

Before we get into our message today, I want to remind you of our prayer list. Continue to pray for Nadine, Kristin out in Las Vegas, Greg's family out in St. Louis, Jean Sobaka, Kimberly's dad, Ricardo, and our missionary to the reformatory there, and our dependent there in Mansfield, Ohio, Sherry's dad, the nursing home today, and then Michael Brown. We pray for them and keep them on your prayer list.

Now turn the Bible to John 14 again today. You remember that last week we looked at two verses in chapter 14, and then I took you to one in 1 Corinthians 8:3. We talked about the importance of defining verses, defining moments in our life.

## I. Defining Moments in Life

The greatest defining moment in your life, first off, would be the day you get saved. That's an incredible defining moment because your life completely changes. You've now redefined yourself. Then you go through a process of growth, as we saw, the seven stages of spiritual growth. Somewhere in that growth process, you will now decide the second great definitive in your life, and that will be the day that you leave this world behind and you begin to do a work for the Lord.

The definitive times in our lives really speak to who we really are in our relationship with Christ. Life is about choices, and you're going to go through your whole life, especially you young kids who are graduating from school and just getting into the world here as far as going to get a job, going to go to college, whatever. You're going to find, and you probably certainly should know this already, but on an even greater level, your life is going to be about choices. Many times those choices are going to be defining moments in your life. Some of them, if they are the wrong one, you can change. Some of them, if they're the wrong one, you can't ever change. If they're good ones, you don't need to worry about changing them. That's really where our life should be: following the Word of God.

My goal was looking at all our past material and the instructions that He's giving the apostles up in the upper room there. I wanted to show you that they are our instructions too. What He's giving to them to carry on the work after He goes back to the Father is what we are to be doing. They're just the beginning of the work, as we've already seen from Matthew 20.

The idea of us truly loving God, and what that really means, is what we talked about last week. I'm sure everybody went out of here last week looking inside yourself, and if you didn't, there's something wrong with you, looking inside yourself and really checking the boxes, so to speak, of where we're really at in our relationship with the Lord. Knowing Him, for that's the key to us doing His work and having a real loving relationship and giving Him what He really wants. Of course, that's our lives totally and completely, but giving it to Him through knowing Him.

As I laid out very clearly last week, and hopefully you got the message, to know Him is to love Him. If you truly know Him, you cannot help loving Him. But trying to love Him without

knowing Him will produce this Laodicean Christianity that we find ourselves in today. This is where the real problem is, or the real issue is, and the reason why we do the work. It all boils down to the fact that we understand what He did for us, His love for us. We love Him, and then we do the work out of that love relationship. Growing up, knowing Him and knowing what He loves and He wants, and then giving it to Him, or in many cases, not giving it to Him.

Our lives, we talked about this, and this is how I love how Thursday nights and the questions many times dovetail into what we're talking about on Sunday, and the Holy Spirit of God just kind of brings it all together. Our lives growing up through those seven stages of our spiritual growth, like we talked about several weeks ago on a Thursday night, starting out as a baby Christian and then walking through those steps that the final stage is the "agent." The last two stages are the "elders" and the "agent," and these are men and women who, after 30, 40, 50 years of your life, and every day you're trying to build those character qualities that we talked about last week, those four things of really loving God and proving the sincerity of our love. Then, in coming out really at that time in your life, of knowing everything about Him that you possibly can know in a human mind.

I'll be the first to tell you that there's so much of God that we'll never know until we get to be with Him. There's so much of God that we'll never figure out, but I am going to tell you right now, He will give you enough that will carry you through this life and show you clearly how the defining moment of your life, when you trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior, was the greatest moment of your life and it defined us.

Knowing everything about Him, it starts with, like we said last week, knowing what He loves, making them the things that we love. It starts with knowing what He hates, the seven things that we talked about last week. It then moves into knowing how He looks at things in life. This would be the book of Proverbs. Then it talks about how He looks at the world. That would be the book of Ecclesiastes. Then in the book of Song of Solomon, we find how He looks at me, and then how I should look back in my relationship with Him. Then we look at knowing His way and now making it my way. Then, as we saw Thursday night, somebody asked the seven kinds of people that He dealt with, us understanding now how to deal with people.

When I talk about knowing Him, this is what I'm talking about. This is the depth level. This is the depth chart. This is what our goal should be. Now, I don't expect many of you to be there at that point right now in your life. I really don't. Many of you just got saved. Many of you are in a process of learning and growing, but I am going to tell you right now, there needs to come a time in your life as you move up through those seven spiritual stages. That's what it takes to know Him and really working at it every day of your life. After a lifetime of getting to know Him, you just don't fit in this world anymore. I mean, we have to be in this world, and the Bible tells us that we are to occupy till He comes. But this world will be no friend to you, and you'll be no friend to this world. As the old song says, "and the things of earth shall go strangely dim in the light of His glorious word."

## II. The Example of Dr. Ruckman

We all have an association one way or the other with Dr. Ruckman, who went home to be with the Lord several years ago. I talked last week, the first time that I heard him preach, it was the beginning of my relationship with him. He spoke at the camp next week, and I had just gotten out of the army, and they asked me to build an obstacle course for the kids to go through. So I was doing that during the day, and he and I got to talk. He wanted to borrow, I remember what it was, something that I had, and we got talking about it, and it began. I'm not saying that he and I were bosom buddies and the best of friends, but we had an understanding of a relationship. He was a military man, so was I. So we would talk about those things, and for the next 30, 40 years, I would preach with him in conferences, places, and we would talk, and I would pick him up at the hotel many times or take him after he's done preaching, and we'd just visit and we would just talk.

But I want to tell you, and I don't mean any of this in a derogatory way, Dr. Ruckman was the oddball of oddballs. He really was. When he stepped into the pulpit, he was the master of the Word of God and teaching and preaching. On a social scale, one to ten, he was sub-zero, and he didn't talk to many people. There's a lot of reasons for that, but he was not a socially outgoing person. He just wasn't. He's always been the poster child for me for a man who gets so heavenly minded he's no earthly good. But I mean in a good way, not a bad way. I mean in a good way.

As far as I am concerned, and I know him pretty well, I know him through a number of ways and a number of things that he has taught me over the years, and I would say this, understanding the context of history, without a doubt, he was probably the greatest mind on the English Bible in the 20th and the 21st century. There was a reason for that, as we've talked about many, many times, of what God did for him in the final years of Laodicea, which we started with J. Frank Norris in the middle part of it, and how the two of them worked separately, but God used them in just a mighty way. His body may have been on earth, but his mind is where God's people never really get. There was a depth to him that was unbelievable. This guy read a book a day for 40 years. This guy had a photographic memory. This guy had at least four or five PhDs, and he threw them in everybody's face. He knew Greek and Hebrew better than anybody else, and he used it to show how worthless it is when it comes to the Bible.

I've watched him debate guys that were up against him. It was over in 15 seconds. He was incredible, absolutely incredible. I would see him preach. He's sitting on the platform behind him, and I looked down at his ankles, and he had two different colored socks on. He didn't care about what color socks he put on. If they were socks, they were socks. Colors did not matter. I was sitting there behind him one time on a pulpit, and he was preaching up there, and his suit was just wrinkled from one end to the other. The lady behind me in the choir leaned over to the other lady, and I heard what she said. She said, "I don't think he's pressed his suit since the last time he was here last year." He probably hadn't.

The greatest show of shows was going out to eat with him. He's the only guy that when he ate barbecue, he got more on his face than he had on his plate. He ate with his fingers. I mean, he just wolfed it down. It was amazing. It's a thing where he just was not part of this world anymore. He really wasn't. He got hit by a train some 30, 40 years ago, almost killed him. He's sitting at a railroad crossing. The train is going by. He's reading his Bible or reading a book, not

paying attention, and drifts right into the side of the train. He cared nothing about this old earth. His heart, his mind, was where most people never get to go: behind the veil. It was an incredible mind. He knew more about the Bible that he would never reveal, or he would just give you pieces here and there, that the depth of his mind in that book is unbelievable.

It was a thing where I get these guys, it's hilarious to me. You get these little wannabes down through my years in the ministry. I had one guy one time, he says, "God has given me some great revelations that He never gave you or Dr. Ruckman," or named three or four other guys. "And He only gave to me." A guy one time wanted to take me to lunch. Now he'd had a church for about 10 years. He's running maybe eight people, probably half of them his family. But he had this mindset that he was the great knowledge, that God had revealed to him truth that He never gave to no other man. He had all the secrets. If you really wanted to know God, you go to his church. So in the kindness of his heart, I guess, he took me and another guy out to lunch, and he sat down and he said, "You know," he said, "you guys have taught me the Bible, but God has given me much more than you guys ever knew about the Bible. And I would like to help you with your ministries." He said, "I would like to explain to you what God has given to me."

Now, my buddy, he didn't know how to deal with it. I knew immediately how to deal with it. I said, "Oh, that is great." Now I'm running a Sunday school class of about 1,200 people at this point in time. And I said, "Man, I can't wait to get this." And he says, "Yeah, it's really good stuff." And I said, "Wow." I said, "Well, let me ask you a question. If you lay all this stuff out and you give me all this great stuff God gave you, then you're telling me I can run eight in my church like you're running in yours?" Stupid.

You got these guys who think, let me just tell you something. When it comes to major revelations about doctrine in the Bible, there are no more. When that Bible was fixed, it's fixed. It's been handed down through Bible-believing men and women for centuries. There aren't these clowns that show up and say, "Oh, God showed me something that changes everything." You're out of your mind. His mind, Dr. Ruckman's mind, it was so in tune with the Word of God, and he's where, I don't know if this is possible, but he's where all of us should try to get to. I mean to tell you, it was an incredible thing. I've watched him over the years. Of course, he's home with the Lord now. But I watched him in his mind to the point where God used him in such an incredible way.

Last week in 1 Corinthians 8:3, it says:

*1 Corinthians 8:3*

*But if any man love God, the same is known of him.*

The reason why it says that is because he has known God. You'll never get to the place in your Bible where you have these things down that I already gave you, or you get to the place where you no longer think the world here has anything to offer you. This is the problem with some of you young kids. I understand that because I was your age once. Right now you're coming into 16, 17, 18, 15, 14 years old, and you think you know everything. You don't know nothing. When I was your age and I was 17 years old, I thought my dad was the dumbest guy in the world, and I

knew it all. When I got out of the army, I came back home. I couldn't figure out how my dad got smart so fast. Truth of the matter is, he always knew more about life than I did.

But this is the problem that young people have today. It's a thing where, in time, God's people have the same mindset. You think you know more about your age, and you think you know more about life, the Christian life, than what God tells you in the book. You know what? With your kid, that's going to get him in trouble, and with you as a Christian, it's going to get you in trouble. You'll never beat the principles of the Word of God. When a man or a woman invests their life and they let this mind be in them, which was also in Christ Jesus, you too, like Dr. Ruckman, will come to the place this world means nothing to you anymore. You see it as what you have to do. You see it like you go to, you have a job at Ford or UPS or the post office or wherever. You're not crazy about the job that you have or the place that you work, but you know it's a job you've got to do to get done. I'm not crazy about this whole life. I'm not crazy about this whole world. It is in a mess, but we have a job that we have to do. Where I'm not crazy about the world, I am crazy about the job I have to do. That's what it takes.

When you look at 1 John 2, we looked at this a couple of weeks ago when I think it was Josh asked this question about the seven stages of spiritual growth. He brought it out of 1 John 2. It says:

*1 John 2:12-14*

*I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.*

*I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.*

*I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.*

*I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.*

*I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.*

*I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*

Notice the young men, the children, and the fathers. The key to all of it is, "you have known him that is from the beginning," knowing the Lord. The key to your spiritual growth will be simply knowing Him, knowing Him better every day, knowing Him a little more today than you did yesterday. That's God's way. We build our relationship on knowing Him, on understanding His way through history and our life from Genesis to Revelation, seeing God, understanding what He's doing, getting in His way with it, and then making what He's doing part of what we're doing. As I said, to know Him is to love Him. You can't get to know God and not love Him supremely. The great pretense and pretenders in the Laodicean church age are those who pretend that they know the Bible without actually knowing Him. Listen, there's a lot of guys out there who know a lot of things about the Bible, but that's different than knowing your Bible. There has to be a depth that only comes through your relationship of understanding and knowing Him. So we saw that last week.

### III. The Coming of the Comforter

Today I want to move on again a little farther, and He again is tying all these things together. Let's look at John 14:15-20. We read 15 last week, but we'll put it into the context today.

*John 14:15-20*

*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

*Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

*I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*

*Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.*

*At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

Notice the reference there to the coming Holy Spirit of God at the Day of Pentecost, if you don't have that marked. He's not in you yet, but He will be after Acts 1, just so you can put that in there.

Let's pray. Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You today. Thank You, Lord, for all that You do for us, all that You've given us, for the folks that are here today, for the fine young men and women, the moms and dads in this church. I thank You for the young kids here that, Lord, are really on fire for the Lord. It all starts and goes back to mom and dad doing everything for them that they could. We just thank You, Father, for all You've given us today. This is kind of an easy weekend for us, Lord, with people off work on Monday. May I be able to give them a little fun time and a little rest and a little relaxation, that they know that I care about them, that I love them, and just want them to have a good day, enjoy it. Lord, we just thank You for our church and for the family mindset and atmosphere that we just take care of each other. We love You and thank You and praise You. In Jesus' name and sake, we ask it. Amen.

Here He continues to instruct them and now tells them what He's going to do for them so they can continue to do the work when He goes back to be with the Father. This becomes now another segment to this. This will also, again, as I said, work for us and will ultimately help us. So we want to develop this today a little bit if we can.

### IV. Christ's Three Replacements

First off, and I've told you this before, but I'm putting it into a context now, when Christ went back to heaven, His body went back to heaven after the resurrection in Acts 1 when He goes back to be with the Father, what transpires then is He replaces Himself with three things. You must understand this because this is where it all begins for your work and finding God's way.

The first thing that He replaced Himself with, and we're going to talk about these in detail here a little bit, but the first thing He replaced Himself with was obviously the Word of God. The second thing He replaced Himself with was the New Testament local church. Then, of course, the third thing He replaced Himself with was the Holy Spirit of God. Now in His discourse here in the upper room, He now tells them of the coming of the Holy Spirit of God.

Up to this point, the difference between the Holy Spirit of God in the Old Testament and the way it operated into the church age is two completely different things. Now I get it. Most preachers today, certainly most Bible colleges, most professors, most theologians, and most Christians, they all think that the Holy Spirit of God operates the same in the Old Testament as it does in the New Testament. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nothing defines you that you don't know what you're doing with your Bible better than a statement like that. There's a difference in the operation. Isaiah 11 shows you the difference between the Holy Spirit of God in the Old Testament and how it will work in the New Testament. The difference clearly here will show you that the Holy Spirit of God was already here when He's telling them this, but He's here in the Old Testament format. The greatest proof that they're not the same is the fact that He's telling them that the Holy Spirit of God is coming, but reality is the Holy Spirit of God is already here in the Old Testament sense. He shows you here that right now it is with you, Old Testament, but it's going to be you, the New Testament. That's the difference. So we see now that He begins to tell them that the Holy Spirit of God is going to come, and it's going to make a difference for them. It's a difference now between the way it was in the Old Testament, as I said, and what's coming in the New Testament.

As we get a little farther in the book of John, the definitive chapter on the Holy Spirit of God will be John 16. Every aspect of what the Holy Spirit of God does is laid out in John 16. When we get to that, we will go into great detail, but that's not our goal today.

Let's look at the three things that He replaced Himself with, with just a little more detail to give us a little more clarity. Then we want to look at how we apply those to us and our work in our last shift that we talked about of the work of God in Matthew 20.

1. The Word of God By 90 AD, the Bible now is complete. John writes the last five books of the Bible. We've talked about this before. We know why he does. We know now from Thursday night with Tony's question why that is important and how that develops itself. We now know that your Bible, in God's way, is going to be in a state of development up to Acts 20. We now know that through the book of Acts, we see things changing and developing as God is going. By 90 AD, long after the book of Acts is done, the Bible now is consolidated into 66 books, Old Testament and New Testament. As we study in the book of Acts, as we come through in Bible Institute, we see the development now coming from the nation of Israel and the Old Testament into the church age and the New Testament Christian church. We now see that it's developing. God is giving the nation of Israel their last chance to really get the kingdom. From Acts 8 on, once they make their final rejection, which we just studied in Bible Institute last month, from Acts 8 on, we now see God moving toward the church age and putting Israel temporarily on the back burner. Now He finishes out the rest of the Word of God with John, and then He develops the books in time into a complete Bible. When John wrote the last

books, he just didn't come out with a King James Bible and put them in the bookstore. They were through a process. That's another great study in history, the history of the development of the Bible, how that all took place. But again, we can't get into that today.

2. The Holy Spirit of God As He's dealing with Israel in Acts 1-7, we see in Acts 1-2 what we know as the Day of Pentecost. Now I get it. Most people think that that's where the Pentecostal church starts. That's not true. Pentecost had never had anything to do with the New Testament in any way, shape, or form. Pentecost was an Old Testament feast found in Exodus 34, and it deals with the nation of Israel, not the church in any way, shape, or form. There's a reason why it came on a Day of Pentecost. When it came on a Day of Pentecost, technically it's coming to the nation of Israel yet, but we don't have time to get into that. You'll remember that while this is taking place in Acts 1, Romans 16:25 tells us that the church is still a mystery. Nobody knows. The church doesn't get revealed until Paul shows up sometime later. So the coming Holy Spirit of God can be in our text here of Acts 1 for the second coming of Christ, Acts 1-7. They make their final rejection, and then it moves into the church age as it turns out. All of this depends, as we've seen in Bible Institute, on Israel, and the Holy Spirit of God now comes.
3. The New Testament Local Church This will be Christ's body. When He went back to heaven, He had to give us His Spirit. He had to give us a mind, His mind, and now He had to give us His body. How are you going to do a work for God if you don't have a body? How are you going to do a work for God if you don't have His mind so you know what you need to do? How are you going to do a work for God if you don't have the Spirit that's going to lead and show you what He wants you to do? So He replaced Himself with three things. The first thing was the Word of God. Now we have His mind. The second thing was His Spirit. Now we know where He wants us to go, but we needed a body. Then the third thing, He gave us a New Testament local church, and this will be Christ's body. In the church age, by which we do His work that He did in His body, it's now God replacing the body of His Son with us. That's why the church is called the body of Christ. That's why you were called Christian. The word Christian was not given to us because of anybody who loved the Bible. It was given to us by our enemies all the way back in Acts 11, because the word Christian means "little Christ." What was going on back there in Acts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and up through there, these people were telling the lost people, and the Roman Empire was hearing of it, that we now took the place of Christ's body, that we are Christ, that we were called the body of Christ. Now there's a lot of saved people who can't grasp that. It always was amazing to me that so many of God's people can't figure that out, but the Roman Empire figured it out because they called us "little Christ." They knew about the body of Christ. God's people today don't. So the church now comes into effect, and it's called the body of Christ. So now we have the mind, we have the Spirit, and now we make up His body. Why? To do the work. He did the work with the Word of God out of His mouth in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, with the Spirit of God that He had in Him, and then the body that God gave Him. That body went back, but the work has to go on. So God gave us in the Bible, His mind, through the Spirit, same Spirit that He had, and then we needed the body, the body of Christ, the church. When I say the church, I'm not talking about this building, though we call it the church, and it is because this is where the true church meets. But the true church is made up of individual people who have

been saved, born again, and are in the body of Christ, and as He's already told us, He's in you and you're in Him. That's the body, the body of Christ, the real true church. So you see how that works. It's made up of men and women who have experienced a new birth, and now the Holy Spirit of God is in us, 1 Corinthians 6:19, and we are now in Him, and He is in us to do the work. These three areas are what it takes to replace Christ, His presence in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and then we see from Acts 20 up to the rapture where the church age really starts, this is where we do the work. Again, without understanding of these three and how they work and how God gave them to us to finish the work, God's people will waste their lives and they'll waste God's time. I listened to Penny's song today, and I always think, I listened to the song and I watched God's people, and everybody, it was a great song. She'd always done a great job, and it really is a very inspiring thing. But I'm sitting up here, "Beautiful Land," and I'm asking myself, I wonder how many people out there know what Beulah really means. Is it just nice words to a song for you? Is it just a nice flowing melody? "Beautiful Land, I'm looking for you." Is that all it is to you? How do you get, see this is what happens with God's people. You hear a song, the song's nice, it moves you, but you don't even know what Beulah means. The real moving of the Holy Spirit of God in a song like that will be you and me understanding what Beulah land really is. See how it is? I know, I know, I know, I'm a nitpicker, I know. I'm just telling you. I was taught when I was taught, I was taught to be exact, know what you're doing. It's a thing where you have to put that into play all the way down in your Christian life. So, God's people will waste their lives because they don't understand the importance of those three things that He replaced Himself with. Simply for you to understand it, it breaks down like this: God gave us the Word of God. The Word of God is our truth. The Word of God is God's mind in a form for us, the roadmap. The Word of God is my roadmap in life. It tells me where to go and tells me where not to go. We don't have these anymore, but years ago when you were belonging to AAA and you had a trip, you could call them up and they'd put together what they called a trip ticket. Remember those? It was a big book, and you had to flip the pages over as you went so far, and then you got you to where your destination. We don't do that anymore where everybody's got a GPS in your phone, and you tell that woman, what's her name, Salsie or Sassy? Siri. Siri? I asked her if she was saved one time. She'll come up, "Can I help you?" And I say, "Yes, if you would die right now, do you know for sure where you would spend eternity?" I said, "You helped me so much finding my directions, I would like to see if you know where your direction is." She said back, "I'm a celluloid, I can't identify with what you're saying." Just like most God's people. I'm telling you, for you and for me, my trip ticket through life is the book God gave me. It'll tell me what to watch out for. It'll tell me who to watch out for. It'll tell me who to hang out with. It'll tell me where not to go, and it certainly will show me through life God's way. It's my roadmap. The Holy Spirit of God is my guide. I got the roadmap, but He has to show me the way, so He will lead and guide me, as the Bible says, into all truth. Then, of course, I have the New Testament local church, and where the Word of God will be my roadmap, it's real simple. And the Holy Spirit of God will be my guide. The New Testament local church will be my vehicle by which I get to where God wants me to go. These are the three things that are absolutely crucial in our lives to be one with His life and to fulfill what He wants. Yet, so many of God's people have no clue. They're in churches today. They have

Bibles today. They're singing songs today that they don't have a clue of what the words really mean. They're going through all of the motions, but they do not understand when He went back to heaven, He replaced Himself with three vital things for us to do the work. If we don't understand them and have them, you're kidding yourself. You're kidding yourself. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. That's a nice verse. It's cute. It's a nice talking point, but boy, set a Christian down and have him try to explain that thing to you.

## V. The World's Inability to Receive Truth

Now let's break our verses down today. I want you to look at this. He says, "Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive." I know it's always been true, but it's such a glaring thing today of how the world cannot figure out what's wrong with it. Every problem we have in this country, and I'm going to speak for America, America has got enough problems. We don't need to get into the world's problems. Every problem we have, they have the wrong answer to everything that we deal with. They want to now take your kids when they're in kindergarten and try to ask them, "Are you really a boy or are you really a girl?" Now what is wrong with that? I mean, this is where the world is. They don't understand that God created man and woman. They think somewhere in the process down the assembly line of boys and girls, somebody fell off the one and got onto the other. God doesn't make any mistakes. If you were born a male, you're a male. If you were born a female, you're a female. You're in trouble if you get married to one of them. I'm just going to tell you, you're a female. There's no "oops," there's no, "Well, I, you know," and I get this all the time, "Well, guys, I thought I was a girl when I, I thought I struggled with my sexuality when I was six, seven, eight years old." And people think that that's a legitimate deal. You know why it's not? Because you don't understand how the Bible should play into somebody's life when you're five or six, seven years old. If the Bible doesn't play in your life at five, six, seven, eight years old, the devil certainly will.

Now everything out there, the world has no understanding of God and the truth of God. So it's going to come after you, even the time that you're little kids. Now we just had, we had, and I don't even know how to put this into words, all these kids that were killed down in Texas. I don't even know what to say about that. My heart just, I just can't get my head wrapped around that. It's got to be the hardest, but there's been over 200 of them. It's a thing where they don't have any answers. Their answer has nothing to do with the problem. I'm telling you right now, nobody listens to me. Most of you don't listen to me, but I could end problems with America tomorrow if they would just listen and do what I tell them to do. I'm a nobody. But I know this: back in the sixties, when you took prayer out of the schools, Bible out of the schools, God out of the schools, it's only a matter of time that AR-15s show up because it destroyed every aspect.

When I went to school, we opened the school in prayer. When we had assemblies, we had Easter assemblies. I was just a little guy, and they asked me to introduce the speaking pastor one time. I must've been about eight or nine years old. I had a little suit on, and I stood there, and I went up and I introduced this guy, and I remember like it was yesterday. I reached over and I said, "Reverend so-and-so," and he came up, gave me a little hug, and got up there. We, and he

preached salvation. He preached in my school, public school, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Try that today. When we started out, they had their intercom system, and somebody would pray, pray we'd have a good day at school. We recognized who God was. That's all gone now. When we don't have God in our lives, it affects it. You wonder why kids do what they do today. Now they're teaching them, "Are you a young man or are you a young lady?" They're showing confusion. The one word that reeks across this country is confusion. Why? Because they can't get the truth of the Word of God because they rejected it.

Final analysis: You're looking at an America today, the judgment right before Christ comes back, on a nation that had had the Word of God, prospered with the Word of God, had the blessings of God with the Word of God, and then walked out the door and rejected it. This is what you have, but they don't get that. You know why? Because the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. Why? Because it's foolishness to him. That's why. So the world can't get it. You just can't. It's a thing where we're in such a mess today. There's no way we're going to turn it around at this point. I'll tell you what, all the politicians get up and they beat their chest and they say, "We got to do something. We got to do something."

Hey, you know what they did back? It had to be about 1790, 1993. The country had been in business now for 30, 40 years. The country in Congress and the Senate had just got like it is today. They were fighting among themselves. They were bickering. They couldn't get anything done, just like today. Ben Franklin was a very old man at that time and very sickly. He came to Congress and he said this little speech, and he told them in essence that you have forgotten God and what He's done for this country. You have lost sight in just 30, 40 years. You know what, though? They invited for the next week. They shut down Congress and the Senate. They brought in some Bible-preaching Bible, and preached the hell out of them for a week. They got right with God and got back to business. You know what this country needs? It needs the same thing. You know what the difference is? Ain't going to happen. Ain't going to happen.

"Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world could not receive." Now I want you to notice, "even the Spirit of truth, whom?" He's a person. I told you a couple of weeks ago, the job of every Christian will be to understand where he's at in God's way. See the prevailing spirit of his day in his work shift. Then with everything that he has, he goes against that spirit. Now I recognize what that spirit is, and I can honestly say with all my strength and power, I preach and go against that spirit. It's the spirit of stealing the Word of God from you.

In the Bible, you have many different spirits that you'll have to understand and deal with. I'm not saying you should understand them all now, but through the process of your growth, you should.

- You have the spirit of deception.
- You have the spirit of jealousy.
- You have the spirit of a sorrowful heart.
- You'll find the spirit of a lying spirit.
- You'll find a hasty spirit.
- You'll find a spirit of vexation.
- You'll find a familiar spirit.

- You'll find an evil spirit.
- You'll find a spirit of slumber.
- A spirit of divination.
- You'll find a proud spirit.
- You'll find the spirit of confusion.
- You'll find the spirit of heresy or false teaching.

Then you'll also find in the Word of God and in life, you'll find:

- The Spirit of God.
- You'll find the spirit of wisdom.
- You'll find the spirit of understanding.
- You'll find where it talks about a humble spirit.
- You'll talk about an excellent spirit. That's a good one to study.
- You'll find a broken spirit, a contrite heart, and a contrite spirit.
- Then you'll find the spirit of holiness.

That's just a few of them. Now, this is why we have to deal with these. Some of these crossing over can be confusing. This is why the Bible tells us, going back to the Word of God, 1 John 4:1, that we ought to try the spirits to see if they're of God or not. Now, how do you do that? Through the Word of God, through its principles. It will detect for you what is real and what isn't real every time.

## VI. The Comforter and God's Provision

Then He says in John 14:18, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come again unto you." Now, in John 16:7, jumping ahead here a little bit, the Holy Spirit of God is called the Comforter that God will send us. The only comfort for a child of God will be through the Word of God. The world has no comfort for you.

When I preach a funeral, sometimes I have to preach a funeral. Most of the time, I preach a funeral for a saved guy or a person. There have been times that I've had to preach a funeral for somebody who was lost. That kind of poses a problem for some people because they don't know what to say. It's never really posed a problem for me because I keep my funeral sermons very simple. My format is very simple. I don't get it, let it get complicated beyond my intelligence, which is very low anyhow. If I'm dealing with a saved man or a saved person, and I got to preach their funeral, then I'm going to preach their funeral through their life. If I have to deal with an unsaved person, then I'm going to preach their funeral around their life because you can't go through it. I will have two different goals. If I'm preaching a saved person, they're already saved. My goal is to give that family the comfort, but I will tell them starting out, "I have nothing to say that's a comfort to anybody. The comfort's going to come as we get into the Word of God and the Holy Spirit of God comes down and then spreads over us like hot, melted butter over popcorn, and there lies the comfort." You don't have that with an unsaved person. So you have to preach around their life, and you have to go after the fact that the only comfort that they could ever

know that they don't know now, you don't necessarily say that, but you get it across. The only comfort that they can't, we're the saved person, as it says in 1 Thessalonians 4:18:

*1 Thessalonians 4:18*

*Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

You can do that. You can't use that for a saved person. So you got to tell them the only comfort that you'll ever know will come from you knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior. One you preach through their life, the other when you preach around their life, but you get the same message out. You can actually use the same text. I do. I don't have to change it because I can go either way with it, but the only comfort that we're ever going to have as Christians, it's going to come through the Word of God as the Holy Spirit of God takes it, wraps His arm around you in your tough times, and whispers in your ear, "It's going to be okay." That's all you have. That's all we have.

It's a thing where, the only way you get all of that is through, as I said, the Holy Spirit of God. He leads and guides us into all truth. He will, through your relationship with Him, open up the book, and He will give for you through the Holy Spirit of God and the Word of God everything you need. This is what Philippians 4:19 says:

*Philippians 4:19*

*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

You get in Christ, you get the Holy Spirit of God in you, you get in the book, you got everything you need through the Holy Spirit of God. When you have tough times, He'll be there for you. When you have good times, He'll be there for you. He will provide the balance in our lives, no matter good, bad, or indifferent. We always stay level with what we're to do. It's just that simple.

Psalms 119:18. Wow, one of my favorite verses that I use many times before I preach or before I do a Bible study:

*Psalms 119:18*

*Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*

Because it's in the book. We talked about learning the Bible and getting all the Word of God as much as you can. I talked last week how that was such a goal of mine. I recognized coming through the Bible very quickly that Psalms 119, 176 verses, the longest chapter in the Bible, was all about the Word of God. As I had looked at it a little closer, I saw that every verse talked about the Word of God in a different aspect to me. I recognized pretty quickly that it looked like it was David that had written this. If anybody had the Word of God down, he did. I remember I thought to myself, "You know what? He's asking God to show him what the Word of God is in his life, to give him the Word of God." Then he's saying, "If You give me the Word of God, I'll do this for You." Now, that's a deal he's making with God. So I thought, "Well, if it worked for him, why wouldn't it work for me?"

So I sat down, and out of Psalms 119, I put my prayer together. I put a prayer together for God to teach me the Bible. I wanted to be spiritual. I knew that seven was a number of perfection. Seven wasn't long enough. So I made 14 petitions. They're in my Bible. I got them sectioned out in 14 numbers in 14 positions of different places. I would sit down, I'd get into a room and put an empty chair there and sit in a chair here. I'd read that prayer back to God. I'd ask Him to give me His Word. I'd tell Him how desperately I wanted it. I would use the same things that David used. If You give me Your Word, he said, "I have more, I have my enemies, for they're ever with me. I have our understanding and my teachers, the ancients." And I said to God, I said, "You know what? Your Bible is truth, and it's over everything." I just over and over and over and over for 30 years, 40 years, just asked that prayer for God to give me the Bible. That's what it takes. You don't get it because you're just a really good guy. You don't get it because you just got saved. You get it because you can't live without it. You want it so desperately that you'll do whatever you got to do. You'll just find a way that somebody else learned it, and that's what you do.

Psalms 119 has 176 verses in it. I don't know what the mathematical probability of how many prayers you could get out of 176 verses, but it's probably an infinite number. In other words, what I'm saying is there's a prayer in there for you. I wouldn't, somebody asked me one time, "Well, can I get that prayer?" Absolutely not. Get your own. You can borrow my car. You can take the dog for a walk. You can do whatever you want to do with most of the stuff I have. You stay out of Psalms 119. That's mine. You go get your own. Mine wouldn't work for you anyhow. I got too many verses in there that would offend you. I tell God what a goof I am, how stupid I am. You got to get your own prayer. You can't hitchhike off of somebody else's spirituality forever, folks. I know you're being disciplined. I know somebody's helping with the Bible, and that's the way it's supposed to be, but it doesn't stay that way forever.

I mean, I drive down the road all the time, and there's people hitchhiking, and I realize that they don't have cars. You got to be careful picking up hitchhikers. I don't pick them up, but I'm just saying I look at that, and I said, "There's somebody that doesn't have a car." Now, I don't know why he doesn't have a car because in America, everybody can find a job, and you can make some money, and maybe he just doesn't want, maybe he's just the wanderer. I don't know. But I look at a guy like that, and I'd say, "You know what? That's a lot of God's people. You'll never take the time to get your own vehicle in God's church. So you know what you do? You just hitchhike through your Christian life. You go from one church to the other, one person from the other, one thing to the other. You're a hitchhiker. I ain't picking you up either." That's the way we are today. You got to get your vehicle. You got to go through life. You got to understand what you're doing.

## VII. Seeing the Invisible and Doing the Impossible

He says here, John 14:19, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also." That "little while" there is just a short period of time of 2,000 years of the church age. The world saw Him at the first coming, and the world will see Him at the second coming. But they can't see Him now because He's not here other than in you. He's seated, Colossians 3:1, at the right hand of the Father for just a little while. But it says, even though that may be true, you and I should still be able to see Him. We see Him through the book.

We see Him through the Holy Spirit of God, and we see Him through the activeness of Him working in our lives.

It's like the book of Esther I gave you a couple of weeks ago. God seems to be nowhere. You can't find the word God anywhere in the book, but yet when you look at the book from the right perspective, God's behind the scenes doing everything that He's doing, and we are to be able to see Him. It's like the Bible says in Romans 4:17, talking about the life of Abraham and how he grew to that place, how he said that God in our lives is like calling those things that be not as though they were. Seeing the things that are not there and yet seeing them there because they're there with God, but you got to get God's mind to see what God sees. It's like Moses in Hebrews 11:27, where it says:

*Hebrews 11:27*

*For he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.*

Now that's how you endure. That's a great verse for all of us. That's how you endure life. He's not here right now. He's here in you. How do you endure? How do you go through the things that have to go through in life? How do you deal with all the negative things? I'll tell you how. You deal with it even though He's not here in a bodily present like He was in the gospels. You see Him who is invisible. You still see Him. You see Him through the Word of God. You see Him through the Holy Spirit of God. You see Him in your life, and it's undeniable.

*2 Corinthians 4:18*

*While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

There it is. We're too busy looking at the things of this earth. You need to get your eyes off the temporal things and look at the eternal things. You need to see where God is really at, what God is really doing. You need to get your eyes off this world and it's upside down with all of its problems and realize that it has nothing for you, but we have a job to do within it. The only way you get the job done being in it is to not to focus on it, but to focus on Him. There's no other way to do it.

Our ability to see God in a world in Christianity that cannot see Him, cannot understand Him, will make fun of you and laugh at you because you do. When parents in this country were upset because the school board and the school teachers thought they could teach their kids more about sexuality than they could, and they raised a ruckus in the school meetings, you know what the government did? They labeled parents as terrorists. That's where this country's going. Now you see those little headlights in the far distance, it's coming our way because if you're going to preach the truth in time as the world gets darker, you're going to get labeled, folks. You say, "What is that?" That's a defining moment. That's a defining moment.

For me, and I have a message I preached on this, and it's a great message. I never preached it to you guys, but I've preached it in my over years, and it's just five things about my relationship with God, what our relationship with God should be, of getting to the place where you see things

the way they really are. I would take this message and put it together. It's just a little five-point sermon, but each one I would develop. I'm not going to do that today. But I'd start out with saying, "Now folks, if you want to get to the place in your life where you really know Him and you have a relationship with Him and you do the work, you know where it starts?"

4. It starts with you believing the infallible. You have to come to grips with the fact that God has given you the absolute perfect inspired Word of God in a King James 1611 Authorized Version. You got to come to the place where you got to believe the infallible. You got to believe that God, in a world where there is no truth, gave you the only light that there is truth, and that is found in His Word.
5. Then, after you believe the infallible, here's what you have to do through that infallible, getting into the Word of God, then you have to begin touching the intangible. You have to begin to touch the things of God. You have to begin to embrace the intangible things, the things that God loves, putting aside the things that He hates.
6. Once you believe the infallible and then you begin to touch the intangible, then through a process of growth, here's what's going to happen. You're going to start hearing the inaudible. Once you touch the things of God, in time you will hear the things of God, and you'll hear from God what others never hear. He'll show you, speak to you when He will to somebody else.
7. So you have to believe the infallible, you have to touch the intangible, you have to hear the inaudible, and then you see the invisible. You start to see what God is really doing in your life. You'll start to see what other people cannot see, that God is dealing with you. You'll start to understand God's way. He'll start to put you into situations, and you'll begin to see, you'll begin to see what others can't see. You'll see the invisible like Moses, like Abraham.
8. Now once you believe the infallible and then you reach out and touch the intangible and then you see the invisible, hear the inaudible and then you see the invisible, you know what happens next? God will take you and you'll do the impossible. He'll take you places you never dreamed about going. He'll do things with you that you never thought you could do. He'll take you places, use you in places around this country, around this city, around this world. You'll touch the lives of people. You'll be like a little one-watt radio station that says, "Hello world," that will be your expectation. Great things because God is going to use you. All because you put a process in your life. You started with believing the infallible, then you reached out and you touched the intangible. Then you heard the inaudible, then you saw the invisible, and then one day God's using you to do the impossible. The work of God for you. Him actually taking your life and doing those things. This is what He does in so many of your lives. I watch it. I watch how you come in, you get saved, you start, you get disciplined, and then I watch these things come into your life, and I watch God start to take you to do with things that you never thought you could do. I walk around there on volleyball at the devotion time, and I watch you young guys doing the devotions, you young girls doing the devotions, and I thought to myself, a year ago you never would have thought of being able to do that. Look how far you've come, and that's just the beginning. That's where it starts. That's where you cut your teeth, and then it just keeps moving up the ladder from there as God wants to use you. Allowing God to save you, to call you through this church, to develop you, and then put you into the work, all by believing the infallible, touching the intangible,

hearing the inaudible, seeing the invisible, and allowing God with your life to do the impossible.

## VIII. The Ultimate Reality Check

Look at John 14:20: "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye shall in me and I in you." The key phrase here is "at that day." That day will be two things because there's two days in the Bible for us. The one first day will be the Day of Jesus Christ, so it's a reference to the rapture. The second day will be the Day of the Lord, so it's the second coming of Christ, making a double reference here. It's the fact that we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit of God and truth to do God's work. You in the Bible, this is called the mystery of godliness. It's one of the seven mysteries given to the church that we are told not to be ignorant of. It's the fact that we have been saved. It's the fact that we now then have been sealed, and because of that, then we have been separated. We've been set apart all for the work of God through everything we've talked about.

In that day, He says, John 14:20, that you'll know it all. We should not wait till the judgment seat of Christ to know everything about God we need to know. You can know it now. But for most of God's people, that day for all of us is going to be a big surprise. We're going to realize how much time we wasted. We're going to realize what we could have done but didn't. We're going to see all the missed opportunities because we thought something else was more important, and we're really going to come to the reality check. Here it is, the reality check of life, that we lost the whole purpose of why God saved us, and we wasted our lives doing our thing and never one time did His thing. Using your weekly reality check on Sunday morning will keep you ready for the ultimate reality check of that day. A life filled with the Word of God, the Spirit of truth, and knowing a relationship with Him. As the Bible says, "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." That's the process.

Knowing God's way. When you learn your Bible, when you make the Bible the depth of everything in your life, you will find God's way through a simple little format.

- From Genesis - 2 Chronicles, you'll find God's way in the Old Testament.
- From Ezra - Acts, you'll find God's way in that intermediate period.
- From Romans - 2 Thessalonians, you'll follow God's way in the New Testament to the church.
- Timothy, Titus, and Philemon will show you God's way for us as individuals.
- You add to that Psalms. Psalms will show you the way with the Word of God.
- Proverbs will show you the way of God in His mind.
- Ecclesiastes will show you the way of God with the world.
- Song of Solomon will show you the way to have my walk and my relationship with Christ.
- Then you add the five wisdom books to it that John wrote that capped the thing off with the book of Revelation.

Now you have the way it will, that little while that it will work all down through the church age. You know exactly where you fit into it. You know exactly where God started, where He's going, and where He's headed. More importantly, you'll understand where you're at in it. You need to have everything now that you have that you need. You have at your fingertips to know Him in every way. That is the key. That is the goal. This church is nothing more than a training ground. It takes men and women who God brings to us. Some of you come in and you get saved. Some of you come in, you're already saved. Whatever state you're in, whatever issues you have, you work through them. Then we begin the process of showing you every aspect of the Word of God, God, how it fits all together so you can do something in these last moments of this last time of these last days. Do something for the work of God.

We'll hold up there and let's pray. Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. I love You very much. I thank You for these good people. Thank You for today. Thank You for the blessings of the Word of God, and thank You for this church, for its truth. Thank You for all the good things we've got going. All the things we look forward to for today and tomorrow and for coming up throughout the summer. Thank You for the good volleyball program. We thank You, Father, for looking forward to our time with our kids on that weekend. Just let us do everything we can to let them know, to show them everything that we have about the relationship with Christ, and that vulnerable age that they're in is the key to everything. We love You, Lord. We thank You and praise You again, and we just thank You, Lord, for loving us, giving to us, and allowing us to be part of Your work. We'll thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

Pre-cookers, head down there right away, and I'll get you squared away. The ribs probably are here by now. Don't forget 7:00 movie tonight. Between 4:00 and 4:30 if you want to show up and eat.