

# John 14

Sunday 6/26/2022

Don't understand what has transpired in the last couple of months. A couple of years ago, we sent a young man out of our church and his family to start a church. His name was Bob Gregg. Bob was in this church for 12 or 13 years. He took care of the prayer ministry and did a lot of things. We sent him out to start a church here a couple of years ago. His family went with him, and he began to build that foundation.

Then, a couple of months ago, on a Sunday morning, as he was sitting there and his son-in-law was teaching Sunday school, he fell over and died on the spot. They never did an autopsy. They don't know what it was. It was either a massive stroke or an aneurysm or something. He went home to be with the Lord. That morning, Logan was over there, and I got the word on the way to church that Bob had passed away. I changed my whole format and preached that morning. We had a bunch of people saved. People have continually been getting saved, not only from that sermon that morning, but then I preached Bob's funeral. I think we had 9 or 10 people saved there. It's been a thing that God has really used.

They had a real decision that they had to make now that they lost Bob, who was the pastor of the church. The decision was whether they move on or they just disband the church. Through the process of time, Joe Heater, who is his son-in-law, and DJ, who is his other son-in-law, decided that they wanted to try to keep the church going. I had been in contact with them and told them that whatever their decision was, I would certainly back them and be there for them. They decided that they were going to make the church go and make it work. They had a meeting, and they lost one couple, I think, but everybody else pretty much stayed on board, and they wanted to get it done.

They asked me if I would come over and preach to them and lay out for them how to move forward. I did that last Sunday. That's why I was not here. We had a great time. We had a great meeting. These people really, really, really want to do what the Lord wants them to do. But once I laid it out to them, it was very obvious to them, and certainly to me, that this church, you are going to be vital in helping that happen. Some things we're going to have to try to help them to do. There are some things that they're going to have to develop that we've already developed.

I went over there and I laid out in great detail, without overwhelming them, what they needed to do and what the philosophy was behind what they were trying to do. Now, I want to bring that to you this morning. I kind of refit this to fit us, but basically, I want you to understand what I told them. Because if we're going to work with them and help them, you're going to have to understand what I said to them. We're going to be out of John chapter 14 today. I want to kind of reframe what I gave them so it fits into our lives too. But most importantly, that you understand where we need to go from here.

I took the time with them to lay out the best way for them to move forward. I told them, as a church, that we are obviously 100% behind them. I wanted to lay out to them some key elements to start in building a church. I've seen so many young men go out and try to start a church. They

make some crucial mistakes. It's understandable. They don't have any real experience. Sometimes what looks like the thing to do is really not the thing to do.

Today I wanted to lay out to you what I told them, because, as I said, we're going to be involved in helping them on different levels. You need to know what I told them so we're all on the same page. Yet at the same time, I've designed this today so that you all can learn some things too. Maybe you'll go away with a better understanding of why we do the things that we do here the way we do them.

Bob and Lorenda and I go back quite a few years. I told them that. I watched his kids grow up. I watched them get married. They became part of his ministry as a family ministry team. I watched Bob grow and God use him and Lorenda both over the years. There's no doubt in my mind, knowing Bob and what he struggled with and what he wanted and the kind of person Bob was, there's no doubt in my mind that God had His hand on him to start that church. I still remember when he came in to see me and laid out what he wanted to do. It was obvious to me that it was time for Bob to do that, and that was going to help him in a lot of different ways.

## I. The Unforeseen Plan of God

To us, even though, and I told his people this, to all of us, even though his death was untimely and shocking to say the least, and it was something where it wasn't like he had cancer and he died slowly and we all got to walk that path with him, he was taken from us without any warning, any explanation, just in a moment's notice. As the Bible says, what is your life but a vapor that appeared for a little while then faded away?

Even though to us it was very untimely and shocking, I tried to reinforce not only to them but to you in the morning that I preached on his death that God has a plan through all of this. There are lessons in this for all of us. I told them, and I'll tell you, you never see all that God is doing in the moment that He does it. Most people can't handle the situations they're in because they can't see the unknown, and God doesn't always give us the answer for everything that He does when He does what He does.

It takes time for us and building a relationship with God, first of all, knowing that God would never hurt us or do anything to hurt us. So with that off the table, then we understand whatever has happened, no matter how tragic it is or how bad it is, God has a purpose in it. The older you get in the Lord, the more mature you become, the more you have the ability to look past the tragedy to see the hand of God and what He's doing. That doesn't mean that the tragedy doesn't affect you emotionally. In the death of a loved one, it doesn't mean you don't grieve. It just means that you understand that all in all, God is in charge.

Through everything that happens in our life, there will be no accidents. The angels didn't run into the throne room on that Sunday morning until Bob just died. It was all part of His plan. We don't totally understand it, but that's okay. We're seeing it reveal itself as time goes on. I told them, and I want you to know today, that people are still getting saved. Lives are still being changed through his death in the message that I preached that morning and at his funeral.

It's the great concept of long-term versus short-term. So many of us as God's people, all we can see and understand is what God is doing in the short-term. That will never balance us out. Through the short-term, we need to understand that God is going to do something in the long-term, and we look for that.

## II. The Importance of a Sending Church

I told them, and I talk about this all the time. I said, hopefully now that you're in this situation, talking to them, you can see the importance of having a home church to send you out. It's the difference between somebody who just goes out and somebody who is being sent out. I showed them that it's the difference between success and failure many times.

I've had young guys come in to me that didn't want to submit themselves to the church to be sent out, but they wanted to go out. They'll come in to me and they'll basically tell me what they want to do, and they all basically say the same thing. They say, "I just wanted to get your blessings on it." I always tell them the same thing: "My blessing doesn't mean anything. The real blessing you better have on you is God's blessing. Don't worry about mine."

This is the importance of having a sending church. There's a process in the New Testament for starting a church. Every church in the New Testament was started by a man being sent out by another church. You see it start with a church in Antioch, and they send Paul out, and off it goes from there. The importance of that is a young preacher will have to face the unexpected. The first five years of trying to start a church and dealing with everything can be overwhelming and really can be very hard for the challenges that you have to face. There are many things that a young pastor has to learn and face to deal with when you start a church. Most guys are very unprepared for that. I know I was when I started.

I remember when we started our church here 19 years ago. I'd already been in the ministry 30-some years, so it wasn't a new thing for me. But I recognized the fact that I just didn't have the authority to start a church. It was Pastor Whalen who met in my kitchen with just a few people that we started with and sent us out of New Hope Baptist Church over there in Independence. That's where we started.

I told you guys in Bible Institute yesterday when we were in the Book of Acts, even Paul, after he got the commission from God to start the churches and he was clearly the man with the Gospel of the grace of God to start every church, and without a doubt, the greatest Christian that probably ever lived, he had the authority now from God that nobody else had. He could have just showed up and declared who he was by God giving what He gave to him, what He gave to nobody else. But he didn't. He went back to the church at Antioch and he submitted himself to that church and waited for that church to send him out. That's the key.

I've learned some things. This is something that you want to just write down if any of you people ever find yourself. You're going to find that people that you start with, in many cases, they'll not be who you thought they were. It won't work out the way that you think that they should work out. The reason for that is because the job of any church is to preach truth. When you do preach the truth, the truth will manifest all kinds of things in people that you did not expect. You have to

learn how to deal with that. There's no way around it. You're never going to have a situation that you don't find yourself with those things. It's just the way that things are. But most young pastors don't understand that.

When I left Canton, Ohio, in 1976 and moved to Kansas City to get into the ministry, if I didn't have my father in the Lord and the church that sent me out, I don't know if I would have made it. It was like I was coming from this dream world where everything was protected and everybody loved the Bible. Suddenly, I was thrust into this world of Christianity in the ministry where you're going to find people who don't love the Bible. They don't like you because of what you preach. You have to learn to deal with that. I don't know if it really would have been a struggle for me if I wouldn't have had somebody to fall back on.

For a young man today starting a church, you need to have some help. You need to have somebody who's going to work with you. There are some mistakes that you simply cannot afford to make when you start a church and still have your church grow. I've had guys that left on their own, some of them under deception, and they go out and start churches. I had one guy in particular that he was going around with people in the church, and this is a number of years ago, and he was telling them he was going to start a church, but "don't tell Bob." He said, "Here's what I want you to do: just quit coming to church. Start coming sporadically, and then don't come anymore for the next two or three months. Then when Bob calls to say where you've been, you just say, 'Oh, I decided to not be part of the church anymore,' and pop up." He started a church. That church is no longer in existence.

There's an age-old thing that you always want to follow when it comes to not only starting churches, but your Christian life and my Christian life and the things that we do. When something starts wrong, it usually ends wrong. Do you know why people get divorces? Because the marriage started wrong. Very few people will get a divorce when the marriage starts right. Do you know why people have problems in their life? They get into drugs, they get into this and they get into that because they started life wrong. You have to understand that that's just a fundamental, absolute rule of life.

There's an unbroken chain of starting churches. Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:2:

*2 Timothy 2:2*

*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

There's an unbroken line in real Bible Christianity going all the way back to Paul. I've said this many, many times. We believe what we believe, not because we got it out of a Bible college someplace or because some man taught it to us. We got it because what we believe can be substantiated down through church history for the last 2,000 years. There are some fundamental Bible principles and truths and doctrines that are unchangeable. They've been part of the New Testament local church. Now, the fact that many churches get away from those and forget those and don't care anymore and develop their own stuff, that has nothing to do with us. We believe exactly what the Waldensians believed, the Albigensians believed, the Paulicians believed, the

Cathari believed, all those Bible-believing groups back down through history. We've not changed any doctrines. One of the greatest doctrines is churches start other churches. When that doesn't happen, then you get into the problems that we get into.

There are five things that you look for in a healthy church. If you don't see these five things, there's something wrong. Now, don't get ready because I'm not giving them to you. But there are five things that you see in a healthy church that better be there. They get there because the pastor knows what he's doing and he instilled these five things. They just don't come to church and you water them like you do your plants out in the garden, and one day your church grows up with these five things. You have to instill these five things. You as the pastor have to be able to communicate these five things without ever telling somebody what they are. It comes back to getting an understanding of how a church is really put together.

Bob and Lorenda were certainly faithful here in the ministry for the 11 or 12 years that they were here. Bob was a really good preacher. I really enjoyed listening to him. We have some guys in our church that are really good preachers and that can preach. We have some really good teachers. But we have guys like Danny. We have guys like Zach. We have guys like Jim. We have guys that can really, when they say something, you want to listen. I'll just tell you right now, it takes a lot to keep my attention. It takes a lot to keep my attention because most guys are just off in the clouds someplace. But Bob could always keep my attention.

I told them that today, when I was there last week, I want to talk to them about some things that most preachers and most churches and even most Christians never see and understand. This will help not only them last week, but I think it will help you. I think personally, this aspect of the Christian life is the key to everything we do, whether it's your own personal life, whether it's in our church here, or if you someday go out and start a church, or anything in Christianity.

Let's have a word of prayer and then we'll jump into this. Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Thank You for last week of being able to go over there with them and to help them and to lay out for them. Thank You for the opportunity today to bring it back to my people because we're their church and we want to be there for them and we want to help them any way we can. But help us all to learn the orchestration structure, how it goes, how it lays itself out, the inside workings that have to be there for it to be a successful work for God. We'll thank You and praise You for all You do. In Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

### III. Defining Moments in Life

Now, I simply call these things the defining moments in our lives. There will be times in our lives, some things will come up, usually not very good. Sometimes they're by our own design. We cause a lot of our problems. We deal with people all the time within our counseling ministry, and people come in here and they really want, they're good people. They really want to get their life turned around, and we're here to help them. But you have to understand that the problems in their life that they have were by their own doing. Now, maybe they never were taught, they never trained. It's beside the point. There will be times that we face issues in our life because of the

things that we didn't do that were right. But then there are things that we'll face in our life because you do do what's right. In other words, you find that on both sides of the spectrum.

There will be times in our lives that something will come up, that we have to make a decision or at least we have to deal with. What we decide or what we do will define who we really are as a Christian, which way we go. As I thought about this, and I've thought about this for a long, long time, and I've used bits and pieces of it, but I've never really put it into a workable format as a sermon. But the Bible is filled with people that had defining moments in their life.

Abraham, as I think of him, he had a defining moment in his life when God called him out of Ur of the Chaldees to go to a land that he never knew. That was a defining moment for him. He was established where he was in Ur. He had everything he could want. Now God pops up one day and says, "I want you to leave everything, forsake everything, and go to someplace that I'm going to tell you to go." He was done where it was. That was a defining moment for him. What did he do? He went.

But then he faced another defining moment because God said, "Don't take anybody with you." Now he had another defining moment, and he failed in this one because he took Lot with him. Then a little bit later on, God promised him he was going to have a promised seed, and he waited and waited and waited. His wife got anxious. She's 86 years old. So she says, "I'll tell you what, take Hagar, my handmaid, have a child through her, and we'll have the promised seed that way." That was another defining moment in his life. Again, he made the wrong choice.

Let me just stop here and just say this to you that I'm going to make this point. We all have the defining moments in our lives. When we make the wrong choice, Abraham made two of them. One of them with Lot, the other one with Hagar. Now, let's stop and look at short-term versus long-term. The short-term was that he took Hagar and he let Lot come with him. The long-term was Lot was a pain in his side and caused him undue problems for the next 40 years, all because of a defining moment that he couldn't decide the right thing, and it defined him in weakness. He took Hagar, the Egyptian. In the short-term, somebody said, "Well, he took the wrong woman. He did the wrong thing." Yes, but long-term, from Hagar came the Arab, who became the nation of Israel's enemy for the next 4,000 years. You see, short-term, long-term. The decisions in our life that define us don't just define a short-term. Many times they're on a scale that define us, and we have to live with it long-term. You need to understand that.

He certainly redeemed himself in his process because by the time you get to Genesis 22, he has another defining moment in his life, doesn't he? This is where God tells him to take his son Isaac and offer him on the altar and literally make him a sacrifice, kill him for God. In that case, that was a defining moment in his life. He did the right thing. Do you know what came out of that? All the blessings that God had for him, and Isaac's in the line of Christ.

I think of guys like Moses. Moses has his defining moment when he was standing before the burning bush, and God told him, "I want you to go back to Pharaoh and bring My people out of Egypt." He struggled with that. It was a defining moment for him. He's afraid. He has no real experience. He's a little nobody going up against the greatest power in the world at that time, Egypt and Pharaoh. But that was his defining moment. He went before Pharaoh. He did what

God wanted him to do, and God developed the greatest nation on the planet. They left Egypt. Of course, a little bit later on, they're thirsty in the wilderness of Sin. He comes up against the rock the second time. God tells him to speak to the rock. That was the defining moment in his life. He got angry and he lost his cool and he disobeyed God. Instead of speaking to the rock, he smote the rock. That cost him going into the Promised Land. I don't have time to begin the theological stuff of all that, but there's a reason behind that. Defining moments.

David had a defining moment when he had to number the people. He had another defining moment with Bathsheba. You're going to find that Christ Himself had His defining moments. In Matthew 4, the devil takes Him up on a mountain, and he tempts Him three times. That was a defining moment for Him. It's not just you and me. It's everybody in that Bible has times in their life where they have to get defined by what they decide they're going to do. Peter was the same way. His defining moment was when he was around that campfire when they were going to crucify Christ, and he denied the Lord. Paul's defining moment, he did what God told him to do. He carried it all the way out, started all the churches. But when it came down there in Acts 20, when he was told three times not to go to Jerusalem, his defining moment, he didn't listen and he went down there and wound up getting killed.

I told them, and I'm telling you, that you and I will be faced with the decisions in life that will define us one way or the other. I deal with people all the time that have issues, problems, and they're trying to dig their way out of the hole that they have gotten themselves in, in the world. I tell them, "This is your defining moment." If you're here this morning and you've got issues and you've got problems, no matter what it may be, you got into those because of the fact that you put a whole set of friends, a whole set of circumstances, you made choices, the wrong choices that put all those things in your life. Now, you're here this morning or you come to church, you hear a message, and you say, "I really want to make my life count." This is your defining moment. You now have to let yourself be defined by the decision you're going to make. You're going to have to change some things. You're going to have to move now in a different direction. It is your defining moment. We all have them. We all have to deal with them.

It's on different levels of spirituality that everybody in this room is on. You're going to have to face those defining moments, one way or the other. People will say and tell you whatever you want to hear for the most part. Boy, do we know that's true. But what they really do is what defines them. Our Christian life, it will not be the good things that help us grow, but rather the adversity that defines us that will help us grow. We grow through adversity. Something doesn't go right in life. We don't get this done or this happens. Instead of blaming somebody else for it, look inside and see that whatever you're going through, God has allowed it not so you can complain and blame everybody else for it, but you can decide in that moment to grow through that adversity.

Honestly, you'll never know who a person really is until they face their defining moment. I told them, and I've told you this story before too, but there are new people here today. I told them the story, the old lemon story. I heard a preacher one time years and years ago, his name was Manly Beasley. He was an incredible guy. He had a lot of wisdom. He was preaching one time and he asked the question. He wasn't a shouting, banging around guy. He was very low key, but boy, he

had some things to say. He asked the question one time, he says, "What do you get when you squeeze a lemon?" Obviously, everybody, in fact, a woman down front, she raised her hand, and she says, "Lemon juice." He says, "That is what everybody mostly would say." He says, "But I want to tell you," he's from Atlanta, he says, "down in Atlanta last year, there was a guy going into grocery stores and covertly was looking at lemons and injecting them with some kind of poison and then putting them back in the lemons. So people would come, they would buy the lemons, and they would go home and make lemonade out of it or whatever, and they would wound up dying."

He said, "The reason why I asked you that is because when these people squeezed the lemon, they thought they would get lemon juice, but the great truth is when you squeeze a lemon, whatever's on the inside is what comes out." Then he said, "What do you get when you squeeze a Christian?" You would think you'd get Christian juice. You would think you'd get somebody that deals with... No, he says, "When a child of God is squeezed, it's not when everything is good. It's not when your life is wonderful. It's when you're squeezed. When you're up against that defining moment, when you're squeezed, what's really on the inside is going to come out."

I've seen Christians who I thought were great men and women that had a good handle on things, and when something went bad in their life, it all went south. It showed that what was on the inside really wasn't what should have been on the inside. Most of God's people, they never understand the concept of a defining moment, being squeezed. So they miss those defining moments, and they never grow through them. I put a lot of emphasis on definitive verses, defining verses, verses that in the Bible will define things for you. Well, there's a counterpart to that. The definitive verses or the defining verses use what you always use in your defining moments. The two have to go together. The two real keys to us as a church and us as a child of God.

## IV. The Three Keys to a Solid Christian Life

Then I told them, and I built this whole thing to them, around a little three-point outline that I always use, a verse that I've always used to never let me, hopefully, miss one of the opportunities, though I do. It's found in 2 Corinthians 13:5, and this is the text that I gave them that I'm giving you that I've built this thing around. It's a little three-point outline, like I said a couple of weeks ago. This is out of my list. A simple little three-point outline that puts everything into a perspective for you.

*2 Corinthians 13:5*

*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

I've always taken that verse and just taken those three things and put them into my life that I need to constantly do:

1. Examine myself.
2. Prove myself.

### 3. Know myself.

These are the three keys to a solid Christian life that will bring you up against any definitive moment, time, period in your life. Then I walked them through each one, basically. So I'll do that with you.

- 1. Examine Ourselves
- 2. Prove Yourself
- 3. Know Your Own Selves

## V. Practical Principles for Church Building

Then I got down to the nitty-gritty bottom line with them, kind of gave them the Bible side of things. Now I brought it down to the bottom line practical things. I said to them, "Now let's be honest today. The reality of it all. We've talked about carrying this church on, talked about continuing the work. I stuck you with the point, 'Are you here for Bob or God?' All that good stuff that preachers always nail you with. But now let me tell you the bottom line. You have here a very young church with very young Christians." They had 14 people that day, and there were two couples that were not there.

I said, "You have two guys, Joe and DJ, who are willing to take over the leadership role as pastors of this church. There is no question about those guys being excellent guys and being good guys. But the reality of it is, other than the time with Bob in a very short time, they have no practical ministerial experience." Now, from a human standpoint, with a young church full of young Christians and the loss of Bob, and then add to that all the emotional trauma, all of the grief of the loss, all of the confusion and the fog of war, and then trying to go forward with all the unknown, to the human eye, it's almost impossible.

I said, "I had people tell me that when it all went down, 'Well, what do you think they're going to do? I just don't know how they could ever go on. I think it's going to fold up. I don't think it's going to be able to go. I don't think this. I don't think that. Or I think that. I think this.'" I told them, "From the human standpoint, it looks impossible. But from God's standpoint, all things are possible." I told him, "I know you probably don't see this and I wouldn't expect you to, but you're probably in the best position you could ever be in, given the situation you're faced with. God honestly would rather have you like this than somebody who comes in and thinks he knows everything he's going to do and doesn't know what he's doing."

I told them, "God always pays for what He's ordered." Here's the key. "He ordered this church. If you make the right decision in your defining moment, He'll pay for what He ordered. He'll make it work even if you have to face some things that are tough."

Then I said this. "When we started Old Path Baptist Church 19 years ago, we started with about 12 or 14 people, almost exactly what they had." Now, I had quite a little bit more experience. But I told them, "Let me say, I believe in you and I believe in Joe and DJ and I believe in all of you. You guys have already worked through your defining moment and you've come to the decision

that you want to make this thing work. I want to show you some things that you need to be aware of. Don't look at this thing or allow people to tell you from a world perspective how this thing will or may not go."

I said, "I'm going to tell you something right now. Both Joe and DJ have three basic good qualities. I can teach somebody the Bible. I can teach somebody how to build a church. But I have never been able to teach anybody these three qualities. If they don't have them, they have to develop them on their own or they don't get them."

- 1. Common Sense
- 2. Patience
- 3. Teachability

I told them, "I'm looking at this from a human standpoint, go back to your Bible. From a human standpoint, Moses was the least choice to be the leader of the nation of Israel. When he goes before God, he alibis all the way around. He dances around. He doesn't want to do it. He can't talk. He can't do this. He can't do that. He's not able. All these things that he's alibis and God that try to get out of being a leader. And you know what? God took him where he was. Because he understood the great concept that God doesn't really care if you're able to do the job, He just cares if you're willing to do the job. Moses turned into the greatest leader Israel ever had. It's incredible. But he faced his defining moments."

David started out as a little shepherd boy. His defining moment, the first one was Goliath. Both of these guys, Moses, before they got into the land, became the greatest leader. David, after they got into the land, became the greatest leader. Both of them knew absolutely nothing of what they were doing when God called them.

Then I said, "Let me give you some good advice. Let me talk to you about what it's going to take to build this work going forward." This, again, is your defining moment. Then I gave them four simple areas. I mean, there's a lot, but I didn't want to overwhelm them. I just started with four simple things that they need to look at and understand and begin to put into what they're doing.

I told them, "When God called Moses, and Moses is all worried about the fact that he can't meet the qualifications that God wants him to do to be the leader, God simply asked him one question, and that's all God was concerned about. He said to Moses, 'Moses, what's in your hand?' Moses said, 'Well, I've got a shepherd's rod.' He says, 'Well, you know what, pal, that's just what I'll use. Don't worry about it. Just take that rod with you, and through that rod, I will do everything that I need to do.'" With that rod, he turned the waters to blood. With that rod, it turned into a snake and ate Pharaoh's snakes. With that rod, he brought all the judgments upon Egypt. It was that rod that he touched into the Red Sea, and it split. In other words, God didn't ask him to be prepared to do any great thing. God just said, "I'll take what you've got in your hand, and we'll start with that."

When David went out to fight Goliath, Goliath had armor. He had a helmet. He had a coat of mail. He had a sword. He had greaves on his head. He was covered from head to toe. He was

covered with armor. All David had was a slingshot, what he had in his hand. The armor of the world and the devil could not compare with the slingshot that David had in his hand. No more than Pharaoh's great magicians and all the great, wise men of Egypt could compare with the rod that Moses had.

Let me tell you something. When God starts to use you, don't look at the circumstances. When God starts to want to do something with you, like these guys here, or maybe you're in your own life, or maybe here in this church, God is not interested in your ability. He's interested in your availability. He doesn't care what skills you have. He wants to know if you're willing to allow Him to use, and He'll start with what you have in your hand right now today. I told them, "You want to build this church? Just start with what you got in your hand." I walked them through that.

- 1. All Hands on Deck
- 2. Reaching People
- 3. The Pastor's Role
- 4. Discipleship

## VI. Conclusion: Opportunity or Disaster

Then I told them, "Remember, this church was not only Bob's dream, but it's God's dream too. It's His vision. The question remains today that you look inside and examine yourself and prove yourself and know yourself. Is it your vision?" Yet I told them this. "What a privilege for God to think that all of you are worthy to take Bob's place when he goes home to be with the Lord to carry this on. You see, God believes in you. I believe in you. That's never been the issue. The question, the real question that all of them have to answer, 'Do you believe in you? Why are you here?'"

Like most tough times and hard times in our lives, we can choose to see this as an opportunity or we can see it as a disaster. We can make it our defining moment for the right thing or we make it our defining moment for the wrong thing. I left them with this. "Bob and Lorenda paid the down payment for this church. Then God took Bob home. Now it's up to you to pay off the debt. You have to decide where you're going to go from here." Of course they have decided that they're going to do what they need to do.

Now I laid that out to you when I gave them for two fundamental basic reasons. One, to help them fully. You needed to hear on the same page with me to help them as their sending church because there's going to be times that we get involved with them, either through the athletic or working one on one with their people or whatever. Secondly, for you to better understand your own defining moments because defining moments aren't just limited to that church over there. Everybody is going to face them. Everybody is going to have times in your life where you're going to be faced with which way you go. Your life, the people with issues, and making good choices and stop making the bad ones.

Remember, defining verses are always used in defining moments. Let the Word of God guide you through them and this church. Whatever problems you may have, whatever issues you may have, you don't have to be alone anymore. You may have made some really bad choices that put you in a bad spot. Those bad choices can stop today and you move forward getting out of whatever situation you're in. It may not be easy, as I said, it takes longer to get out of something than it does to get into it, but you can get there.

I teach you the defining verses so you can use them in your defining moments in life, building all of you on whatever level you are to be one with the Word of God. Like I showed you the week before last in 2 Samuel 23. The work of this church, the work of any church, is found in Ephesians 4:12, and that is for the perfecting of the saints.

*Ephesians 4:12*

*For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

Helping you get better every day of your life. Perfecting you from the imperfections that the world has put into you. Perfecting you as the saints get you through your issues, help you face your defining moments, help you deal honestly with who you really are, and then take the Word of God to perfect you. But He doesn't just perfect you so you can be a good person. He doesn't really perfect you so you just get out of your problems. He says, "for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry." He perfects you to take to others what somebody has given to you. He perfects you that you might be able to be used of God once you get through your defining moments to help others get through theirs. Then the last thing he says in that passage is the fully edifying of the body of Christ, helping each other grow.

The defining moments in your life and my life are nothing more than opportunities to grow through adversity. We're all going to have them. Hey, look, we could all go back in our life and say, "Well, I really got short-changed, or this really happened, or this wasn't fair, or this wasn't right." We can all say that. What's your point? What has it got to do with where you're at now? What has it got to do with going forward from this point on? Obviously, you're still here. Obviously, God has blessed you. Obviously, God has taken care of you. Why do so many of God's people have to focus on something that happened in their life way back in the day when it has absolutely no effect of what God has given you now? All it does is keep you from growing. The defining moments for them, for me, for you, for this church coming up against the things that are going to come our way. We work through them because we have the definitive verses that define the moments that we all have to face.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. Thank You for all that You do for us. Thank You for Your love and for Your mercy and for Your goodness. We pray now, Lord, that You'll help us to grow. Pray for Bob's church over there and Joe and for DJ and all of those good people. Help them, Father, to grow and help us to be there for them. Thank You, Father, for the privilege of being part of that, for the honor of being able to speak to them. But, Lord, we all need to learn the lessons. There are so many things here in Bob's passing that are just not for his church, but for all of us. How that life is so short, how that we should never

have an attitude towards someone. Better yet, why let the sun not go down on your wrath? Because in that quick moment, that person could be gone and taken, and there's never a chance to make it right. Lord, help us to understand all the great lessons that are found here and bring us back to the central point of our ministry, loving each other, perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry that we edify each other as the body of Christ. We'll thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Please take time this morning to sign up for the 4th of July. Also, sign up for Jeff.