me better as your pastor? The great people around me. You know what makes the people sitting next to you better? You sitting next to them. Good, strong people make other good, strong people better. Iron sharpeneth iron. A church ought to be filled with people who make the pastor better, the pastor who makes the people better, and the people who make each other better. That is New Testament Christianity based on the Bible. That is a oneness. That is a unity. That is taking everybody that God gives us and helping you be better because it only makes me better.

I am 71 years old. I know I get up in the morning, and I am achy, and I feel 71. But you know what? I can still do a lot of things that probably guys that are in their 50s and 60s cannot do. I sleep good. My naps are wonderful in the afternoon. You know why? At 71, in my mind, I feel like I am still 35 because of you guys. If we had a church like most churches that had everybody that looked like a graveyard of dinosaurs heading for Florida, I would be right in there with them. You keep me young. It is an old thing: if you have an old dog and you want to give him some life, get a puppy. Well, I am the old dog, and you are the puppies. Do not you lift your leg in my pulpit up here. You are in trouble with your young.

But it is a thing where we help each other. You make me better. You make you better. That is what it is supposed to be. You keep me going. You give me hope. You give me confidence in what we are doing here because I see the hand of God in so many ways. You guys out there winning people to Christ and doing this and doing that and going out there and doing all you do. We go down to Branson for a nice fun time. It turns into a missions trip. These are the things that a church should do.

We are in the midst. I looked at Dr. Ruckman and all he did and all he touched, and all hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of lives. You realize he did it from a church that was not any bigger than ours. He had a Bible Institute just like we do. In fact, he is the pattern by which I followed. We are reaching the world in our young stage just like he did after all the years that he did it. But that is the right pattern. His church kept him young. You know how I know that? Because he did not retire from playing hockey, being the goalie, until he was 85. We make each other better. We make each other stronger. But we have got to get past this thing of looking at things by the appearance of it. Whether it be the government, the country, the world. See it for what it is. Understand it for what it is. Then let us get back and do what God has called us to do.

Within Christianity, the appearances, they will be taken care of when we all appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ. You follow two things. You follow the doctrine and the fruit. You stay with those two things. Everything else can just be put in the wastebasket. I will hold up there. Do not forget to sign up for Jeffrey.