

I. The Deeper Meaning of Foot Washing

A lot of our time in the Gospel of John will be about correcting things that are wrong today, or misconstrued today, or not understood today. That is our goal. We looked at Christ washing His disciples' feet and then telling them, and I do not know how people miss this, that what He was doing was an example of something. There was more to it than just washing these guys' dirty feet. He told them that they would know later why He was doing this. Then He tells them that He is washing their feet so by example they will learn to wash others' feet.

I told you there are people out there today that never get past the physical foot washing, and they do that in their churches. He is talking more in a way here that is an example of something. So we developed it last week, and I tied it into our study actually the week before on verses 1 through 5 of the great study on God coming down to man in 1 Timothy 3:16, the great verse: God manifested in the flesh. Christ left it all and came down to man so we could have what He gave up through the salvation that we get, and then through the fellowship that we have with Him. Then us taking that and doing the work that He has given us to do as a servant.

I showed you that in the understanding of washing our feet, it will be key to our walk with God, understanding how to stay in fellowship. It is more here than just an actual foot washing. What He is telling them here is, "When I go to the cross, you are going to have to carry on the work. I have delivered it into your hands. To do that work, you are going to have to stay clean, and you are going to have to stay in fellowship."

I have told you this before, and a lot of this is repetitive, but the price of learning is repetition, so that is okay. That is why I staged it to have two "Victory in Jesus" today so you would have two of them. It worked out just fine.

II. The Themes of John and 1 John

I told you how that the book of John, when the Gospel of John was written, you are told in John 20:31 that the specific reason for it was to get men saved. Then I showed you and told you that the book of 1 John deals with our fellowship. That is why those two books are so vital. The one book shows us how to get saved, but after we do get saved, then 1 John shows us the fellowship that we need to have.

The theme of 1 John is, here again, every commentator you are going to listen to or read, excuse me, any priest you are going to listen to, almost without exception, they will tell you that the theme of 1 John is love. That is certainly not true. If you would study the book of 1 John, you would know that it is just five little chapters, and in those five little chapters, twenty-seven times you find the word "knowing" or "to know" or "to know Him." The theme of 1 John is not love. The theme of 1 John is knowing Him.

That is so typical of American Christianity and American Christians, and I have told you this before: we always fall in love with things before we know them. We do not take the time to know something or explore something or give somebody a chance. The Bible says, "Prove all things." We are so quick to just jump into a relationship or jump into this or do this or make this decision. When the Bible clearly tells us that when it comes to God, you do not fall in love with God. People who fall in love with God, in a very short time, they fall out of love with God because that is the American way. We fall in love with things that actually cannot love us back. We fall in love with our cars, our boats, our dress, our shoes, with this, and I understand it, and this is not a criticism; I do it too. I love the color. I love this. I love that. I love the sky. I love the dog. I love all that stuff. I get that.

But the bottom line is, we as American, especially American Christians, when it comes to God, you do not just fall in love with God. This is why so many people will come down and get saved in churches, and then you will never see them after two or three weeks. They got an emotional movement. They got an emotional experience, so they came down and made some kind of emotional decision, but it was not based on knowing Him. I would just say this: if you want to love God and you want to love Christ, to know Him is to love Him. That is why the book of 1 John is not about love; it is about knowing. Taking the time to build a relationship with Christ through fellowship that will lead to a lasting love that nobody will ever replace, nothing you will ever take from you. That is the problem: when you do not do that, there will always be something more glittery or something more gold or something this or something that will take that praise. Real, true biblical fellowship in your relationship with God and loving Him through knowing Him, nobody can ever take that from you because there is nothing better than that.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us:)

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Verse 3 says that life was manifested to us. That life is the Lord Jesus Christ, and four times in these little verses here, you will find the word "fellowship." Fellowship will be your joy. Where He wrote the Gospel of John to get you saved, He wrote the epistle, 1 John, that your joy may be

full through fellowship. There will be no fullness in your life as a Christian without real, true biblical fellowship, and that is why 1 John was written.

I do not know if you have ever looked at it and compared, but look at the similarities between the Gospel of John and the first five verses, and then 1 John. In John 1:1-5, it says:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

You have all the characteristics here and all the things here that He talks about in 1 John, but in a different way. Look at 1 John 1:1-4:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us:)

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

You see how similar that is to the Gospel, but it is different. In the Gospel of John, He is talking about the Christ coming down, the Man who was God's light, and He was the true light. Here, He is talking about after it is manifested, they handled it. They handled the true Word of life, the Lord Jesus Christ. For the life was manifested, and we have seen it and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. In the beginning verses, "that which was from the beginning," and I will tell you, the two books go hand in hand. John 1, the Gospel, is about getting life from God's light, verse 4, and then that joy of salvation from that light can only be fulfilled through our fellowship, 1 John 1, and that is how both books go together.

Again, the theme of the Gospel of John is the Son of God coming down and dying for man. The theme of 1 John is Christ our life through our fellowship, and I will tell you, those two books are incredible books. It shows you how, and then I showed you how that the Old Testament tabernacle was a picture of our work and our fellowship and the importance of an understanding foot washing, the labor of water. How that that priest, when he went in and went out, he had to wash his feet to do the work, and how that is a picture of really what Jesus is telling the disciples: "If you are going to do My work, you are going to have to do the work in this dirty, old, filthy world, and your feet represent your walk with Me, and you are going to get dirty, so you have got to keep it clean; you have got to wash it."

Then I showed you how that Peter refused to let Christ wash his feet, and how that is a picture of folks who claim to be saved but want no fellowship with Christ after that salvation. What He is telling us through Peter's rejection, and you take this for what it is worth, He is saying, "You cannot have one without the other." You cannot claim to be a Christian and have real salvation but then just ignore fellowship in the biblical sense.

III. The State of Modern Christianity

You know and I know, we all get out of fellowship from time to time. I understand that. We all do; that is just part of it. We do. But I think Martin Luther gave the greatest advice to anybody that could have when it came to fellowship with God when he said, "Keep short accounts with God. Take care of it." Do not run up a big bill of unconfessed sin, because unconfessed sin is like your credit card. When you do not pay it, and you get a two thousand, five thousand, six thousand, ten thousand, twenty thousand charge on your credit card, and the interest is 29%, you are never going to get it paid off. Most people will not pay their credit card off the moment they spend it, use it, but then pay it off. That is like your sin when you get out of fellowship with God. Do not let it incur interest. Do not let it build compounding interest, or pretty soon you know you are going to be overwhelmed, and you will never get it paid off. That is what people get into. Once it starts piling up debt, you are in trouble. So Martin Luther gave good advice: "Keep short accounts with God."

We talk a lot about this, and it is just the day that we live in. The state of Christianity today is a disaster. I mean, the lack of any real truth, any real doctrine. So we find ourselves much like, and I have used this parallel many, many times, much like the nation of Israel when they were at their darkest hour, and certainly Christianity is at its darkest hour. There are some churches out there that have the lights turned on that are doing the work. I get that, but you know as well as I do, the average Christian is just lost when it comes to understanding anything about God and the Bible.

Much like what Isaiah said about the nation of Israel in Isaiah 29:13 when he told Israel, "You have a head knowledge for God, but you have no heart knowledge for God." It is a lot like the great prophet Hosea said in Hosea 8:12 when he said that the nation of Israel, "The great things that God has done for you, you now look at them as strange things because you have forgotten what God has done for you." That is us.

Again, Isaiah told Israel in Isaiah 59:14, he says, "Truth, God's truth, has fallen in the streets. Nobody cares about what is real anymore." Then he said in Isaiah 10:1, he says that Israel was in a time of unrighteous decrees. If there has ever been a time when the church, God's people, are so messed up with things that have nothing to do with the Bible, it is the day and age that we live in. In Isaiah 5:20, one of my favorite places, he says, "The time in Israel right now is a time where all of the good things are called bad, and all the bad things are called good." You have a King James Bible, the absolute perfect Word of God. The Christian world will tell you that it is bad. It will try to sell you some piece of junk out there that is not worth making out of a boat anchor and try to tell you it is good. That is the state of Christianity.

I am telling you, Micah saw it in Micah 2:11, and he said, "Israel's problem with all that has happened, a spirit of falsehood has descended upon God's people, the nation of Israel." Then Hosea said it in Hosea 4:1-3 when he said, "Israel is in a time now where they have no truth, they have no mercy, and there is no knowledge of God in the land." That is where we are at. It is just like old Jeremiah said, and oh, he is a character, in Jeremiah 23:30, he said, "God gave us a perfect book, but somebody stole it from us."

Doctrine, Bible doctrine, will be the glue that holds Christianity together. There is a book in our bookstore back there that you ought to pick up and get. It is called *The Death of Bible Doctrine*, and it is when Bible doctrine died. It is just a matter of time before New Testament Christianity died because there is no truth in it. I would say to you that the greatest fraud today in the 20th and 21st century has been Christianity, churches, and Christians who pretend that they have a relationship with God and are saved, and maybe they are, but they deny any real fellowship. They do not want to pay the price to have what they need to have.

We hear pastors compare other pastors and people to the Apostle Paul. Let me tell you something, there is no man that walks on earth today that could ever fill Paul's shoes and what he went through because of what he believed. We live in a Disneyland world. Today, as we continue on in John 13, we see things develop as we move through here, and I do not pass them up because I am looking for every opportunity for all of us to learn and grow. We see what takes place in the upper room, and it will lead now to His betrayal, which is coming up here pretty quick, and crucifixion.

Next week is Easter. Today is Palm Sunday, and this is where they laid down the palm trees like we studied a couple of weeks ago. Next week is Easter, and everybody you will find next week will be packed out. All the people who do not have any relationship with God or any fellowship with God are always going to show up. You can count on them two times a year: Easter and Christmas. I always thought that was interesting because they always show up the two times that Christ really cannot have any power in life. When they show up at Easter, it is about His death, and when it shows up at Christmas, it is about a baby being born. They will never show up on Second Coming Day. I think we ought to have a Judgment Seat of Christ Day. What do you think? I think we ought to start getting off these rumpy-bumpy little days and get some real hellfire days going that will rattle some cages. But all it will do is make you mad. It will not change anything.

IV. The Unique Character of the Apostle John

As we move through this now, our attention is reverted or comes to one of the apostles, the Apostle John. For you and for me, this will be the greatest example of what He has laid out in the first fifteen verses. What He has done here, if you are following along so far, verses 1 through 5, He talked about fellowship in Christ, losing the fellowship, and leaving the deity, putting on a towel and coming down to man. We talked about that. Then we were told that He has put all things into our hands because His hour is coming when He is going to be crucified. Then we saw verses 5 through 15 last week, the example of foot washing. Now we understand that that is a picture of us keeping ourselves clean in our walk to do the work like the priest in the Old

Testament tabernacle. Now we see that the washing of water is a picture of the washing of the water of the Word of God that keeps us clean in our walk.

Now, once we have come to this point, and I love this, now He gives us the prime example of all He has told us through the one man in the Bible that is who every one of us should try to be like, and in time, to the best of our ability, be like: the Apostle John. I tell you this, and you will see it and maybe better understand it by the time I am done this morning, but the Apostle John is the most unique man in all of the Bible. There is no question about it.

I want to begin reading today John 13:18-26. We are going to be going some other places here after a while, but we will start here, and here is what He says:

I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

Father, we ask You to bless our time today. Lord, these are the greatest people in my mind on the planet today. They have the right Bible. Most of them love You. Most of them are part of my ministry. They have shared their lives with my life and my family to build this work for God. They labor along with me, and I pray, Father, that You will bless us today, take us a little farther in our understanding of how we can get close to You. We love You. We thank You for our church, for what You have given us, to the visitors today, for the many things that You have given us that we certainly do not deserve, and we will be careful to give You all the honor and the praise and the glory in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Character studies in the Bible, and I know there are a lot of different ways to study the Bible, but when it comes to character studies in the Bible, which I think are probably one of the richest ways to study it once you learn some fundamental things about the Bible. The people in the Bible are incredible; every one of them will show you something, and there are many that will help you understand your own life, your relationship with God, and all of those things. When we came through John 11 a couple months ago, we looked at Mary and Martha. What a great illustration

and what great two character studies they would be. You have back in the book of Daniel, you have Daniel, what an incredible example of what we can learn from Daniel. You have Abraham, and what an incredible character study he is and all the things that he goes through in his life. David, a man after God's own heart, what an incredible study he is. We throw into the mix people like Paul, people like Timothy. There is no end to it; there are just so many. But I want to say this to you today: none of them will give you the complete picture of what we should be more than the Apostle John. I think that his life, without question, goes so deep from what my life should be and what your life should be, and today I want to lay out this great character study for you.

A couple of things here: you yourself now will not only glean from everything we are going to look at, but hopefully you will learn from this how to do your own character study, because there is the way that you do character studies, and there are some things that you want to approach when you do character studies, and maybe today you will be able to get a better understanding. This story is found right in the context of our study of what we have come through. How have I laid out from the first fifteen verses? It is perfect. Now He has given us everything. Now He gives us the ensemble of what we should be, and there will be none better than the study of John.

I want to build this today around one verse in what I already read here, and we will be coming back to this in weeks to come with some other areas, but we have got to take it as it appears as we come through it, and it will be John 13:23, and it says, "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved."

Let me start by showing you the composite here of the men that Christ chose, which we know as the twelve apostles. They are chosen for us in Matthew 10. You can actually go back there and see who is chosen and all of that stuff, and you want to remember now that everything in the Bible was put there for a purpose and for a reason. God just did not use filler material. He did what He did for a purpose and for a reason, and so you should understand this.

First off, you have the twelve apostles, and they will be a picture of the total Christianity today. Then, of course, we have got to subtract one from that, and that would be Judas. He was a devil. He was a counterfeit. He was a phony. He will be a picture of an unsaved man, and that will tell all of us that in any church, in any group of Christians, you are going to have some that are not really saved. So you begin to see how that the twelve apostles are a picture of what Christianity is in an overall fashion, and there was one here, Judas, who was not saved.

Then you have eleven left, and when you begin to study it and look through the scriptures with it, you will find that of those eleven, there will be three who are what we would call the inside of Christ's ministry. We know them as Peter, James, and John. When guys write about this, they call them actually the "inner three," and they are called the inner three because when Christ does what He does coming through the New Testament, you are going to find that these three guys experience the power, the glory, and all that God does in a greater way than the rest of the eight do. It is clearly there. You will find that when some great things happen, those three are just there all the time, and the others are not.

In Matthew 17, you have the Mount of Transfiguration where Christ actually goes beyond the cross and gets glorified. It is a picture of the Second Coming of Christ. You will find Moses and

Elijah are connected with that. You will find that one of the disciples say, "We ought to build some tabernacles," showing you that they understand the Second Coming is going to be at the Feast of Tabernacles. When this great event takes place, when God takes Him beyond the cross and He is glorified, it is only Peter, James, and John that are there. The rest of them, I do not know where they are at.

You will find in Luke 8:51, when probably without a doubt the greatest story in the Bible that for you and for me helps us understand what happens when we die as Christians. It is the open door to one of the greatest studies in the Bible of what really happens. I know you think you die and you go to heaven and pluck a harp for returning on a cloud. No, no, no, no. That is the gateway of understanding in a Christian's life, death, and how God looks at it and how it works for us. It is a thing where He is called to this man's house, the daughter is dead. He walks in, and they are all crying and wailing, and He makes one of the greatest statements in all of the Bible when He says, "What is everybody all upset about? She is not dead; she sleepeth." You know what the Bible says? The Bible says they laughed Him to scorn. They could not get what He was saying, but I will tell you this, you know who is there? Peter, James, and John. I do not know where the rest of them are at. Shoney's, stuck in their chariots, and McDonald's drive-thru. It was a busy day that day. I do not know.

In Mark 14, oh man, another incredible thing, the agony in the garden. What an incredible picture that is of so many things. There are so many studies out of that, that He is in the garden, tying that back to the garden that Adam was in, tying it through a garden all the way through the Bible. Where the Bible says as He prayed, His sweat became as great drops of blood. Yet Peter, James, and John were the only ones there. Nobody else was there.

You know, it is a great truth that there are some of God's people who will just never see or get more out of their relationship with Christ than just a nominal thing, that "here I am." They never get to see and experience the great things that God does. I told it to Thursday night, somebody asked me what of all the years in the ministry, what is the greatest thing that I ever experienced or got out of it, and that was so easy to answer. The greatest things that I have ever experienced in ministry, you see God changing your lives. I have watched you come in that door or the other doors or any door, and I have watched you sit here, and I look at some of you this morning. George, I love you to death, and I watched you come. You do not know how much I prayed for you, and you know what? God changed your life, and I love it, and it is just a thing where it is, there are so many of you that have just come in, and you know, it is just incredible, and that is the greatest joy of ministry. But you know what? There are people here that never see those things.

Talk to little Jeanette over here, and I look over here, Penny over here, and Troy over here, and you know, going back to when you were just kids, teenagers. Penny, you are far from being a kid, so get that smile off your face. I got to watch you guys. You had struggles in life with getting a hold of God, did you not, buddy? Well, you got it now, man, and the greatest joy is not only you tackled me so hard on that football field over playing so many years ago, but look what God has done in your life. Good. It is great. I get to see those things. I call Penny James Bond Money Penny. Steve Bracken. I mean, twelve years old, probably fourteen with Jeanette and all you

guys, you all you guys were hanging out. I mean, I slapped your heads up against the wall over there so many times, but I look at what God has done. I look at our athletic program, how we kept some of you coming year after year after year, like old Josh back here and his wife, family. You know what? Just kept coming, just kept coming. You know, Darren Orring and his wife, they have come out and played ball with us over and over and over again, and you know, many people just see that and they just get used to that, but I never forget. I never forget from where you came in that door and the struggles that you had, and that God came down and changed your life. I am telling you, greatest blessing, greatest blessing.

You are going to find that with God's people, there are some people who God will take and give them greater things to see. The majority, like Peter, James, and John, the majority of the apostles, they were just satisfied with the status quo. They were okay coming on Sunday or doing this or whatever they did back then, but when something came down and God did some incredible things, it was only those three. I count myself as one of the most fortunate men on the planet, not only to have the family that I have and it supports me and all that that we do and part of my ministry and what they do and teaching principles and working with me and doing everything, and you know, this is a stupid thing to you probably, and that is okay. I am a grandpa, so I can say that. One of the greatest blessings I had last night was watching little Kenzie up there call that volleyball game. I am telling you something, you will not get nothing past her. I have often thought I would like to do that, but my mind wanders. I could, I do not even think I like some of you guys call the lines, you stand there and you, I do not think I could do that. I get, I am watching, "How are you? You know, was that in or out? No, he is in. I do not know where the ball went, but she is in." I cannot do those things. You know, in my senior moments, I do not focus very well, but other than when it comes to the Bible, so I am not a good candidate for that. But I, but I watch how God changes your life. I watch how He has changed the life of your kid. Let me tell you something, there was more going on here for that offering than just two little kids saying it. I am telling you, and I like the little girl, she is, man, she is in it, man. We are going to take up an offering and get you guys a bus and put you on the road, man. God has done some great things in our lives, amen.

Then why will God's people be so satisfied with the norm? Why do you not want that Mount Transfiguration experience? Why do you not want to be there with the rising of Jairus's daughter, which is to me God using people here to win somebody else to Christ? Why do you not want that? I, and I confess, I know a lot of things about the Bible. I mean, I could put it into a, you know, millions of things that I do not know, but I will tell you, I understand a lot about God and what He is doing, but I never understand God's people, why you can truly be born again and just be satisfied without the power of God and the majesty and the miracles of God in your life. I just, I do not understand that.

V. John's Distinctive Qualities

But out of those three, we come to John, and there are some things about him that you do not find with the rest of his disciples, even the other two, Peter and James. I think so, to develop this character study, to show you how we do this, you pick a verse that you want to base from, and

for me, as we did today, it would be John 13:23. He lays his head on the breast of the Lord Jesus, and he actually hears God's heartbeat. We hear a lot today about getting God's heart, do we not? For most of God's people, and actually for most preachers, it is just talking points. It is trade talk. There is no real definition to the phrase, and we make the mistake in thinking that getting God's heart has something to do with my heart. Well, my heart, I have already been told in Jeremiah, is desperately wicked above all things, and who can know it? So I am not relying on my heart for anything with God.

But in reality, it is getting so close to Christ through my fellowship that I get to hear His heart first, and then it changes my heart. You see, I do not love God with all of my heart. I love God with all of His heart. Pray about that for about ten or fifteen years. Finding out what His heartbeat is. Finding out what His heartbeat is. Knowing what my heartbeat is, and knowing that through salvation, God gave me the ability to hear His heartbeat and make it my heartbeat. My flesh will always pump and blow out and give me all kinds of problems, but it is understanding and hearing God's heartbeat that overrides the sinful heart of man. I want to tell you something, the only person on this planet outside John who can hear the heartbeat of God will be New Testament Christians because this book is God's heartbeat. When you get into this book and your fellowship is through this book, and you are walking in the light as He is in the light, you too will lay your head on His breast, and you will hear the heartbeat of God, and it is from that heartbeat that God will change your life. God's people are so far from that today. They do not understand that today. Knowing Him. Knowing Him.

At the end of John 13:23, this is the second thing that I would uncover here. It says, "whom Jesus loved." Now it says that two times in John. It says it in John 13:23 and then again in John 19:26. There is no question about it, God loves all of us. There is no question about that. But if you think that God does not have His favorites, you do not know very much about God. Jesus had a special love for John. That is hard for some of God's people to get because we all live in Christian entitlement. We all think we deserve all the things that God, and we do not deserve any of it. You know what we do deserve is to scream our lungs out in the lake of fire for all of eternity. But we get to the place that we get so spoiled, like I said last week, that we actually think that we are not here to serve God, that He is here to serve us. You see it in prayers: "God, give me this. God, give me that." Our prayers, we order God what He is supposed to do. It is a very subtle thing, but it is very clear that Jesus had a special love for John, and it will be based on that John had a special love for Jesus.

You see, that is where it comes down to. It is a thing where, you know, in ministry, when you have a ministry and you have the burden of God and know what God wants you to do, and God sends people, and there are some who will just never help you. There are some that they come to take whatever they can get. Oh, they love the Bible. They have this, that, that, but they are never going to step out of the box, so to speak, to ever really put their life on the line to do anything for God. Then you have those that do. You have those that sacrifice their families, sacrifice their own lives. They sacrifice. They will work their whole schedule throughout the week around the people that they work with. They will work their full job a long week and do everything else, but they will never let ministry slip. There is never a time that even though they are very, very tired,

there is never a time they are not too tired to do whatever God called them to do. I just have got to tell you, you may love them all, and I do. But you have got to understand that the ones who give it up and realize and get God's heart and get your heart, they have got to be something special.

Paul makes this very clear in his own ministry. We saw last Thursday night in the question about Epaphroditus in Philippians 2. He was special to Paul. Paul had a bunch of people in his life, but you have got to go back sometimes and see the ones that he makes mention of, the ones that really get his heart of what God had given him to do. He loved them all. God loves them all. I love them all. But if you are not, if you do not think that John and Christ had a special relationship based on John's love for Him that the other one did not have, you are missing a boat. God has got a heart. That heart is to do the work that He has called us to do, that He started, but we are to finish. How do you think He looks at God's people who are so indifferent to that, who are too busy with their own life, too busy doing their own thing? Over there He says, "Who am I? Send me," and you say, "I do not know, but it is not me. Send somebody else."

You see, John is that special guy who does something that I would say that 99.9% of God's people never get to do today. He goes behind the veil. He actually goes into the Holy of Holies. He actually hears the heartbeat of God, and whatever he did with his life, it was based on that heartbeat.

The third thing: in John 13:21, Jesus openly tells them, He says, "Hey, I want you to know, one of you is going to betray Me." Now when you develop this through the Gospels, you will find over in Matthew 26:21-22, which is the same account, you will find that when He says it there, every one of the disciples turns to Him and says, "Lord, is it me?" Every one of them. "Lord, is it me? Lord, is it I? Lord, am I the one?" You know what John said? John said, "Lord, who is it?" There was no betrayal in John's heart. Do you know why? Because there is no betrayal in God's heart. You know where betrayal exists? We have all had people betray us. In the ministry, it happens on a regular basis. You have all had people that have betrayed you. I have had people that have betrayed me, but in the heart of God, listen to me, in the heart of God, there is no betrayal. Now John may not have figured out who exactly it was, but he figured it out and knew that it was not him. Boy, that is a great thing. That is a great thing to say about any child of God, that in your heart, in my heart, I wish we could have said that there is no betrayal to God. When we got His heartbeat, it changed us, and it changed us that the fellowship that we have is so close and so pure that you hear His heartbeat, and in that heartbeat, there is no betrayal. There is none. That is the confidence that we have.

You see, I have never, you have a lot of people, a lot of God's people, they get everything backwards. They cannot trust God. They worry about everything. They have no confidence in God. They are not sure God is going to fix this or fix that. Something down the road, something happens, and they are not sure what God is going to do. They cannot trust Him in that. They have no confidence in Him. You know, that is never really the issue. The real issue is not that you have confidence in God; the real issue is, has God got any confidence in us? The only way that happens is to get His heart. That is our confidence. That is John's confidence. That is why John could look and say to Him, "Who is it?" Everybody else said, "Is it me?" You know why they

said, "Is it me? Is it me? Could it be me? Could it be me?" Do you know why? Because at the end of the day, at the crucifixion, they all betrayed Him anyhow. They all took off. Except one. There is no betrayal in his heart. He had the confidence. They could look at Him and say, "Who is it? I will kill the sucker. Who is it?" That is our confidence of our trust that is based on the relationship that will be found only in our fellowship.

Fourth thing: now when His hour does come, which we know now as the crucifixion, in truth, as I just said, they all betray Him. They all take off. They all head for parts unknown, all except John. John goes all the way to the cross. I have always asked myself, in face of everything that is coming in this world, and in face of everything that Christians have to face today, "How far am I willing to go? How far are you willing to go when the world falls apart and shatters and everything changes?" You know, that is really, and most people do not really get this. The death of Christ at His crucifixion was to the apostles the disaster of all disasters. Most people do not look at it this way. Their world had suddenly come crashing down and come to a screeching halt. For three, and think of it now, for three and a half years, they walked with Him. They experienced some of the greatest times of their lives walking with the Lord Jesus. Now it is all gone. Everything has changed. It did not change in a year. It did not change in six months. It changed in less than eight hours. Everything they knew in their world, everything that they knew and loved in their life, everything that they thought was going one way has now went south. Yet He told them this was coming. How many times in the Gospels did He not say, "Hey," you know, He told them, He prophesied that it was in the Old Testament. Now there, they are nowhere to be found. That one night, everything they knew had changed.

Listen. The disasters of life that change the face and the course of the world will either scatter you to the wind, or you will be found at the foot of the cross. At the foot of the cross. It is just that simple. But the apostles, they are nowhere to be found, all except John. What a contrast that is to Christianity today. I mean, when their world came to an end, every one of them headed for parts unknown. John is the only one who stood his ground. You look at today with what we have been through, which amounts to nothing compared to what they went through, to what is coming. Boy, God's people better stop and look inside, and based on their confidence and their fellowship, you better decide where you are going to be found standing when our world comes down. Because it is coming. It is coming.

The next thing: in John 19:26, we have an incredible picture of the church today in relationship to the nation of Israel.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

This is John. He is giving His mother to John. What an incredible picture that is. I know to most people, it is just a nice thing that He did. Took and married the mother of Jesus, you know, into his home because now she has nobody. Joseph must be dead by now. I do not know, but he is not in the picture here. But yet, when I look at that through the train of thought, what a picture that is

of Romans 9 and Romans 11. You see, Mary is a type of the nation of Israel, and John is a type of the church. In those two chapters, we are told that the church in the church age is to take the watch care over the nation of Israel, Mary. So there again, He is showing us the New Testament principles found in Romans 9 and 11 that the church today, John, is to take care of Mary, the nation of Israel. Incredible.

Not only the next thing: not only is John a complete picture of what our fellowship should be, but he is an incredible example of what our wisdom should be toward God and His work. Us, as we say so many times, having the mind of Christ. Getting God's wisdom like it is laid out in Proverbs 2. You know, in the Old Testament, we have what we call the five wisdom books. Each one will give you the wisdom of God and who He really is and what He is doing and trying to accomplish in a very unique way. When they are truly laid out, it becomes one of the most incredible studies that you could ever take. Those five books, though, you have the book of Psalms, you have the book of Job, you have the book of Proverbs, you have the book of Ecclesiastes, and you have the book of Song of Solomon.

I heard a message years ago that I thought was a very good message where a guy took an inspirational application to those five books, which is 100% true, and it would make a great devotion, make a great sermon. He says those five wisdom books represent the five stages of life.

- Psalms is about a happy man.
- Job is about a sad man.
- Proverbs is about a wise man.
- Ecclesiastes is about a worldly man.
- Song of Solomon is about a heavenly man.

You know that is so true from a practical standpoint. But each one of these doctrinally will lay out a different aspect of God that everybody needs to get and understand, and John certainly understood it.

- When you talk about the book of Psalms, you are talking about the heart of God.
- When you talk about the book of Job, you are talking about the sufferings of God.
- When you talk about the book of Proverbs, you are talking about the mind of God.
- When you talk about the book of Ecclesiastes, you are talking about the mind of the Spirit.
- When you talk about the book of Song of Solomon, you talk about the mind of Christ.

Now the book of Song of Solomon ought to be the greatest of these five to you and me because it deals with our intimate relationship with Christ. A couple of New Year's Eves ago, not a couple, fifty or sixty years ago, we did that and laid it out for you. But you know, back in around the turn of the century, Marconi, who is an Italian, had invented the wireless radio, and the telegraph got invented. You know, with a little key you do a Morse code, and they would send messages back and forth through the telegraph. We have developed that over the years, and now we have telephone, telegraph, telephone, and tell a woman. You want to get it out. Just kidding, just kidding. I have got a man joke coming up here in a little bit that will make all your women happy.

But they came out with a distress signal which has become the standard, and it was the, you know, dot dot dot, dot dot dot, dot dot dot, S.O.S. Most people do not know anything about S.O.S. today. They have not used the Morse code for years. S.O.S. meant "Save Our Souls." It was an emergency that the Titanic put it out, and ships were using it, and then later it became, it became a thing where it became the standard distress. S.O.S., S.O.S., S.O.S., "Save Our Souls." To me, I have always thought my S.O.S. is the book of the Song of Solomon because that is where He saved my soul. That book ought to be the most precious book any child of God, any child of God anywhere that we have, because of what it does.

John is an Old Testament Saint. He would have these down, and he would know these as the rest of the Old Testament. But then we have John on what he knew from the Old Testament going into the New Testament. He will write the five wisdom books of the New Testament. I said earlier that John was totally unique. The reason why he is, is because of all the writers of the Bible, he is the only writer that when he writes his books, he has the rest of the Bible on the table in front of him. Paul did not have that. Timothy did not have that. Nobody had that except John. When he sits down to write the Gospel, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John, and Revelation, he all does that in 80 to 90 A.D. He has the complete rest of the Bible in front of him to gauge what he is doing. When he writes, he has the complete rest of the Bible, so he writes from a perspective that should have a complete understanding of everything that God is doing. Then when he is taken out in Revelation, he is taken up to the Lord's Day. That is a Second Coming. Then he is told to look back and write in three tenses: what has been, what is, and what shall be. I think to myself, every Christian here that is saved, if we emulated John, then we ought to be able to do the same thing as we have got the complete Bible. We can look back through it from the Second Coming of Christ, and we ought to be able to lay out what has been, what is, and what is to come. God's people are so shallow with it all today.

So he writes the Gospel of John and the Epistle of John. His first two books of wisdom. The Gospel of John will be salvation. The Epistle of John, as we know now, will be fellowship, written to the New Testament church. Then he writes 2 John and 3 John, and that will be for us to understand the nation of Israel. Then his fifth book will be the book of Revelation, which he lays out the complete layout of the New Testament of the church history, going from the church which he is now starting with and going all the way into the millennium and then into eternity. It is a complete understanding of everything that God is doing in the Old Testament and now a complete layout of everything He is doing in the New Testament. All of this will simply be found when you and I lay our head on the bosom of the Lord Jesus and get His heartbeat. Again, in Song of Solomon 2:6, and I do not have time to get into this today, in Song of Solomon 2:6, you will find the exact picture for you and for me that is taking place in the upper room where John is laying his head on the breast of Jesus, illustrated for you in Song of Solomon 2:6, that that is what we should be doing.

Now the five wisdom books of the Old Testament will match completely the five books of the New Testament. Now what does this do? This shows us the cohesiveness, the togetherness of the Word of God. How does the Old Testament and the New Testament go hand in hand? How it is like left and right hands, they fit perfectly together. When John wrote his five, he was looking

back and understanding the Old Testament five, and he knew how the Bible cohesively went together. Boy, does he do a job.

- Psalms, the heartbeat of God, will match the Gospel of John where we get the heartbeat of God.
- The book of Proverbs will be God's mind, will match 3 John, because in the book of Proverbs, you find that the theme of Proverbs, or one of the themes, is what a wise man and a foolish man. So, lo and behold, in 3 John, guess what you find? A wise man and a foolish man.
- The book of Ecclesiastes, which is the mind of the Spirit, will match up to 2 John, because you will find there that that is written to the elect lady, the nation of Israel, and her children, the twelve tribes, and it talks about them going to be restored and what God is doing through His mind to them.
- In the book of Job, which is the suffering of God, that will be the book of Revelation of the great tribulation and the suffering of the nation of Israel.
- Then in the book of Song of Solomon, that will be 1 John, because those two books go together to show me my fellowship that I need to have with Him to do the work, my distress S.O.S. of my life.

VI. The Warning Against the Strange Woman

Now there it is. John will be the greatest character study of what we should be for Christ in our relationship, in our fellowship. Going all the way to the end, no matter what happens, no matter what tragedies befall us, no matter whether all the other Christians in the world run for cover like the other eleven did, somebody stands at the foot and carries on the work. That is John. Having all the wisdom of the Old Testament and the New Testament at our disposal to do God's work through any disaster to get the job done. Nothing, nothing, nothing should stop us. All we do when the opposition hits us, like it did with COVID-19, is find a way around it, find a way through it. We do not stop. We do not realize that we cannot go any farther. We do not run like everybody else did with their apostles. We stay at the foot of the Lord Jesus, listen to His heart, and then follow what He tells us to do.

But be careful. Here is the real problem in Christianity today, the real problem in churches today. If you would please turn back to Proverbs 7. I know that is a labor for many of you. You all were almost asleep now, making you wake up and turn back to Proverbs. Proverbs 7 is what we all have to watch out for. The problem with God's people today is there are too many of God's people hooking up with a prostitute. I will let that sink in for just a minute. A spiritual prostitute. I want to read for you how it works to destroy us in your spiritual life and relationship with Christ. How this strange woman, and I want you to look at her today, will take from you through spiritual fornication your relationship, your fellowship, and leave you destitute.

Allow me to read:

My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.

Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.

Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.

Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman:

That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.

For at the window of my house I looked through my casement,

And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding,

Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house,

In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night:

And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart.

(She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house:

Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.)

So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him,

I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows.

Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.

I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt.

I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves.

For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey:

He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed.

With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.

He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;

Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.

Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.

Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.

For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.

Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

Now the first five verses here are great advice. They are great advice for any Christian, any young man.

1. Keep my words and commandment. That is a good rule.
2. The Word of God, the apple of your eye. That is a good one.
3. Bind them upon your fingers and the tables of your heart. That is a good one.
4. Make your relationship with wisdom and understanding part of your family. That is really good.

Now that is great advice, and then the first five it says these things, if you do them, will keep you from the strange woman. Now all these things here have to do with your relationship, obviously. Now here we come in verse 5 and verse 6, here is our strange woman. Okay, here she comes. It is happy hour, here she comes. First of all, verse 10, it says that she is wearing the attire of a harlot. That means she is dressed up seductively. That she is dressed up to get your attention. That is where, and she is painted her face, and she looks like a possum hunter at Pokebury time. I mean, she has got, she has got lipstick on, rouge, and all those things, and she is one of those ladies that the more you drink, the better she looks. Now I am just going to say this, she is giving the illusion of being something really incredibly beautiful. The closest this woman will ever get to a smoking hot body is when she dies if she is cremated. She is an illusion. It is not real.

Yet doctrinally, this will be the story found in Kings back here of Ahab and Jezebel. She is the, she is the strange woman here. She is the fornicating religious prophetess that makes up the antichrist type of Ahab that the kings of the earth commit fornication with in Revelation 18:9. Just so you know, inspirationally, it will be the false teaching and the false doctrine that the devil puts out and puts into Christianity to destroy young men and young ladies in the ministry. You see, the first thing the devil wants to do is take your book, Jeremiah 23. The second thing he will do once he takes that is he will take that fellowship, and then when that happens, he has to replace it with something, so he entices you with something that looks wonderful, looks beautiful, looks gorgeous, says all the right things, flattery things, looks good. The only problem is her house is the way to hell. See, because the devil wants to stop every one of us from having a relationship with Jesus Christ. You do know that. He does not mind terribly if you got saved, and nothing he can do about it. He much rather you did not get saved, you died and went to hell. But if you do get saved, he cuts his losses. But what he cannot and will not put up with is once you get saved, getting God's heartbeat and doing something with the salvation that God gave you. So he will do everything to stop you, and churches are for God's people. The devil is in good fellowship with because they are saved, and the devil is appearing, "Well, you know what? You got saved. You know, I, I always wanted to get saved myself, but I knew I could not live it, and you know, I am happy for you, but do not become a fanatic. Do not go off the deep end. Just go to church, be nice, and never do anything that God put into your hand to do." That is what he wants, and he is, by the way, he is right on track with that. He is doing a great job. So he will produce for you the strange woman with the attire of a harlot, spiritual fornication.

Now look at verses 8 through 13 for a moment. She is working her street. Back in the 40s and the 50s and the 60s, this would be 18th and Vine, probably in Kansas City. She is working in the street, and a young man, verse 7, a simple one, must be a Bible college student, a young man

void of understanding, a picture of a young Christian who is vulnerable, who really has not been grounded in the Word of God yet. Probably somebody has taken his Bible from him and told him, "You cannot trust the King James 1611, and you need to get the devil's Bible." So you are really, and when you get the devil's Bible, she shows up. Notice verses 14, 15, 16, and 17. This hooker is religious. She has got peace offerings that she has offered. She has got vows. She has got myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. I mean, verse 18, "Come, let us fill our love until the morning." You know what that morning is, do you not? That is the Second Coming of Christ. In other words, this whore will work, this prostitute, this strange woman, she will work her street right up to the day He comes back. But you have all that time till the morning. Morning is coming. Verse 19, "The goodman is not at home." That is the church age. Look at it: twilight, black and dark night. That is the church age, and we have all this time to spiritually fornicate, but He is coming back at a day appointed. You bet He is. In verses 21 through 27, she absolutely destroys him and his life, and verse 27 tells us that her way is the way to hell, a chamber of death. Now be very careful. Be very careful of who and what you build a relationship with outside of that book and have fellowship with.

VII. The Call to Be a "John"

Now get this. The greatest example, the greatest example in the Bible of what you and I should be, after you have laid it out for you, there is no question, is the Apostle John. John had a special relationship with Christ, and Christ had a special relationship with him. He went all the way. There was no betrayal in his heart. He loved the Lord and lived and heard His heartbeat, and he was going to carry on and write the five wisdom books of the New Testament that matched up to the five in the Old Testament that literally puts our Bible completely together and shows us what every one of us should know about that Bible now.

When any city in America, when a hooker, prostitute picks up a young man and enters into a relationship and fellowship that will destroy him for the purpose of fornication, give him a disease, and destroy his family, she will call him a "John" because that is an example. You all should be Johns. Do not let the strange woman destroy your life for God. It is amazing. It is amazing. S.O.S., "Save My Soul." Five in the Bible is a number of death. It is amazing. First man in the Bible dies in Genesis 5. When they killed somebody in the Old Testament, they stabbed them under the fifth rib. When that spear went in Christ's side, it went under the fifth rib. It is always separated disaster, and the world cannot get away from that. So when you are out there and you are Air Force or the Marines or the Army, and you are flying along some place and you get all shot up and you are in trouble, you turn on that mic switch and you broadcast over the airwaves, "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, Mayday." January, February, March, April, May, fifth month. You cannot get away from that book.

You and I are to be Johns. You and I are to hear the heartbeat, and the devil wants to put out there a strange woman who wants to destroy Johns, and it is so clear that in the world, when a real prostitute wants to destroy some guy's life, she calls him a John. Be careful. You only have one life to give to God. You will not get to come back as some other animal or some other dog or beetle or fly to be reincarnated to do something else. You have got one life, folks. Some of you

got saved when you were young. Some of you got saved when you were teenagers. Some of you got saved when you were middle-aged. It does not matter when you got saved. Once you get saved, become a John. Let God change your life. Hear the heartbeat of Almighty God and stay away from the strange woman because her, her goal, God's goal in life is to make you a John. Her destroy, her, her goal in life is to destroy you as John. She will take your love for God, just like Jezebel destroyed the nation of Israel. I am telling you, the Gospel of John has so many incredible stories. It is filled with this, and now today, you not only have got the greatest character study in the Bible, everything there is about it for your own personal life, you now understand better how to dig it out yourself, but I will tell you, you will never find one better than him. My prayer for every one of you, male and female, is you become that John, that you hear God's heartbeat, and nothing else, nobody else, nothing else in this world will get your heart and your mind off of what God has called you to do because the game today is there is a strange woman out there who is pimped by a strange man who wants to destroy you from being God's John. Every head bowed, every eye closed.