

I. The Old Paths: Defining Our Church

I'm interested in what pastors name their churches. I know that some of them are based on the Bible, some of them are not. I always liked churches that were called Antioch Baptist Church because, to me, that signifies that he understands the book of Acts a little bit where they were first called Christians. Some churches will call themselves New Hope, and obviously they're basing that on when you find Christ as your own personal Savior, you now have New Hope. Some churches call themselves Open Door Baptist Church. That will be based on Revelation 3 where the church of the Open Door was the Philadelphia Church. Some churches call themselves Bible Baptist. They want to emphasize the fact that they are Baptist, that they are based on the Bible. Some churches call themselves Grace Baptist Church. They want to emphasize the fact of God's grace. I always am interested in that.

When we started our church, I looked for a name that would not only be Bible based, but would define us as to what kind of church we would be in this Laodicean church period. I show Jeremiah 6:16. It's always been a favorite of mine.

There's a book out there that, if you would ask me the five books of my world that are the top five in my life that are the best books, that would be the short shelf life of my books outside the Bible. It would be a book by a guy by the name of James Lynch. He wrote a book a number of years ago called Old Paths Preaching Methods. James was an old school of the old school. I actually got the privilege of preaching with him a couple of times in Bible conferences over the years back in the day. He wrote a book that I think is probably one of the best books that has ever been written to a pastor if he is going to build a Bible believing, Bible based church built on the old paths.

And Jeremiah 6:16 says:

Jeremiah 6:16

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

This, of course, is written to the nation of Israel. I like this verse because it talked about somebody taking a stand for God's way. It's not about today just taking a stand for God's Word. Many people do that. The real question is, do you take a stand for God's way? That's the question. Then He says, you see and you ask for the old ways or the old paths. He says, it's a good way and that you walk therein. And then in that you find rest for your souls. Of course, even though this was written to the nation of Israel, it was very applicable to the church today. Just like Israel, they said, "We will not walk therein." About 99% of God's people won't either.

II. The Future of the Church: Investing in Youth

Today and over the next couple of weeks, I want to lay a foundation to our anniversary Sunday, which is going to be on the 7th, when Jim Lake will be here to speak with us. Jim is probably my oldest friend in the ministry. He's been with me from really from day one. We were together long before we ever were in the ministry. We did a lot of good things together for the Lord. When I moved to Kansas City at the end of 1976, he actually moved out with me and helped me drive out and get settled out here. He has been my lifelong friend.

I wanted to tie all of this together around our youth weekend, going into the fall. I wanted to kind of put it all together. We could have spread it out through the summer, but that's not really what I wanted to accomplish. We were going to have some special speakers that weekend for the kids, not just for the kids, but also for our adults. Dean Hayes, who is down in Dr. Ruckman's church, Dean and I go back when he was just a kid in my old Bible conferences when Mel Shabaka used to come out and preach at Old McDonald's Farm, if some of you remember that. We go back quite a ways. Matt is Jim Lake's son-in-law. He's a great kid and he's working in a church down there. Jim is down there with him. It's always good for me to reconnect with them before they have to hit the road and do the work here, to spend some time, go out to eat and just fellowship and get caught up on things. These guys have meant a lot to me and my family's life. They mean a lot to people in this church. I know when Zach was on vacation, him and Jenny, just a couple of weeks ago, they went down and spent the whole day down there at Dr. Ruckman's with Dean. Dean and his wife are just great people.

So I want this whole weekend that we're going to put together starting today for me to be a celebration of the 19 years that God has given us here. Because I know, and I want to tie this in, the future of our church will only be found in the youth of our church and the young couples and, of course, the young singles. Without a doubt, the single greatest aspect of our church will be all of those groups, bringing them along, helping them develop.

Most churches, 85% of the people, maybe if not more, they're all over 70. I talk with pastors all week long or throughout the month and deal with them and try to help them. The number one question that they continue to ask me, and many of them have been here and they see our church and they just can't believe the youth and the young couples that are here. They all struggle trying to do that. I guess the number one question they ask me is, "How do you get young men and women into our church? How do we get it in?" I'll be honest, it's tough when your church is already on the way to being a dinosaur graveyard and it's got everybody in it that's 80 or over. I tell these guys, "You're going to be out of business. If you don't turn it around, you're going to be out of business in the next five or six years, just by the fact that everybody's going to die and there's nobody coming in."

They have to understand something that I learned a long time ago, that the youth of our church, the young couples, the singles, in any church, they are the lifeblood. They are the future generations. I've always seen the value of this and I've always realized that this youth group, this young group, if you note in history and in life, their minds are the sharpest they're ever going to be. Actually, they are, whether they know it or not, they're at that time in their life where they're seeking answers to things. The reason why I know that's true, that in history, when you want to go back and look at the beginning of communism or socialism or liberalism or any of those

"ologies" that really are against the Bible and are all worldly, you're going to find that every one of those started in a university or a college. They went in there and indoctrinated the young couples that were the young singles that were looking for truth and answers and gave them the wrong answers.

I have seen that and all my life I've tried to take that element and everything that I do in ministry and try to develop it the way that it needs to be developed. I've spared no expense nor will I. I don't think you can put a dollar value on our kids. When we do camps or whatever we do or whatever we try to do with couples or the singles, you can't put a dollar value on that. You want to try to develop leadership and building team concepts, working together in ministry. I know, and one of the things that pastors have a tough time overcoming is they see they got a 75-year-old and a 30-year-old and they think that they have nothing in common. Well, obviously the 75-year-old is not going to hit the softball and run the bases. He's not going to play volleyball and spike the ball and get out there, unless it's John Christensen and he can pretty much stay up with anybody. But the bottom line is they look at that and they think to themselves that there's nothing that they have in common. Well, maybe in sports or whatever, but the thing that they both can do together no matter what the age group is, is minister. Ministry knows no bar of ages. There's no age gap in that. You give me a 75-year-old that loves the Word of God and a 20-year-old that loves the Word of God, they have that in common and they can work together to do what God wants them to do.

Today, our singles are down at the lake, some 40 some of them, and they're in a team building thing down there trying to have a good time, but also talking about concepts of trying to come back and be more valuable. They're spread out all through our church. They help in all the other areas. In the next couple of weeks, Zach's going to take the high school kids and they're going to have a team building concept of really pulling all of them together. Then, of course, the Timothy kids and doing the same thing there and they will all try to work together. Then Labor Day weekend, again, our family time together in Branson. I always want to try to take that time and build everything. My goal is to build families that will minister together as a team. I never want to separate one group out from the other. So I'll use things that will build it in a total system that we can have time together and do things together and have a good time. But everybody understands at the end of the day, what this church is really all about. It's about the old path, staying on it and helping people get to it.

There's no doubt in your mind, I'm sure, no matter what you know about the Bible, this is not even a Bible issue, though it is, but it's a national issue. The attack today, and I guess it's always been the same attack, but it's more prominent today. The attack today is squarely on the families and the youth of this country. The devil does not want your kid to serve God. He doesn't want your family to be a family ministry together. The attack today is so clear and we have to stand in opposition to that. I realize there's nothing I can do to stop the national flow of all the things that are going on, but here is our Jerusalem and we need just to make an impact where we can. We need now to understand that we are building the future generations of our church. If it's bad now, if Jesus carries His coming, think what it's going to be in 10 years, five years. We need to prepare not only ourselves mentally and spiritually, but our children, your children, no matter what age

they are, they need to begin to be prepared for that because they need a no-nonsense approach to the truth of the Word of God. Put all the fun things in there that they want to do, but it's built fundamentally on the Word of God.

III. Lessons from Past Youth Ministry

I was thinking this week, in 1976, I came to Kansas City to be a youth pastor. I was 26 years old then. Back then, the youth across America in Baptist churches was a total joke. I mean, I guess some things never change. It isn't a whole lot better today. It's just a different joke. Back then we had a guy who was known across the country. I won't tell you his name because I think he's still alive, but he was given the moniker of "Mr. Youth." Every Baptist church in America wanted Mr. Youth to come and help teach them how to reach young people. This guy could get a large crowd of 200, 300, 400 kids together in a church, large churches, and they would have a great time. Then they'd all go to the park, find a park someplace, and they would create either the world's largest hot dog. They'd lay hot dog buns for 200, 300 yards. They'd put the hot dogs in them and they'd make the world's largest hot dog or the world's biggest banana split. That wouldn't work very good here in the last week. It'd be melted before you, but it was huge. Then they'd all get their kids around and they'd take a picture and it was put out on a national publication. "Mr. Youth, the world's largest hot dog." In time, the world's largest hot dog really wasn't what they laid on the bun, but it was the guy himself was the world's largest hot dog. But anyway, they never gave these kids any Bible. There was no teaching the Word of God. It was all fun and games. Get a crowd, but give them absolutely nothing out of the Word of God.

This guy, and I know him personally, he knows me personally. If I saw him, I would say to him by his first name. If he saw me and he remembered me, he would remember my first name. I know this guy. He was big back in the day and I knew him through association with all the guys that were back in that time. What I am telling you, this guy was great at getting a crowd, but he knew absolutely nothing about the Bible. If there was one spiritual bone in his body, I never saw it. It was rampant throughout this country.

It was about 1979 or 1980. I was asked to go to Wichita, Kansas. This is where I met some of our Bryce, your mom, not Bryce, where's your wife at? This is where I met your mom and dad way back in the day. All the churches of Wichita brought all their youth together for a big amusement park. They had the kids have fun all day long and then they were going to have a service and I was asked if I'd come up and preach to them. Well, absolutely. I got pretty well known back then for preaching to kids and having a good youth group. So they asked me to come up and preach. There must have been 500 kids there and they had been out in the park all day long, having a great time. Then they bring them in this amphitheater about five o'clock. They fed them, bring them in here. "Now we're going to have the service."

So I'm sitting on the platform. I have no idea what was going on. I just know I'm going to preach. So they bring this guy up who's a youth pastor. You remember back in the day, I think his name was Galinger. Remember him? How many know who Galinger? Don't lie to me now. You young people are lost. Well, he was the big guy that he'd take a sledgehammer. He'd go on stage and he'd smash fruit. All the people in the front row would wear rain smocks or whatever. They

would go crazy. Every time he put a watermelon up there and squashed it with a sledge and he beat it and it squashed everybody and they would go crazy. That was his, he did that all over the country. It was a big thing back then. This guy was going to mimic that. I got to get up and preach after this. So he's up there smashing apples and oranges and cantaloupes and everybody's going nuts. The kids are, everybody wanted to sit down in front rows so they could get splashed with this stuff. I'm sitting up here like this. I'm sitting up here and I'm saying to myself, "How in the world do I follow this? This is stupid." But he's smashing fruit and they're going crazy.

So I set up one of them, I'm walking up to preach and I set up one of them Nehemiah prayers. You know what they are back in Nehemiah, you're on your way in and you're saying, "God, give me something to do or something to say." It hit me. Because when I walked up to the platform, everybody got dead silence. The excitement had now dissipated. And I said, "You know, about 1500 years ago, what you saw up here, they used to do to Christians. Back in that day, they smashed Christians' heads, impaled them, burnt them alive, rolled boulders down on them to crush them. All the world went crazy over it and enjoyed it. Today, we're much more sophisticated. We kill fruit and you all go nuts. Now, I don't necessarily have a problem with that, but let me ask you a question. I sat up here and watched brother so and so make a great salad. And then suddenly when I come up to preach the living Word of the living God, everybody gets quiet. There's no excitement. Why is that?"

For the next 45 minutes, brother, I preached to them. Probably had 70 or 80 kids come forward to get saved. But that's the way it was back then. Nobody cared anything about the Word of God. They would have been fine if I would have just got up and gave a fruit message. You got to be careful saying that today. But you know what I'm saying. I'm telling you, it was a thing where I grew up over the next few years in my Christian life and in the ministry. I've been lucky. I never been to Bible college. Praise the Lord. I was homegrown out of a local New Testament church. But I'm like the guy who starts out being a janitor in his corporation and then works his way up to the president of the company. I started out at the bottom and I did every job in every church that was to be done. I'm not saying I didn't have fun along the way, but I started out and did everything. I did every job that anybody you were doing here. I did it. I understand what it takes to get it done. I know because I did it. I'm not some pastor that has never done it. A pastor who has never done anything is like a one-legged man trying to teach Olympic running. It doesn't work. I had the experience of starting at the basement and working myself up. I was around all kinds of people. I mean, I got to see everything the way it really was.

I remember as I grew, looking at the church I was with at the time and then looking at other churches around. After about 10 years of that fruit salad stuff, I noticed that in the church there was a whole generation of young singles, couples that were missing. They were gone. They weren't part of the church anymore. The ones that were there were worthless, but most of them were gone. I saw it immediately that they had become victims to the world's largest hot dog. They were not taught the Bible as they grew up and they got married. They had marital problems. There was no spiritual foundation in their life. They were gone.

I remember having a camp down at the Sydney New Mission campground. I was talking to the guy that was the speaker. We were out late one night looking at the stars and just philosophically

talking about things. He said, "You know," and he saw it too. He said, "You know, there's a whole generation of that church that is missing." I said, "Yeah, I know." Then we talked about why it was all because of guys like Mr. Youth. I have always tried to learn from everything that I see, whether it's good or whether it's bad. I think there's value in everything. I've tried in my own life to develop a sense of awareness to the people, to circumstances, the things that are around me. I believe that there's no happenstance when it comes to a Christian's life. I believe that the circumstances around us, whether they be good or they're bad, God allowed it that we might be able to learn some things from that.

When I came in in 1976 and 1977, I was determined to build a youth department based on the Bible and truth. I also knew, and it is true, that it was not an easy process. As we're sitting here this morning, I have Steve Bracken. I think he's up counting the offering. I have Troy and Penny Hansinger, who's not here today, but they were back there with me in that day. Troy, you had to be about 14 years old. Steve had to be about 14 years old. So what I'm about telling you here, they know it's true. I mean, I asked these guys. Everybody had been built on fun times, great big games, music groups, all the flivoliest stuff that had nothing to do with the Word of God. Now there was a new sheriff in town. The first year or so, they all thought they died and went to hell. I remember I'd come down to preach and I remember, I know who did this, but she doesn't, I'm not sure. Anyway, I went down, there was a blackboard up there and somebody had written on the blackboard, "Dear Pastor Bob, we do love you, but you need to feed the sheep." Because they didn't like my hard preaching. They wanted that palatable stuff of telling everybody how good it was. It says, "Pastor Bob, we love you, but you need to feed the sheep." I walked in there, the place was a bunch of people in there, I looked up there and I looked at that and I walked up to that blackboard, took the chalk and I said, "Thank you very much, but you can't feed dead sheep. All you can do is skin them. Open up your Bibles, folks, and here we go." But that was the mindset back then. I was determined. Later as God developed me and I started to pastor, I simply followed the basic simple format and just moved it to an adult level that I had been taught on how to deal with people and train people and give people the Word of God.

IV. The Church's Soul: A Place of Refuge (1 Samuel 22)

In building a church, and you've heard me say this many, many times, the church is not a building. The church is people. I've learned that in everything that God will do, I've seen this over the years, everything that God will do, He does it by a pattern. When we talk about the universe, Hebrews 8 tells us that He had a pattern for that. When Moses was given the instructions for the tabernacle, we're told He had a pattern for that. For your life and my life as a Christian, there's a pattern. There was no reason for us not to live above the circumstances as Christians. He's given us the pattern for it. Your marriage, there's no reason to lose your marriage, no reason at all because God has given the pattern for it. Your kids, there's no reason to lose your kids. I don't care what excuse you think you've got. The pattern is clearly defined out in the Bible for you and laid out in the Bible for you. The pattern of building a New Testament, Bible-believing church, there's no reason for it not to be everything that God wants it to be if you follow the pattern. The mark of success in any one of these things, whether it's your own life, whether it's your marriage, your kids, or if you're a pastor listening to me in your church, the

mark of success is only going to be one thing out of all of this. That it will be, find the biblical pattern and then follow it.

When people come in to get help, and I have couples come in all the time and they have issues in their marriage or with their kids and they want us to help. I met with a great couple just this morning and when I look at that, I think to myself, "What we do here is just get people who are struggling with issues in their life to start getting the right pattern in their life and quit following the wrong pattern." It's not complicated. It's not rocket science. It's so simple.

Now for me, my model and pattern for a New Testament church is found back in the book of 1 Samuel chapter 22. So now we want to turn back there. That would seem strange to some people, but to me, it's always been where I start. Maybe after I'm done here in a few moments with some of this, you'll have a better understanding. 1 Samuel 22:1-2. I want you to understand as we go into this weekend, we've got a lot of new people that's come in over the last couple of years and you fit right in here well, but I want you to understand the heritage of the 19 years that we have and even beyond that in my own life.

So he says in 1 Samuel 22:1-2:

1 Samuel 22:1

David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.

1 Samuel 22:2

And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You so much. Thank You for today as we look forward to what You're going to do with our youth and all the things that we endeavor to do here. We pray Father today will be the beginning of all that, that we'll see really who we are and what our job really is. Help me to communicate to them what You have had on my heart for so many years. We'll thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Most people would tell you that the model and the pattern for anybody starting a New Testament church would be found in two places in the New Testament. The first place would be in the book of Acts and in Acts 12 and 13. This is where the early church, their first church in Antioch, their first called Christians at Antioch. I wouldn't argue with that at all. I would agree with that 100%. I would tell you that when you study the church at Antioch, it's the new church. So you're going to find that there are seven key things that are new in this church because it's the new church. Then I would go over to Acts 20 and somebody would say, "Well, the church at Ephesus in Acts 20 is the pattern," and you would be absolutely correct because that's the church that is established. Antioch is the new church. Ephesus is the established church. But we see that in Revelation 4 and you're going to find six key areas in that church. So you want to get them both

together. I have no qualms with that. I agree with that 100%. They would be absolutely true in telling you that.

But I'd say this, if the church of Jesus Christ is a body, and it is, then I would say that the church was born in Acts 12 and 13. That becomes the body of the church. I say that in Acts 20, where you have the ministry now going forth, would be the spirit of the church. But in 1 Samuel 22, I would say that just like any man has a body, soul and spirit, the church is Christ's body, has a body, soul and spirit. I would say the body of that church is in Acts 12. The spirit of that church is in Acts 20. But I'd say the soul of that church is 1 Samuel 22. That's how I look at it.

What we really are as a church, Acts 13 and Acts 20 is great stuff, but it's the mechanics. It's the ministry of what they're doing. But what we really are and what we really should be in a church is only defined here in 1 Samuel 22, how I look at you, how you look at me, how together we look at the church that God has given us. Understanding obviously that we are laborers together. So Acts 12 and 13 and Acts 20 are the body and spirit of the church. They're the mechanics of the ministry. But in 1 Samuel 22 will be for me anyhow, the real heart of ministry within the New Testament church. Let me show you how this fits into my world.

Now, look at this. First of all, the church is a living body. It's a living organism. The example of a church in Matthew is a pearl, not a diamond, not a ruby, but a pearl called the pearl of great price. Most people don't understand the significance of that. If you're a craftsman in jewels, you can take a diamond and you can cut it in half and come forth with two perfect diamonds. You can take a ruby or an emerald, cut it in half and come away with two perfect stones. But if you take a pearl and cut it in half, both halves die because the pearl is alive. It's a living thing as the church is. All three of these aspects of building my church, Acts 12, 13, Acts 20, and now here are very important to me in building a church.

Now, let's look at a couple of things here in this story, in these two verses. First of all, we have the cave of Adullam. I don't know if you know this or not, but Adullam means refuge. The first thing I want to tell you, and the first thing I want you to know about our church is this church should be a place of refuge for people. It should be the safest place on earth for you. It's the only real place that you ought to be able to get the real truth. But that's not true anymore. It is here, but not across Christianity. Churches and pastors today have no idea the priority of how to take care of their people.

I was in Quick Trip not long ago and didn't gas when they didn't get a cup of coffee, and there on the door was a sign, "Quick Trip is a safe place that if you're lost or being chased or somebody's after you or somebody's going to hurt you, you can run in a Quick Trip and that's a safe haven that they'll protect you." I thought to myself, "What a strange world we live in when Quick Trip is now safer than the New Testament church," because it is. This church should be a refuge.

Look what he says. And the next day, David. David is obviously a type of Christ. There's no question about that. But inspirationally here in our story, he's a type of a pastor in this place of refuge. David always looked after his people that God gave him. He wasn't a perfect leader, but you compare him against Saul when it came to how they treated the people. He always looked out for the people that God gave him. People loved him, not just because he was their king, but

because they knew that he really loved them. He was fair and he was just. He had a really good balance in his life when it came to the people. He had his problems and he had his issues, but fundamentally God said about him that he was a man after My own heart. God said he did that which was right all the days of his life except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. The people loved him. When you look at the mighty men of Valor over there in Samuel, they're standing in line to be part of David's mighty men of Valor. Look at what they do for him. Look at what they sacrifice for him. Look at the honor and the courage that they have to him as their captain where Saul had to force people to be his mighty men of Valor. He had to make them, conscript them. Nobody wanted to volunteer to be his mighty men. Everybody wanted to be David's. He's an incredible picture. The people loved him, not just because he was their king, but because they knew that he really loved them.

In ministry, and I'm going to tell you this, here's where most pastors fail. They'll love a man's soul, but they'll never learn to love the man. Ministry is more than just loving somebody's soul because they're lost. Ministry is loving that person, taking them in, being their friend, allowing them to be who they are and then allowing the Holy Spirit of God to work through him. It isn't just about loving this guy's soul. It's about loving the guy's soul, but also loving the guy.

The next thing I want you to see, he's running from Saul. Saul will represent in our story, for me, anyhow, the world system. He heads to this cave. Saul's trying to kill him and the world system will definitely try to kill you. When he gets in this cave, the place of refuge, the word spreads and all the people come to be with him in this place of refuge. All this will picture the true calling of any church. We're to be a place of refuge, not just a building, but a place of refuge against the world of Saul, the wicked king.

The Bible says that these people come to him. It says, first of all, that they're in debt. Now that's two aspects to that. If you come to the church and you're unsaved, you have a sin debt you need to get taken care of. You need to understand that Christ paid your sin debt on Calvary's cross and He has and holds within that the forgiveness of sin. As Paul says, "You will rely without the law once, but when sin revived, you died." And now sin has become exceedingly sinful in your life because you have a sin debt. The only way to eradicate that sin debt is to trust Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior. So these people came in in debt.

Then there's another aspect to their debt. That would be for us who know the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior and we are saved. Paul said in Romans 1:14:

Romans 1:14

I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

You see, before you're saved, you have a sin debt that has to get eradicated. After you get saved, you have a debt to pay back for the price that was paid on Calvary's cross for you. We live in a world today that doesn't understand the freedom that we have. Kids today, young people today, teens, college, singles, young couples, they enjoy all the freedoms in America that you have. You enjoy everything that you enjoy about this country. You're free to criticize what you don't like. You're free to do and go wherever you want to go. We all cherish our freedom. We talk about the

First Amendment, the Second Amendment, all of those that are supposedly guaranteed our rights and our freedoms. But the thing that most of God's people today don't understand or people in general today is freedom is never free. Somebody paid a price for you to have the freedoms that you have today. Somebody paid a price on Guadalcanal, Okinawa, on the beaches of Normandy, in the Falaise Pocket.

I like the song that Zach sang here, "Abide With Me." I never hear that song, but I don't think to me that it was in 1944 when Montgomery wanted to put together Operation Market Garden to try to shorten the war and get into Germany. It failed miserably. It was unprepared. He was unprepared. It was a total flop. I've read the story in accounts that the historians say. I've seen the documentaries. Yet the best account that I ever read was written by the German commander that commanded the German troops. The British 6th Paratroop got completely surrounded. They all went into captivity. Everything fell apart in Market Garden. The plan was doomed from the beginning to fail. But it was the pride and the ego of the generals that didn't care. A common man paid the price. So these British paratroopers are all grouped here, about a thousand of them. Some of them are wounded very badly. Some of them are wounded. Some of them are hurting. Some of them are just there. The German, they know that they're going to fall into German captivity. They know the ruthlessness of the Germans. In most cases, they wouldn't take prisoners. So the German commander is riding in the command car and he's coming in with all of his SS troops behind him. Suddenly across the British paratroopers, who were a lot of saved guys, they start singing a song, "Abide With Me." The SS commander said, "As I drove into that, I heard that song come across those men, Abide With Me." He says, "It moved my heart." Instead of killing them all, they took them all prisoner and treated them fairly. I never hear that song that I don't think about that. I'm telling you right now, that it's a thing where there's a debt that has to be paid.

Then he says that they were discontented. Boy, if that isn't America today. Broken lives, broken marriages, broken families, shattered dreams, disappointment, anxiety, depression, heartache, trials and tribulations. These are the real issues of our society today. The world, Saul's crowd, has no answers for it. No drugs, no Prozac, nothing will help that. No Christian counselor who tries to apply the philosophical principles of the world and dabble a little Christian in it can fix it. The only way to find rest for your soul is the Bible says in Jeremiah 6 is the old paths, getting where God is at the cave of Adullam, the place of refuge. The Bible says that they're also discontented. So many of God's people are disillusioned with life. They're disillusioned in life because they never understood that they have a real debt that has to be paid. They've never understood that the debt of their sin was covered, but once you get saved, you have something to pay back. You are a debtor, you owe, you were bought with a price. All those who were hurting and in need came to that cave where David was at. He now is their captain. Inspirationally, he's now their pastor and he takes care of the hurting. He takes care of those that are in debt. He takes care of the discontented. He takes care of all the ones that are distressed. The Bible says there was about 400 men.

To me, and again, this is the soul of a church. This isn't the manifestation of doing it of the ministry. This is to me the soul of what my church needs to be, what I need to be. To me, that's

the size of what a church probably should be and get not much bigger. The idea that a church with a thousand, two thousand, three thousand can really function in a biblical way. In 99.999%, I leave one mill of a percent for an exception to the rule, not today. Listen, a pastor cannot be there for that many people. Honestly, he doesn't want to be there for the people. He wants the people there for him. When you go in, if you even get a chance to see him, he'll send you out to some second string or someplace and he won't, in most cases, won't have time to deal with your problems. I always thought instead of a church of two thousand, how good it would be to have five churches of 400, but that'll never happen. They'll never do that because they want the power of a king like Saul. They want to walk out and look at their congregation as their kingdom, that they lord over, that they dictate over. Like Saul, in his reign, the people starved to death. He put them under very hard bondage and made no sense at all. You remember back a couple of Thursday nights ago, somebody asked that question and I showed you how that Jonathan just got a little bit of the honey and it opened his eyes and showed him where the real problem was. Today, you can't build a mega church without compromising the Word of God. You just cannot do it. I'm sorry. Just look at what's going on around you today.

I want to say this, the greatest thing about 1 Samuel 22 in this story, it wasn't the cave was some beautiful cave. If you've ever been in a cave, there's nothing really beautiful about them. They're just rock, gray rock, dark, dusty. The thing about the cave was in its beauty of the cave. The thing that made it beautiful was the Word of God that David brought into the cave. A church is just a building. The thing that makes the church beautiful is not the building or the stained glass windows or the big spire or the big gymnasiums or the kitchen or the restaurant or the McDonald's or all the great things that they have. The things that makes the church beautiful is bringing the Word of God into it. Nothing else will work. This should be the soul of a church. Being that city of refuge for hurting people. I've said it many, many times, this church will never hurt you. You may hurt yourself by not doing what's right, but we'll never hurt you. In the Old Testament, you already know this. You had cities of refuge that were planted around Jerusalem that they could get to in circumstances. In Christianity, every church ought to be a city of refuge where people can come in that are hurting.

V. Eight Absolute Principles for Building People

This story, where I learned this, it was taught to me years ago. Along with it, I was given the eight absolutes. The old boys sat you down when they worked through it. They gave you the whole thing. They told you what to expect, what was going to happen. They didn't paint any rosy picture because they knew you were going to go into a warfare. They laid this story out to me and showed me that this is what a church really needs to be. Then they gave me eight absolute principles for building a church, building people. As I have said many, many times, building a Philadelphia church in a Laodicean church period. I've never deviated from these, added some more to it. But this for me has always been the biblical pattern. It has been passed down to generations, to men who built churches that were good churches. I always call these my eight absolutes in church building, building people.

1. They taught me, never to build your church on another man's foundation. Of course they cited Romans 15:20, where Paul said: Romans 15:20

Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: You don't build a church by stealing somebody else's people. That happens a lot. It's happened to me over the years. Of course, my philosophy on that is this, it's been this way forever. We had a guy one time that in our 19 years, him and his wife, they always had problems. Their kids were an absolute disaster. Behind the scenes, he started to have little groups of people that he would pull aside and he would say, "I'm going to start a church and don't let Bob know about this, but here's what we're going to do. You just quit coming to church on a regular basis. Now just come about every three weeks or every, and then broaden that out. And then when we start our church and if Bob says anything, you can say, "Well, I quit coming there six months ago." It was a very well thought out plan as stupid as it was. I remember I watched this guy and when he had his first church service, he made the common rookie mistake. He called all of his friends and wanted to have come to the first church service and the first church service, he probably had about 120 people. I know exactly how he thought. He walked in there and saw all those people and he said, "This church building isn't tough at all. Look at the crowd that I got today." Little did he know that 95% of them came just to see his first church Sunday and the next Sunday, he was down to about 20 people. Everybody went back to their churches. He just got the people that he got from me. It went downhill from there. This guy knew nothing about pastoring a church. His wife was even worse than he is and she run the family and that's what put the family into the ground. Two years later, church has gone. They're not going to church anywhere. They went to another church for a while, a friend of mine's and he's come up to me one time and he says, "What is going on with these people?" And I said, "Well, I never said anything, but since you ask," and now they go nowhere. You never build on another man's foundation. If God is in it, He will give you what you need. Doing it behind somebody's back is never the way to do it.

2. Then the second thing, you'll never build a church with people who get mad at one church and leave and go to another church because they don't want to do right in yours. This is a mistake a lot of young pastors make. They want a crowd. Well, who doesn't? So when people get mad at one church and then they go to his church, if he doesn't find out what the problem is, they just bring their sin into their church. I've had people in this church that left because they got involved in some great sin and was about to get found out. So they opted out of here the next day, blaming it on us, going to another church. That pastor is too stupid to find out why. He thinks, "Oh, wow, I got all the," no, all you got is the trash of one church that is now filling up your dumpster. It's always the disaster. These are things that you have to learn. I had to learn these. These are things that are the absolutes that they always are. They never change.
3. I'll tell you another thing. They taught me never reinvent the wheel or try to. This is a common mistake. These guys don't know the Bible. They can't build it on the book. They have no real experience or they won't listen to anybody that has done it. So they try now to get a crowd to invent some new thing, like the world's largest hot dog back in the day. They're like the Athenians over in Acts 17, who were always looking for some new thing.

You will not improve on the pattern of just teaching people the Bible. But I'm going to tell you right now, if you're not excited about the Word of God, you're not going to get people excited about the Word of God. If it isn't the number one thing in your life, it'll never be the number one thing in their life. It has to work through you understanding Jeremiah 6:16, the old paths from the old book with the old message. There's no new spiritual invention which will take the place of the Word of God. These are things that I had to learn. When I began this church, it was instilled in me. I did it when I was in the high school. I did it when I was in the singles ministry back in the day. I never deviated from the principles. The pattern for building people and a church are clearly established and has been proven for 2000 years. Listen, your clothes may get out of date, keep them long enough and they will come back. Your hair may change with time. You can almost look at pictures of people and you can almost date when they had that picture taken by the style of the women's hair. Your clothes may get out of date, your pictures hairstyle may get out of date. Everything about your life may get out of date. The Word of God will never be out of date. It'll be as fresh as Nestmunk's newspaper and nothing will replace it. You just stay with it. You just keep teaching it. You keep preaching it. You don't really develop some new program that steps aside from the Word of God.

4. And the fourth thing, never deviate from established truth. Paul told us 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. That's, I mean, I was raised on that when it comes to Bible doctrine or anything about the Bible. There's one word. It's the word consistent, historically consistent, biblically consistent. The truth that Paul taught was handed down to faithful men through the Albigenses, the Henry, the Waldensians, the Paulicians, the Lollards, the Cathari, right down to you and me. Right up to today, but you're going to see, and we have it here. They come in here. Sometimes they'll come in on Thursday night Bible study. Sometimes they'll show up and they got some heresy out there that is completely off the wall. They want me and you to believe that they've got some great truth from God that nobody down in church history ever got. You're out of your mind. Sell it someplace else. God's foolproof plan to protect us, the refuge from heresy. Heresy will creep in. It will. It will try to.

5. Then the fifth thing, I had to know where I wanted to go and know how I was going there. I don't profess to be an expert on leadership. In fact, honestly, the only thing I've ever perfected in my life is sinning. But I understand the key principles of leadership in the Bible. Today in churches, the number one issue is the absence of good biblical leadership. Most churches are just a puppet show. Somebody's pulling their strings and everybody else is going through the movements. The guys will not teach their people the Word of God because like Saul, without the Bible, they can be deceived. They can buy into this, buy into that, do this, do that. A pastor has to do four things well. I'm speaking to some of you out there and the other some of you out there and the young guys are listening to it. I'm speaking to you that someday you may be in the ministry. You may be teaching. You may be a pastor on any level, whether it's in the elementary or the high school or the singles, or you're pastoring a church. You have to be able to do four things well. First, you have to have a vision. You have to have a plan. You have to have in your mind where you want to go. The second thing, you need to know exactly

how you're going to get there. You don't fly by the seat of your pants. You don't read this or read that. I knew a pastor one time that literally almost destroyed his church because every new thing coming down the pike, he tried to put it into his church instead of staying with what he knew. You got to know it, not only have a plan, you got to know how you're going to get there. You got to be able to project in your mind the levels that you're going to bring them through. I know it also doesn't go the way you think it will and you have to adjust, but you have to understand how you're going to get there. Then the third thing, you have to be able to communicate that to your people. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Habakkuk 2 shows you this whole concept about a vision. A pastor, somebody in charge has to have the vision. You got to have the plan. It's your church. It isn't going to just get there because you show up on Sunday. You're the guy that has to have the plan and you're the guy that has to know how you're going to get there. Then you have to communicate it to the people. Then I'll tell you the fourth thing you got to do. Once you do that, you got to be smart enough to create opportunities for their spiritual growth. You got to look around you. You got to look at every opportunity, whether it be the Rise and Shine Ministry or the Jail Ministry or the Mission or the Rest Home or whatever we do, the Ship of Ship One or Two, whatever you're working in, dealing with people. You have to have outlets for what I'm giving you. A pastor has to understand how to do that. Without these four, forget it. Forget it. Forget it. I'll tell you, you have to be patient through these things. It doesn't happen not always the way you want it to in a timeframe you think, but he says in Habakkuk 2, "Be patient. It will come." The key is staying faithful to it.

6. The sixth thing, never build a mega church. Never try to build a mega church. But in reality, you want to build mega people. Forget the mega church concept. You want to build mega people. Big time pastors fall into the trap that their position demands respect because of their title. They fall into the mindset of the big me and the little you syndrome. Remember this, the more praise a man is willing to receive, the less he deserves. This building means absolutely nothing though it's vitally important to a certain aspect, but the people mean everything. We can meet in a tent. I don't want to. We can meet in a woods. I don't want to. I thank God for what He's given us, but I'm not under the illusion that the real diamonds in this church are sitting in the pews today. I've learned as you build a church by building people. One family at a time, one couple at a time, one person at a time. It's just that simple. I don't have a mega church, but brother, I have some mega people. I would put some of you guys up against any five pastors in this country when it comes to the Bible. I have some of you guys that I would have, I would total confidence you could take them on and hold your own because of what God has done with you in the Word of God. I've got ladies in this church that could do the same thing. I don't know that you'd find five ladies that you could take on because both ladies and most churches don't know anything about the Bible. I put you up against the five guys. I don't want to build a mega church. I want to build mega people. I want to build young men and young women, singles, high school, Bible explorers, right down the line, right up to the adults, everybody to come to the place where you have such a handle on the Word of God that you can handle yourself in any situation.
7. The seventh thing, never burn your bridges with people who got you where you are. I hold this one as dear to me. You will face many things you didn't expect in the ministry. I know I

did. Your sending church or your pastor will be invaluable to you. You never want to forsake those that got you invested in you to get you where you're at. You never forget that God put them in your life for a reason. He used them in your life for a reason. Never think that you don't need them. Never think you need to be not thankful of them and never forget what they did for you. Don't become ingratitude toward the people that God has put into your life. The people who taught you, the people who invested their life in your life, the people who were there by you that gave you the opportunities to develop you, to saw in you what maybe your own mom and dad didn't see or nobody else saw, but they saw in you something that maybe you couldn't even see yourself, but they developed it. And here you are today. Never forget that. Don't think you know all the answers because you do not, nor do I. Two key words for me to learn and to listen from those who have been successful. Learn and listen.

8. Then the last thing here, eight, everything rises and falls on your leadership. Leadership, greatly misunderstood today. Leadership is not about ability. That's clearly taught from the Word of God. Leadership is not about ability. Leadership is about responsibility. Responsibility always has to be built on character. A man can borrow ideas. He can pick somebody's brains and borrow his ideas from that, but he can't borrow character. Nor can he borrow the aspect of responsibility. Character and responsibility have to be built hand in hand through the Word of God. But leadership will never be about ability. It will be about your character taking on responsibility, not just to make the easy calls in ministry, but to make the hard calls. Not just to make the ones that don't really affect your friends or this or that, but just the ones that are general that everybody's okay with. Real leadership is you have the responsibility to deal with issues when it's going to cost somebody something who's not doing what they need to do. Making decisions not based on friendship, but biblical principles. The hard ones. That's the mark of a good leader. My job and responsibility is to preach, teach, rebuke, and admonish from the pulpit. That's what the Word of God tells me to do. The job of responsibility of my church members is to respond to the preaching of the Word of God. I always examine myself to stay within the book. As a pastor, sure, I'm human. I may not like the things that some folks do, some folks wear, or even what they say. But it's not my job to preach on my personal likes or dislikes. As a pastor in the place of leadership in this local New Testament church, I must continue to examine my own preaching to make sure I'm preaching the book instead of my own preferences or my own so-called convictions. Staying with the Word of God. You lead by example. You lead by example. Know this is very important. People, you, will grow through levels. My job is to watch you. Proverbs 27:23

Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds. I'm to watch you. I'm to help you get through those levels, those stages. But just as people go through stages, churches go through stages. A pastor needs to see that, lead through that. You need to lead through the good times, but you also need to lead through the bad times, the hard times. Leaders lead.

VI. The Pastor's Enduring Responsibility

Today, 19 years later, for me, I can see the growth of this church. We now are at our defining moment. Now have our own building. Not that we didn't grow in the one that we had, but we

were limited in so many areas. God now has given us that. We moved over here in November and it, we've been taken all this time to get things settled and get where we want. But I have been looking at this weekend coming up and wanting to build everything around that. I know how I'm going to get there and what I'm going to do. We now have the key people in leadership, people who love the Bible, know the Bible, and they know what they're doing with the Bible. We have key people in levels of learning leadership and you're well on your way to grow and be everything that God wants you to be. It takes time. This is where patience come in to allow God to do His work. I never get in a hurry with anybody because I know how long it took me. I look back at my life and how people were patient with me and realized that I had things that I had to work through. You got to allow people that you never write anybody off that just struggles, but you see in them the quality to be everything that God wants them to be. Everything now is fundamentally in place from the nursery, the Bible explorers, the Timothy group, the high school class, the singles adults. I have looked and built toward this time for 19 years, developing people with these real developing ministry in their lives to make them Christ and this church, the cave of Adullam.

I look at things like this, and I've always, I learned this many, many years ago. When you have a camp, we're not having camp, but what we're doing or some great revival happens in churches. It's like going surfing. When you go surfing, you wait for the biggest wave and then you get on that wave and you ride that crest of that wave for as long as you can. That's what you do with a weekend that's coming up. That's what you do with the high school and the Timothy. It's what I do with you. Every time God does some great things, I realize that I'm going to take that weekend and we are going to ride that crest for as long as we can because God's going to do some things in the lives of our kids. God's going to do some things in your lives and we want to carry it out. We don't want to walk away and just simply say, "Okay, it was fun. See you next year." God is going to do something. It's up to us as leaders to ride that crest as far as we can because I'll tell you this. I've never been in a revival. I've never been in a great time where so many people got saved or so many lives were changed. That when the last person of that great revival of 40, 50, 60 people got saved and it was a great week and great preaching and the last person got up and they all shook hands and hugged each other and walked out the door. I never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never forgot that the moment they walk out that door, everything that God did begins to erode because the devil's waiting for them at the bottom of the steps. We have to ride it out as hard as we can, as long as we can, keep that thing moving in their lives, in your lives. That's what leaders do. It takes time. It really does. As a leader, you never, you always keep moving forward. You don't move backwards. You move forward. I see churches, they'll have something happen and they'll say, "Well, we got to stop and regroup." You don't stop and regroup. As a combat adage for every combat leader that knows that you never want to pay for the same ground twice so you don't retreat. You may have to hold, but you don't go back. The next morning you go forward. You have to keep going forward. These next couple of weeks are going to be key. When we hit the fall, everything is going to be in place. I look for this weekend as we get up here and all build on it and keep everything going.

I know I'm talking my singles. They're listening. I brought them to a place and this is open to anybody, but I'm going to take them to the next level. Once we get back from Branson and do

everything that we need to do, then we're going to take some time. Every four or five weeks, I'm going to have them come in. We're going to meet together. I'll buy dinner for them. We're going to sit around at a round table and I'm going to give them and let them ask me every question they want to ask about ministry. I want them to get out of me everything they can before they can't get it anymore. I want them to have the freedom. Everything's on the table. Whatever they want to know, how it works, how this guy, what do you do with this? What do you do with that? It's now time that everybody is at the level and I'm open. Anybody can come to that. If you're involved in ministry or you even want to be involved in ministry, you're welcome, but we're going to sit down and I'm going to let them pick my brain as long as they want. I'm going to show them and give them everything that I can. I'm going to make my final investment.

It was a couple of Thursday nights ago, one of my young men asked the question to me about what was the greatest thing God ever did in my life, in all the years that I had. I told him, "God done some great things, but the greatest things He ever done is the last part of my life right now. This is the last chapter in my life. There won't be another one." I want to make sure that these young guys, everybody, anybody that wants it can get everything that you need to carry on because there's going to be a time when you walk in that office in there, that chair is going to be empty. It's the young people that are the future of our church and you leaders who helped make that cave of Adullam. I love Acts 12 and 13, first talk, Christ is an Antioch. I love Ephesians, the seven things the church ought to be, but you want the soul of a church? It's in a cave where people that are hurting can come and find refuge, refuge in the Word of God. I've just spent a whole thing down there taking that second half of the deal and turning it into a sounds around with everything. We make talk about war movies and all that. That's great. We'll have some fun time with that. But my main purpose is I want to take these same people. I have got a ton of documentaries on history, on Christians, on things that I want them to experience and see, things that they'd never get someplace else, things that we can come in and bring our stand, sit down there and watch how things unfolded in history, get a better understanding of how things work. It's a full court press as far as I'm concerned in these last days of my time to get these young people or anybody that wants it, everything you can get to carry on.

VII. Chipping Away: The Sculptor's Analogy

My final thoughts and I'm done. The nine keys of leadership I want to build in you, your kids, the young couples and the singles that we have, everybody from the nursery right on up and everybody's in the right place to do the job. I could not be happier. But a real leader, he has to adapt, but he never compromises. A real leader will surround himself with strong people, not weak ones. People that are smarter than he is, to do things better than he can do. A real leader cares more for the reward of his people than he does his own personal reward. A real leader never takes the credit for what somebody else does. A good leader never takes himself too seriously. He can laugh at himself. He can laugh at his own dumb mistakes. A good leader realizes that success will be learned through failure by learning from your mistakes. That's why I never criticize someone that goes struggles or ups and downs in life. This is your place of refuge. I know we all have problems and we all have issues. It's never fair or right to judge somebody on those things that they deal with, as long as you learn from them. Learning from your mistakes

will be the greatest teacher you ever have. Not learning them will give you an F. I've learned that in a real leader's life, anger is a good thing, only if it motivates you to do something good for God. A real leader needs to be principled, but not inflexible.

I look at all of you, and I know that it's no accident that God put us together. When I started this 19 years ago, just like when I came in 1977, I had a plan. I knew what I wanted to do, and I knew how I was going to get there. I began to process it. By the time I started this church 19 years ago, I had over 30 years now of seeing how it works and how it doesn't work. 19 years ago, when we started what we had, most of you were not here. We started in my kitchen. Pastor Whalen from back then New Hope Baptist Church. I think it was Lighthouse at that time. He sent us out. He came to my house that morning. I think there was 12 of us. He commissioned our church. He's gone home to be with the Lord now, but he was a good friend, and I appreciate all that he did for me. I always had a plan of getting where I'm at right now. I asked God for the men and the women to raise them up, let me see in them and be aware and bring them up through the levels that we could get to where we're at right now. I'm not under any illusion. I have more time on this side of my life than I do on the other side. That's okay.

I look at these guys. I was over having lunch the other day, and I met a guy that some of you went to his church. I'll tell you his name afterwards. He's retired now, and he was meeting the former pastor of that church who also retired. And he was telling me how they were meeting to play golf. This guy, he was an idiot. He never knew how to build a church day one, and he really ruined it when he got it from the old man. He sat there and he told me how that he'd done all that he could do in the ministry and give all his years. I'm thinking to myself, I didn't say anything because I didn't want to give him indigestion when he ate. But I thought to myself, "You know what? You're 64, 63 years old. Supposedly, you're at the prime time of your life for ministry. You've got 60 some years under your belt of learning and experience and really watching God. Now you are probably the most valuable in your life than you've ever been. When guys get to that point, you know what they do? They quit. They think now that this is like working at IBM where you just stop now and you go to retire. There's no end date on the pastoring. You don't retire, you re-fire. You don't stop. You realize that you're 60 years old or 70 years old or whatever God gives you. Look at Ruckman, he was 96 years old when he went home to be with the Lord. He never stopped. The last image I have in my mind is a 93-year-old guy out there, free preaching, shaking his cane saying, 'Turn or burn.' You don't stop. If it's real, if it changed your life, where does it change it back? You don't stop. You get to the point in your life when you have something to give and now you just go away from it. The making of a man of God."

I've watched you guys. The greatest joy and privilege of my life is watching you guys come to me with me, help me, watch you grow, watch you take major responsibility, take the pressure off of me, let me do what I do best. That's train people, train leaders. I look at every one of you and I think of a story I read many, many years ago. A sculptor was asked one day by his king. He was called into the presence of the king and the king said, "I would like you to make a sculpture of my image." He said, "My king, I would be glad to do that." So the king ordered the finest block of stone that he could find. He gave it to the sculptor. The sculptor worked on it for a number of months and when it was finished, he brought it in and unveiled it before the king and the king

was astonished. The king looked at him and he said, because when the king gave him, it was just a block of stone. Now it was an image almost perfect of the king. And the king said, "I don't know what to say. How in the world did you take that block of stone and make it into my image, into my likeness?" The sculptor bowed his head and he says, "Your Majesty, it was very easy. I just chipped away everything that didn't look like you." And there's the image. For 19 years, that's all I've done. I've watched God work in your life through my preaching, my teaching, doing everything I knew how to do, following my plan. You came into my church. I've just chipped away at everything that didn't look like Christ in your life. And here you are. Here we are. The greatest time in our life, 19 years. I probably won't be here for the next 19 years. If Jesus tarries His coming, some of you will be. Hopefully all of you will be. But the bottom line, that's all it is. That's all the ministry is, taking this old cold block of stone and just chipping away that everything that doesn't look like Christ. Here you are. Happy anniversary. God's been good to us. I'm happy because of the fact that we got right where it needs to be. I'm going to hit the ground running. Some of you will have to help me. But we're going to take everybody that wants to and get them to the next levels.

Let's pray. Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Love You. Thank You for all that You've given us here. Thank You for the opportunity today, Lord, to speak to these good people. Lord, every one of them is brought here by Your design. Every one of them is here because they're important to what we do. Lord, I recognize that and I thank God for that. We just now continue to work as a team, families, working together, taking it from the nursery right up through the adults in this church and giving everybody a place of refuge from the things of Saul. Help all of us, Lord, to chip away at all the things in the people we work with and only leave the image of Christ in their life. We'll be careful to give You all the honor and the praise, protect the kids as You have down there this weekend and bring them all back safely. We look forward now to getting ready and preparing for everything that You're going to do with us and that we can then do for You. We love You. Thank You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen. Parents, if you do not have your applications in for either Zach's group or Danny's group, give it to me or Zach's here, give it to Zach. But if you have Danny's, you give it to me. Sign up for Branson if you want.