

# Proverbs 29:18

Sunday 8/14/2022

I used that surfer story, that a surfer, a guy who surfs, he waits for that right wave, and then he rides that wave or the crest of that wave for as long as he can. God is about to give us, and has given us, a gigantic wave. It is on the level of a tsunami. It is incredible. We now are going to, in all areas of our church, find a way to ride that out as far as we can.

We have looked back for the last nineteen years. Last week was Anniversary Sunday. Jim Lake spoke to us and, as always, did a good job of laying out the perspective of the church. I have to tell you, last week was my day. I know the kids had their weekend and everybody, but last week, particularly last Sunday night, was one of the most humbling experiences that I think I have ever had in my life. We wanted to, I wanted to have an open house that night on our Anniversary Sunday. Over one hundred people came through. For me, it was probably one of the most moving and humbling experiences in my life as I sat there and I just watched the people come through that God had done a work in your life. I looked at the older ones that have been with me for many, many years. I looked at what I call the midline people who have not been here that long but have been here for a while, and then all of the folks that have come in. I thought to myself, putting aside all of the fun, all of the things that we do, everything, stopping and looking that night for you to come by and for me just to sit there. I could not even hardly talk to anybody. I just absorbed what God has done through the Word of God in this church. It is not about me. It could have been anybody who believes the Bible and teaches the Bible. It is about the Word of God. It will change your life.

As I sat there and watched you come through, some of you with three or four plates in your hand, I thought, I am the luckiest guy on the planet. I look at you and what God has done in your life through a book that is an everlasting book that will change people's lives. If I would die and go home to be with the Lord tomorrow, I could go home satisfied knowing what the Word of God has done in so many of your lives. I want to thank you. You do not know, on our Anniversary Sunday, what a gift that was to me just to watch you, just to look at you, and to know that God, through the Word of God, has changed your life. I wanted to just thank you for that.

We are going to take some time today. I had this message done six months ago, and I just waited. I have learned a long time ago that waiting on God is never time spent wasted. So I waited for God to put all of the ducks in a row, so to speak. I began to see how everything was unfolding, and then God did the unprecedented. We will talk about that a little bit later on. It was a green light to me that God now was going to take this church to the next level. I want to talk to you about some things today. I cut down the song service. I cut down everything today. I did not want to spend twenty minutes in singing and doing all the goofy stuff that I do in the announcements. I want to spend the time today, and obviously we have the Lord's Supper, but I wanted to spend the time today giving you an understanding. Some of you have been with me for twenty, thirty years. Some of you have been with me ten years, fifteen years. Some of you have four or five years, and we have talked, and you have seen all of the things that I have talked about as far as our church is concerned and what we want to try to do.

We have come to the place now, and last week was Anniversary Sunday, this week is Vision Sunday. We are going to leave here today everybody on the same page. I want you to understand completely and totally. So I am going by the best of my ability, I am going to take my time, weave my way through this because I want no misunderstanding this morning. If you are in my ministry and you are working in my ministry, I want you to understand where I have come from and where I am at and then where I am going. I just think that it is a time now that we have to do that.

## I. The Necessity of Vision

We know the Bible is very clear on the fact that God's people are in need of a vision from God. Proverbs chapter 29 verse 18 clearly tells us, and it is a familiar passage, and bear with me this morning, I need to go over a few things to put it into a flowing context for you today, because I want you to totally completely understand. There will come a time if you stay working in my ministry that I will ask you what part of this you did not understand. So listen carefully this morning. We are going some places, and it is a thing where God has done some tremendous things to take this church and training up the leadership to meet the demand that God has so graciously given us.

*Proverbs 29:18*

*Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*

Let us pray. Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. We thank You for today. We thank You, Father, for, I thank You for the last couple of weeks. I thank You especially for last Sunday, Lord, Sunday night. Jim did a great job on Sunday morning, but for me, the real blessing in my life was to see the men and the women whose lives have been changed, whose marriages have been saved, whose kids have come to Christ under this ministry, whose lives came out of the darkness of sin in the light of the glorious gospel, and now so many of them with me in ministry of this church. Help me today, Father. I am as needy as ever could be. I have so much in my heart today, and I pray, Father, that You will be able to clear my thoughts, put my words into a workable, understandable format, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

I would tell you that I slept good last night. I would be lying to you. I have thought about this morning for so long. I have thought about this time with me as your pastor and you as my people. Where we go, how to get you to see and understand. I had to wait for all the pieces. Believe me, we now have all the pieces. When you read Proverbs 29:18, we all understand and we all use that for a church. I do not know if you have ever saw the context, but the context of that is your children. If you read the verses before that, you will find that the vision that he is talking about directly is fathers providing a vision for your children. I get sick and tired. I have heard it all my ministry. Parents that want to blame everybody else for their kids' failures in whatever, and you hear it all the time. I get so sick and tired of people trying to blame somebody else, blame something else or whatever. Let me tell you something. Fathers, if you do not provide a vision for your family, there is a great chance you are going to lose them. It is not

about somebody else. It is not about the school they go to. It is not about, it is about your providing a vision for them, and that is where it is at today. Yet at the same time, it is true of any pastor with his church. The pastor is responsible for the vision, and just like a family, if the pastor does not have a vision from God and be able to communicate that, then the people are going to wind up, as so many of God's people do, just wandering around in life, probably saved and on their way to heaven, but what a waste of their life of never fulfilling the real purpose that God saved them for.

## II. Elements of a Successful Ministry

You will remember a couple of weeks ago when we were talking about vision, and we have talked about it in several different aspects. I gave you the four key elements of a successful ministry based on vision. Four things that any pastor has to be able to do well to succeed in doing what God has called him to do if he has that vision to do that.

1. A pastor has to know where he is going. Trying to lead people without you knowing for certainty where you are going will always be a disaster.
2. He has to know not only where he is going, he has to know how he is going to get there. You have to have a plan. Some of you boys may pastor someday, I am sure you will. God is raising up leadership here that we already sent Bob Greg out, and now his boys are handling that. It will just be a matter of time before God raises somebody up and God gives you the burden and we send you out. I am telling you right now, you better understand not only what God wants you to do, but you better know how you are going to get there. You do not take over a church and then scratch your head and get a bunch of books or get on the internet or talk to people and then find out what to do. You need to know what you are doing before you do it.
3. He has to be able to communicate that to the people. They need to clearly see and understand where you are going and how you are going to get there.
4. You have to, as a pastor, develop the opportunities for your people to grow, learn the ministry through the open doors of God giving you that through that in your ministry, they grasp the vision.

I have told you many, many times, and it is so true, everything rises and falls on leadership. Leadership is the key in every aspect. I know I use it in the aspect of pastors and churches and leaders in churches if you are working in a ministry someplace, but it is true of the world. I mean, you look at Germany when they had a good leader under Martin Luther, the whole country came to Christ. When they had a bad leader under Adolf Hitler, the whole thing went down the tubes. It is in our country, you see it. Good leaders will always do good things, and the people will prosper. Bad leaders will always bring us down and give us the problems that we have today. I remember when he talked about how it is true in your family, but nowhere is crucial leadership more important than in the Bible. The nation of Israel was simply this: they were good or they were bad based on their leadership. When they had Moses, they were great. When they had Joshua, they were great. When they had David, they were great. When they had Ahab, they were terrible. When they had Rehoboam and Jeroboam, they were a disaster. By the time you get to

their demise, the last bad leader they have is a guy by the name of Coniah, a despised broken idol. I am going to tell you, in the New Testament church today, God's people are totally dependent on good, solid leadership. A pastor who takes a church who cannot lead, who does not understand how to lead, who does not know how to build leaders. You see the churches around us today that are filled with that.

### III. The Definitive Passage on Vision

This idea of a vision, and again I am going over some things that I am sure you already know, but this idea or concept of a vision is found in, as you know, the book of Habakkuk.

*Habakkuk 2:1-3*

*I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.*

*And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.*

*For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*

Now, it is places like this years ago when the great leaders taught me about leadership and vision, it was places like this that they started. This is the definitive passage on vision in the Bible. It is a definitive passage for vision for your family, and it is also the passage for me as a pastor of this church. There are several things that I want you to note here, and we have never really looked at it this way, but today is the day. Several things to note here on a vision and the four aspects that I have just given to you about what a pastor or a leader needs to do well.

The first thing it tells me as a pastor that I am to stand my watch on a tower. The Bible tells us that a New Testament pastor and the deacons and the elders and whatever other pastors he may have in his church, they are for the watch care of your soul.

*Hebrews 13:17*

*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

Every pastor, every leader, every head of every ministry in this church or any church, someday you are going to give an account for your leadership and the stewardship over somebody's soul that God entrusted to you. They can see things on a wall in a tower. A pastor, he can see things that you cannot see in your life yet. He has had the experience, he has had the years, he knows the pattern of things. He knows what will make you or break you, and very frankly, when a lot of you young Christians, some of the things that you think are really good are the worst things you put in your life, but you cannot see it yet. The job of a pastor is to watch for your soul, to look out for you. Why? Because God has something He wants you to do, and I will tell you right now, if you do not think the devil is not going to try to stop you with where you are at and where you

are trying to go, you are too naive about things. You have not had the experience, you have not had your nose bloodied enough yet, you have not been shot at, hated, written about, cussed at. You have had it pretty easy, and you get saved and you think, “Oh, la-di-da-di-da, heaven came down and glory filled my soul.” Let me tell you something, the moment you decide you are going to do something for God, the devil is going to be, you are going to be in his crosshairs. The tower of David talked about in Isaiah 28, the wall that you built, example back in Ezra and Nehemiah, we have talked about it many times, the wall, the city around the city of Jerusalem, and what that means for your life, for your family. God could have just saved you and let you go. He established the church. Jim said it last week better than I could ever say it, the church is God’s structure for your protection. It is the institution, it is the only institution that God set up where you can have, if it is done right, the protection that nothing can ever hurt you, nothing can ever get to you. You, like the cave of Adullam a couple of weeks ago, is your place of refuge.

The second thing I want you to see in verse one is he says, “watch to see what he will say unto me, and what shall I answer when I am reproved.” Now there are a couple of things here that, and I have never really got into this before, but today is Vision Sunday. You are going to leave here understanding the vision from the Bible, understanding my vision, and then you will have to decide where you fit into it. The first thing that I notice out of here is that you do not just listen to what God says, you watch what God says. Listening and watching. Most of God’s people will listen, but they do not watch what is going on around them. They do not see that God has put a thousand examples in your life if you are saved through sermons and messages and the Bibles you get taught by the people in this church that teach you the Bible. You do not just listen, you watch what God says. Then he says, note the vision. You have to answer the vision based on God reproving you of some things. Learn that the process and through the process of growing spiritually will be from the good things in your life and from the bad things in your life. You learn from both. We do not really learn much from all the blessings and the good things in life. Oh, we thank God and we give God the honor and glory, congratulations, but do you learn from the things that are wrong in your life? Do you look at the things that when God reproves you, when the pastor reproves you, when you hear a sermon from me or somebody in this church or some discipleship or where and it goes against and you know it is wrong in your life, how do you answer when you are reproved? The vision depends on it.

Then the next thing he says, “make it plain upon the tables.” Not for me, this has always been a kind of a thing where I have always looked at it, tables in a literal sense. When we have our Bible study, we used to set up tables, and I did most of my teaching and most of my, for the most of the nineteen years, we would do Institute and Bible study, and I know it does not really mean anything, but it was on the tables. Now I understand that in a biblical sense, it is the tables of your heart. I get that. It certainly is the table of God’s fellowship. I understand that. But the pastor’s job and the job of every leader when you have a vision is to make it plain upon the tables of the people’s hearts. You have to know where I am going. We have had people come to this church over the years. I have watched people come and watch people go. It is part of every church, and I have always said this, and I believe this today just like I always did, I believe this church is here for a number of reasons, but for one of the reasons it is most definitely here is to bring people in to see if you really want to do what God wants you to do. Some do and some do

not. I am okay with that. I have told you from day one, this church is not for everybody. I am looking for a particular kind of person. We will get to that in a moment. Making God's vision for this church plain to you so you can understand it.

Then the next thing he says in verse two, once you understand it, "that he may run that readeth it." So when I lay it out to you, you can take it now and you in your own life within my ministry, this church, you can run with it. This, as you probably well can figure out by now, this will be what Paul talks about in the race of 2 Timothy 4:7. This will be the race against time of your life, in my life. The Bible says that we have on an average threescore and ten. The Bible says that our life is a season, four seasons. Some of you are in the springtime, some of you are in the summer, some of you are in the autumn of your life, and some of us are in the winter. But how did you run the race? See, that is the question. The only way you run the race, and the Bible says you have to run it lawfully, the only way you run the race is for somebody to make it plain to you that when you see the vision, because God's people need a vision, and the pastor's job is to give you the vision. It is not the deacon's job, it is not a Sunday school teacher's job, it is not somebody, it is the pastor's job to give you the vision, and then you run with it, and you run lawfully.

The next thing in verse three, the fulfillment of God's vision will be in God's time, not mine. It will take for a pastor, for you and your own personal family or your own ministry if you are working with me, it will take patience and time for God to bring it into a usable format. I have waited and watched and labored for nineteen years now. I saw this day the moment in my kitchen when Pastor Whalen came and it was what, twelve or fourteen of you there. I saw this day then and began to work toward this day, and it took some time, it took some patience. I have seen, as I said, I have seen people come and I have seen people go. I have watched God bring in the quality people and remove the ones that would hinder the ministry. Learning to wait on God will be, and listen to me, learning for you to wait on God will be your most valuable asset in ministry, in life, because if you are watching what he says and what he is doing around you, verse one, you will learn how God does things. You see, that is one of the problems we all have. You are all saved probably and you are all good people, but the problem is you do not know how God does things. You have not watched the patterns, you have not seen in your life, you have not been through anything bad, you have had no real tragedy in your life, you have had no one hating you, you have had no one writing volumes about you on the internet or on this or that or Facebook. Your life has been pretty cheesy. You have just skated along. Let somebody else pay the price. You enjoy the fruits of the labor without ever having to get a pain in your back of bending over and picking it up. I understand that. I get that. I realize that. I realize that better than you think I realize that. Learning God's patterns, knowing when something is truly of God and when it is not. You young singles Christians that are my singles that I work with and have dedicated to train you, this is the number one thing you have to look out for because you are vulnerable. It is easy for you to buy into something that is not really having anything to do with the Bible. We see it all the time. I have seen it all the time, and it is a thing where you have to learn through the patterns.

Then the next thing he says about this vision in verse three, that it will surely come. And now, nineteen years of labor, sweat, and tears, here we are. The right time, with the right people, with

the right vision, in the right place. Now we are all going to get on the same page moving forward.

## IV. My Vision for the Church

The first thing I want to do here, and you could classify what I just gave you as my introduction, but I want you to understand totally and completely my vision, where I am coming from. I would say and tell you that my vision has a couple of parts to it overall. In my early years, when I watched and listened to what God was saying and what he was doing around me, I got the vision that when I would pastor a church, that I was going to build a Philadelphia church in the Laodicean church period. We all know that that comes out of the book of Revelation chapters one, two, and three, and we are not going to waste the time. It basically comes down to the church of the open door versus the church of the closed door. I saw that. I realized what was going on around me, and I was determined to get to where I am right now. I never worried about people. My job is to preach the truth, let God bring in the people and get the people out if that is what He wants. That is never my concern. My concern is understanding that God gave me a vision, and it is my job as pastor to communicate that vision.

I saw this as God taught me my church history and obviously the development of the Bible, and I knew the second part of my vision was not only to build a Philadelphia church, but the only way I could do that was to build Philadelphia Christians. I was a youth pastor. I was hired as a youth pastor. I look back on that now where I am at today, and I see clearly the hand of God doing in my life what He did. That was my first open door in the ministry, and I realized within the first year that I could never fulfill the burden of the vision in my heart as a youth pastor. I had in my heart that I wanted to build men and women like you, invest my life into them like I do with you, give them part of my ministry as I do to you, but I realized as a youth pastor that was impossible. I had them for what, one, two, three, four years maybe, and then they were gone, and I got a new crop coming in. Now for some guys, I guess that is true. I guess there are guys, and I have known guys out there that their whole life is they want to be, that is what they want to do, they want to be a youth pastor. God bless them. It was the most frustrating time in my life. It was the hardest time for me not being able to get past where I was growing. I do not tell you this wrong, I grew out of the high school class, I grew out of the kid. I loved them, but what I wanted was not just in my high school, I wanted them down the line where I had them forever, not just for two or three years, and it was the most frustrating thing of my world. But God knew what He had for me, and it was not long after that that He moved me out of the high school into what they called back then the college and career class, which was college kids. I quickly manipulated that into our gigantic Sunday school that had everybody in it, because through the preaching of the Word of God and working with people, that is when I designed the discipleship lessons and everything else, had my own Bible Institute back then, and the thing grew, and now I was out of place, and then I moved into pastoring. But now I was out of place. I had finally found the spot that I could build Christian character through the Word of God for as long as they could stand it, and I realized now that my vision was beginning to be fulfilled of making investment in people's lives, as I said a couple of weeks ago, like that sculptor with the king chipping away all the pieces that did not look like Christ.

## V. The Model of Timothy: Building Leaders

For this aspect of my vision, the pattern for me, how to do that, like I said, you are not only to know what you do, you have to know how you are going to get there. For me, the model and the pattern was so clear in the Bible, and this is what I used. It is the model found in the life of young Timothy. Timothy is the model pastor. He is also the model Christian along with Titus and Philemon, but we have more information on him, and for all of us, and back then for me, a study of his life relates to the vision that I had as Paul took him through his vision and building leadership in his life to the place where he became actually Paul's replacement.

Now I do not know if you are aware of this or not, you probably are. The first time Timothy shows up in our Bible will be in Acts chapter 16, and then again he pops up in 2 Timothy chapter 1, and we can glean so much and learn from him as we look for in building leadership. We see in his life one, what it takes on my part and the tremendous responsibility that I have, but then it also shows what it takes on your part, and this is what we all need to leave here today understanding.

Let us look at Acts chapter 16 for a moment.

*Acts 16:1-5*

*Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek;*

*Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.*

*Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.*

*And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.*

*And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.*

Now we are about to see and hopefully understand for us what is laid out, the Bible model for God through a man in the Bible, Paul, but in this church through a man who is your pastor, me. Building young men and young ladies, couples, moms and dads, whoever fit for the leadership role of ministry through Paul and Timothy. Years ago, as I saw this and began to put together how I was going to do it, I saw four key areas here.

The first thing I see in verse one is it looks like from all indications that in Timothy's life his mom is saved but his dad is not. It looks that way from the way it is stated, and if somebody would say, "Well, I do not see it that way," hey, then when you get your own church, you can preach it any way you want to preach it. This one is mine, and it looks like, whether it is or not, I need it to be, it looks like his mom, it says she believed, but his father was a Greek. That would lead me to believe that his father probably, and later on he talks about the faith of his grandmother and his mother, never mentioned his dad, so it is a safe thing. What does that tell me? It tells me, kids, that God will use you no matter what your home life is. Some of you come

from broken homes, some of you come from homes where your parents hate the Bible, hate you coming to church. Some of you come from the fact that you go from places where you had no Christian parents, nobody really at home will teach you anything about the Bible. It tells me that none of that matters if you really want to be what God wants you to be. God will take you in no matter what your home situation is, so do not blame it on that. Let us not say, just like the parents, I had a parent one time, she said, "Well, my son hangs out with this guy, and he is a terrible influence on him." I talked to the other mother, and she said about the other woman's kid, "Well, my son..." It is not about that. It is about you have a choice to make, and it does not matter. It does not matter if you are an orphan, it does not matter if you have no parents, it does not matter if they are terrible, it does not matter if they are good, it does not matter if one is saved, it does not matter if they hate everything. You have your own choice to make because Timothy did.

I watched last Sunday night, wow, I cannot tell you what that was for me, but can I be honest with you? I love you to death, but let me be honest with you, some of you young guys and some of you young gals, you should not even be here. The debt was stacked against you. The life you came out of, your parents, the circumstances you were involved in, you should have never made it. You should be still on drugs, still out there fornicating, still doing all the things that you did. You know what I see when I see you? It hit me last Sunday night. You know what I see when I see some of you who by all standards, you should not be in church today, you should not love that Bible, you should not be in ministry? You know what I saw? I saw in you the trophies of God's grace. The fact that God would reach down, because God does not care about your circumstances. He did not care how bad your home life was. He does not care what you were into. All He cares about when He puts a man of God in your life and gives you a book and gives you a church, what are you going to do with it? That is all that matters.

The next thing I see in verse two that says that he was well reported of by the brethren. Timothy was in his New Testament local church and allowing God to grow him. Jim's message last week was again, was one of the highlights of it, was the only recognized structure in the world to teach and train you is the New Testament local church. You get your Bible and you submit to the Word of God and church leadership, and that is where you get your training. The model is clear, it does not come from any other place.

The next thing I see in verse three, the Bible says that him would Paul have to go forth with him. Now I have to show you this, and these are little things that you young Christians do not get yet, so sometimes you get caught up in a false spirituality. When Paul took him, the first thing he did with him, he had him circumcised. You know that meant nothing. We are way past circumcision being anything now connected with the Bible. It shows me that Paul understands something that many young Christians do not understand. This is why you need somebody in your life to show you. I guarantee you when the word got around Christianity in the church that Paul had taken Timothy and circumcised him when circumcision was done with, and Colossians says it is past, and yet he did it. I am sure the great spiritual brethren had a fit. Do not tell me about it. I have been in this business, I have been around the block a couple of times and bought the T-shirt. I know how it goes. I know exactly how it goes. The brethren go ballistic. "Well, I just, do you

believe that Paul had him circumcised? Why, circumcision is over! It was nailed to the cross! I just do not understand why is Paul doing..." I know, you know what Paul is doing? Paul is understanding that within his liberty there are some things that he is allowed to do that even though some of the spiritual brethren may not like it. You think that is bad, you ought to see in Acts chapter 21 what he does. Yet if you look at that, here he had him circumcised, but when you go over to Galatians chapter 2, I think it is verse 13, he has Titus, he does not get him circumcised. You know what? God's people do not even know the difference between the two and why Paul saw in him the reason why he chose to take him. God is all over this. Paul saw in him what young Timothy could not see in himself. Why? He is on the wall, he is in the tower, he is on a watch, and any pastor worth his salt ought to see in you, every one of you, what you have that God wants before you see it. That is the pattern. Paul not only had his own vision, but he had an understanding that God put Timothy in his path, and now he sees how Timothy will be part of his vision for ministry, and he uses the only real biblical format for training leaders, and that is on-the-job training. Taking a young man, young lady, mom and dad, couple, and bringing them into your established ministry and then working with them, seeing in them what they cannot see in themselves, and then orchestrating the things that in time God shows them. God always uses the man, and I know the great spiritual John, "Well, God..." I know, I know, I know better than you do, but the Bible says there was a man sent from God whose name was John, and in my life there was a man sent from God whose name was Mel, and in Mel's life there was a man sent from God whose name was Pete. Do not become so hyper-spiritual that you lose sight of the pattern. God uses a man in your life, and it will be the pastor that He gives you. It is that simple. You do not like it, there is a door there and a door there. That is the pattern, that is how it works.

Then he says in verse four and five, "And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep." They worked a ministry together there. He got in Paul's ministry. He did not look for somebody else to teach him. He recognized that he was in Paul's ministry, and Paul is the one who God put in his life to teach and train him. Churches get established by God's people getting established. That is the pattern I follow. I do not know any other pattern, and in my life, and I am not 100% on this because I am fallible like anybody else, but I try to have a biblical pattern for everything I do.

## VI. The Character of Timothy: Developing Leaders

Then we see in 2 Timothy chapter 1 the second aspect of this pattern of building leaders with Paul and Timothy.

*2 Timothy 1:1-7*

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,*

*To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

*I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;*

*Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I might be filled with joy;*

*When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*

*Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.*

*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

Now here we see four or five more things, character qualities in young Timothy's life that Paul had seen in him, and every pastor worth his salt will see in you and then help develop it.

The first thing he says, "Timothy, my dearly beloved son," and of course he says in the Lord. That means that Paul was directly responsible for Timothy. Maybe he won him to Christ, I do not know. Maybe he just hooked up with him there when he was already saved, it does not really tell us. But I thought of Jim last week when he was talking about it, he was talking about the fact that Mel Sabaka was Jim's and my father in the Lord. He was the Apostle Paul of my life. There is no question about it. Now I will tell you right now, Mel did not do everything right, and there were things that I would see in his ministry that I do not do today. You would never catch me bad-mouthing Mel Sabaka to anybody. He is the man God put in my life. He is the man who sacrificed for me. He paid the price for me, and I am going to tell you right now, I would not be where I am if that man had not made an investment in me. Before I got right with God, I was a jerk. My mom and dad getting mad, I do not know, at something at church when I was five or six years old, quit going to church. My mom dressed me up, I still remember, dressed me up in my little suit and tie, I looked good even at five, sent me across the street to church. How long do you think that lasted? You do not send your kid to church, you take your kid to church. So I went the way of the world. Every Tuesday night they had visitation. They do not have visitation, I do not think, anymore. You get shot. You would go knock on people's doors and you come in the door, say, "Hey, I am from Canton Baptist Temple. We have missed you. You have not been to church for a while, and we would just like to know, we would like to have you come back." That is what you did. You got a handful of cards. I met, he came to my house every Tuesday night with a bunch of kids my age. I am a teenager now. I learned very quickly that I told my mom, "Tell him I am not home." I would shoot out the back door, go down the alley, and be gone. I do not want to talk to those guys. So I did that probably, oh, I do not know, ten weeks, twelve weeks, I do not know. And then one night they came at two o'clock, knocked on the door at seven o'clock. I said, "Tell him I am not here." Blew out the back door. Guess who was waiting for me back there? I thank God that he did that. I thank God that a man cared enough about me that he just did not write me off. He should have written me off, but God should have written me off. But when I came down those stairs, I was not happy. I was caught, I was trapped, I was busted. But that was the beginning of my journey to where I am at today. He loved Timothy. Mel loved me, and I love you. I will never write you off. I just will not. It is a thing where you may write yourself off, I will never write you off.

I look at the relationship that they had. My vision for you is just like the vision that Mel had for me. There were people who did not like Mel, and they did not like his style, but they better never

say nothing to me about it. God only knows where I would be if he was not out beside that back door that night. Then when I got right with God after my dad died, his whole family adopted me. Jean became my mother in the Lord. He became my father in the Lord. I became his Timothy. He became my Paul. Was he perfect? Absolutely not. Did he do everything right? No. But he was there for me. You know what some of you guys' problem is? You get a little Bible, you get puffed up, you think you know something, and then you forget the price that was paid for you to have what you have today.

Paul prayed for his Timothy. I pray for everybody in the church, but I will tell you, I have your name on a list if you are in my ministry and you are part of what I am doing. I promise you, I pray for you every day. My whole last Sunday night was nothing more than a prayer time of thanking God for every one of you, and you knew nothing about it, and that is the way it should be. I promise you guys, and I am telling you right now, maybe not now, but in some time, not everybody was happy with Paul's ministry. Not everybody liked the way he did it, and you see that from the book of 1 Corinthians, and then he lists the guys. Do not kid yourself for a second, in this church, including this one, not everybody is happy the way I do things.

Then he says Timothy's unfeigned faith. It was not fake. It was first in his grandmother and then in his mother and then in him. No mention of his father. The power of godly parents even when it is a broken home. Again, Timothy's situation was not perfect, and many of yours is not. We have covered that, but God will put the people in your life to get you where He wants you to be if you will let Him. Many of you have no Christian family at home. The only Christian family you have is at this church. Again, in my madness and lunacy, I have designed this church to be a family, not just an institution of religion or theology. Family first.

Then he says in verse six, Paul will stir up the remembrance of the gift that is in Timothy. Let me just say this to you, Timothy's gift was pastoring, and I am sure that some of you young men will pastor at some point in time. I have no doubt in my mind. Paul saw that in him before he did, and through the New Testament local church, his ministry allowed God to develop him. Paul took him under his wing and developed that gift, and my job as your pastor is to see that gift as it comes alive in your life before you see it and even after you see it. My job is through the preaching to keep it stirred up, keep you remembering it, because it is so easy to forget it. I take the vision and you and develop you, and in this, God's gift will be clear in time, and you now will have your own vision of what God wants you to do. That is the biblical pattern for it, but it has to go through the pastor. It has to go through the structure. You do not get it off the internet. You do not get it by listening to some preacher out there that is a great preacher but he has no clue about ministry. Those are all good, I do it all my life, I have done it, but I never lost sight of the fact that God structures the New Testament church and the pastor He gives you. You say, "Well, you just say that." Hey, go to any church, pick another one and go to it, and I will tell you the same thing about that guy. You get this idea that the grass is greener on the other side of the hill. Well, where do you see the water bill?

## VII. The Danger of Getting Off God's Plan

The danger of getting off God's plan in your life. Now I am going to say something to you that probably some of you are not going to like. I do not care. This is my Sunday, this is my church, this is my ministry. I have allowed you to be part of it, so suck it up. I have to have something a little stronger.

Several years ago, maybe ten, I had a young man in our church that was, he was a good kid, he was a kind of a young Christian, and he always had a side to him that was a little on the spiritual Pharisee side. He came to me one day, and he had been listening to a pastor, I will not tell you who the guy is. He had been listening, and the guy is a good preacher, there is no question about him, he is a good preacher. So he is listening to this guy, and he gets the idea that this guy's church is right for him and better than my church, our church. So he comes in and he says to me, "I am going to move down to so-and-so, and I am going to go to church there because I believe he is really doing, he is really preaching the Bible like I am not." And he says, "I think I could really learn the Bible from him," like he could not learn it from me, but this is where he was. So he goes down there. Now I have told you before that a lot of good preachers, they do not make good pastors, and a lot of good pastors, they do not make good preachers. You have to find the one that has got the balance. So he goes down there. When he goes down there, he has got this grandiose idea that he is now in the millennium, he is in Mecca. This guy can really preach, and he is a good preacher, but now he finds out that there is no ministry in this church. You do not do anything. This church is that old mindset out of the old sixties and the seventies that the church is run by three or four top guys, and all you do is come Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, and tithes. There is no discipleship, there is no ministry, nothing for you to get involved in, and it is a thing where there is nothing for you, and it is all run by the good old boys club.

We had one of our young men in our church here that you would know, his brother got transferred down there, and this kid is a good, this kid is a good, good guy, good preacher, would be a great asset to any church, I would love to have him. But he got transferred down there, and so he goes to this church, and again, nothing. This guy wins people to Christ, they need to be disciplined. He has to disciple him in his home because if the pastor finds out he is disciplining him, he is going to be viewed as somebody who is trying to take over the church and be booted out. It is out there. The same church had another couple go down there, and they were really super spiritual people, they were the Pharisees of the Pharisees. So they moved down there, and they think, "Wow, this is going to be great, we are going to have this, we got it, got it, bobs this, bobs that." "You know, I am going down there and we are going to really get into a church." Well, they got into some serious marital problems, serious marital problems. It was not just a little knocked down, it was serious marital problems. So they called the pastor, this great preacher who can lay out the Bible. So they go see the pastor or call the pastor. You know what the pastor says? "I do not do marital counseling. I do not get into problems between husband and wives." The last time I talked, she divorced him. They got a divorce. The last time I talked to the guy, he called me on the phone, it was the week before he picked up a gun and blew his brains out. But what do you do with that? I will tell you what you do. You young Christians, do not believe everything you see. Do not believe everything you hear. Just because a man has got a great preaching ability, and they do, does not mean they know squat about ministry or care, and not caught up in some legalistic mindset that you are going to be squelched.

Zach said it better when he preached when I was in Ohio. I have always loved him preaching, but I think this was your best sermon you ever preached because I stole it, and I do not usually steal your sermon, but I stole this one. He said, you know what was on the prodigal son, and he talked about the fact when the prodigal son got out there and was doing his thing, he said what the prodigal son did not know that he had everything he needed already in the father's house. You have everything you need right here. That is right.

## VIII. Opportunities for Growth and Ministry

Now I have given you my three areas of a vision and my vision: what to do, how I am going to do it, and communicate it to you. Now I am going to show you how we use the opportunities. Remember, gentlemen and ladies, leadership is not about your ability, it is about responsibility, understanding the vision and your responsibility to it. The Bible says about leadership and responsibility in Luke 12:48, "To whom much is given, much is required."

The first thing, learning and growing through self-examination of what and how we do things here, taking responsibility not only for the good things but also for the not-so-good things. It is my job to set the bar for working in my ministry because the vision, Hebrews 13:17, I am going to give an account for it someday. Every church, every pastor will have his own philosophy and standard of ministry, and I am 100% okay with that. This is why I do not get in other churches' businesses. This is why I do not get in with other pastors. I have my church, my vision. They have theirs. They deal with theirs. I have to deal with mine. Some of them are really good at it, some are not so good at it. For me, I have spent nineteen years teaching you the ministry, people ministry, Bible Institute, our Bible study format, giving you the freedom to ask me whatever you want to ask about the Bible, and obviously Sunday morning. I believe in ministry and giving you part of my ministry. I believe in delegation of ministry. I am not one of these guys who squeezes everybody out. I like to push everybody in. I will allow a young man or a young lady to have whatever my ministry they are willing to take responsibility for, but to do it right. I am not a micromanager. Some of these guys out there, I know, boy, I have been with them forever, they, I have known about them forever, they micromanage everything you do because they really cannot think that you can do anything better than they can. Let me tell you something, if you are in this church five years or more, you ought to be doing things better than I do them. That is what I expect of you. I am not going to micromanage you. I am not going to tell you this or that. I am going to help you where I can, but I want you to have a part of what I am doing, and I want you to develop yourself through it as I help you develop it. I will delegate to you, but I have a proven process of ministry. Say it one more time for the slow class: I have a proven process of ministry that works, and I expect you to follow that pattern. I will give you latitude to be successful, and thank God for you, and we will praise the Lord. I will also give you latitude to fail, and we will praise the Lord for that, and we will learn through it, and we will move on, the good and the bad, because a true leader will learn lessons in both success and failure. When someone has a teachable spirit like Timothy, he learns the lesson from his mistakes. He does not puff himself up and try to defend the undefendable. He grows past it. He learns from them, and believe me, I know, pal, I made my share of them.

So the first thing we are going to do is we are going to begin to evaluate everything we do. We just had camp. I am going to sit down with Zach, sit down separately with Danny, and we are going to, I am going to talk to some of the key counselors, and we are going to look at what we did. We are going to look at what we accomplished, and we accomplished some things, and we are going to look at what we did not accomplish. We are going to look at what was good, and there were some great things, and we are going to look at what we could have done better. And we are going to learn from it. That is the only way it works. Up to this point, we were not ready for this, but with what is coming now, we have to take this thing to the next level, and I am telling you right now, there is not one thing in my life that I do, no matter what it may be, including this sermon, including Institute. There is not one thing I do in my life that when I am done, I do not sit down and compress and look at what I did and how I did it to see if I could have done it better. I want God to get every ounce of everything we do. And the only way that happens is to us examine ourselves that we do not keep making the same mistakes, and we learn and grow through it, because that is what leadership is.

I want to streamline the discipleship ministry over the next couple of months. I want to look for somebody who will take that over for me. I work with you. I have some great things I want to incorporate in it, but I need somebody that will say, "Boy, that is my bag, Bob, let me do it. Show me, work with me, help me." Because I delegate, and we are going to the place now and the level now where, oh my. Here we are on our way. You young guys who preach, you preach at the mission, you preach at the nursing home, you preach at the jail. John was there this morning with one of his other guys, and I want you to know, when I do, when John records it, I listen to your messages. John will record them down at the mission and he will send them to me. Some are good, some are not so good. But you have to learn how to preach. You have to learn how to give a delivery. Now you do not get that off a tape. You do not get that by reading somebody's book. You get that by studying good preaching, realizing, let somebody who knows show you. We have a number of guys in this church. I know right now that some of the older guys are taking some of you younger guys and helping you, and I have never told them to do that, but they are doing it. We are going to do it on a greater, larger scale. Because if you are going to preach here, you are going to be good at it. You are going to know what to do. You are not going to just rabbit trail all around the place or get up there where everybody is wondering where you are at because you do not know where you are at. There is a method to delivery and putting a message together and preaching. Your prayer line groups. We are going to evaluate everything we are doing. Everything in this church.

Another classic line from Zach's message. I think this was my favorite. When he started out when he was talking about camp, and I have used this, I do not know, about a thousand times. You know what he said? He said, and this is true of you, you do not need anything new. Now you are going to get new stuff because we are just in the Bible, but you do not need anything new. You do not need to get online and do this or do that. What you need to do is what he said. You need to just start using what you already have. Amen.

The second area, the core of our leadership today in this church simply came out of my people ministry classes. You will remember, we started out a number of years ago, and I brought you

through and taught you every aspect of dealing with people through the examples in the Old Testament. I have not done that for a while. A couple of reasons, COVID-19 hit, and then the fact that we finished the Old Testament, and there really was not much to go through the New Testament that I wanted to accomplish because all the types, for the most part, are in the Old Testament. So I purposely waited to now to incorporate the next level. What I am about to tell you is called Ministry Training Time or People Ministry Two. I am going to take my singles, you who are involved in my ministry on whatever level, you are working with a high school, you are working with a Bible Explorers, you are working with a Timothy, or you are just working with me. We are going to take a time, and the first one is going to be September 9th, that is a Friday at 6:30 here at the church. So put that on your calendar. I am going to begin to sit down with you, and we are going to dialogue and talk, and I am going to let you ask me, I am going to teach you, I am going to show you, I am going to screw off the top of my head and pour into your mind and heart fifty plus years of what I have learned. We will talk about every aspect of ministry. We will talk about everything that goes on. We will see how the devil never sleeps, and that he is always going to be there to try to stop you whatever you are trying to do. I am going to tell you, I totally get it and understand what I am saying, and I am going to say this, where we are going right now, and the next level we are going to, do not you think for a moment that this church is not going to pay a price to get there? Anything that you do for God in your life, you are going to pay a price for it. I am telling you right now, this church has faced some problems in the past, we paid the price in the past, you get ready to pay for another one, because you are going to a level that is unheard of. We are going to get there in a minute. I am going to show you the ins and the outs of the ministry. There is going to be no taping, there is going to be no YouTube. We will take time to talk about sensitive things. I will lay out people, I will lay out ministries, we will look at every aspect so you can learn what I have learned in over fifty some years in the ministry. You better get everything you can from me while you still can get it. As an old farmer preacher said one time, and most of you young kids will not get this one, he says, "Get all you can and then can all you get." Learning the philosophy of ministry. Now, this is designed for my singles, but anybody is welcome to come. If you want to learn and you are involved in ministry someplace along the line, I want you there, I want you to learn, I really want your input. Because many of you have experienced things that these young single guys and gals have not. So it will be a molding time together that ministry and understanding, my vision and philosophy of ministry will come out on the other side.

Then I want to talk to you, and there are other things that we will put in as we go, but the thing I want to talk to you about now is something that is called simply, you know me in my military terms, Operation Arkansas. Many years ago, I put teams together to literally go across the world. I sent teams to churches all across this globe to teach discipleship. Those same discipleship lessons that you have in your hands have been translated in over forty different languages. There are churches in Russia, there are churches everywhere across this world are using those lessons today because of what those teams did back in the day. I had two hundred people, we put them in teams of ten, twelve, thirteen or fifteen, and they literally at times were crossing each other in the sky, as one was coming home and the other one was going to Europe or the Philippines or South America or Russia or the Ukraine. Some of you were part of that. Some of you have the fondest memories that most people do not have of Hell Weekend. There are still, believe it or not, videos

around of those days when, boy, we trained them. We trained them hard, we trained them long, and we trained them. They were going into communist countries, they were going into East block countries, they were going into situations where there were revolts and things going on, and they had to be understanding what they were going into and be prepared for it. I had one team one time that was in the Ukraine that got up on a Sunday morning and had to be at the airport by noon. They all got up at six, had breakfast, and found out that there was a labor strike in this city and none of the cabs, buses or trams or anything was running, and they had a fifteen mile trip to the airport. You know what they did? They packed up their backpacks, they carried everything in backpacks, they had MREs, they ate off the land, they packed up their backpack, the leader got them to a train track that led to there, and they hiked the fifteen miles and made their flight. That is what I am talking about.

I had teams in El Salvador that were down there working and preaching and doing work down there in the middle of the war. We were at a hospital one time, and I had a group of ladies and guys with me here waiting for the van to pick us up. There were armed guards, military at the hospital because of people blowing things up. Some guy came up, passed us, went over there, was throwing rocks at the guard. They just ignored him for a little bit. He kept saying something in Spanish and throwing rocks. Suddenly one of them slung a G93 off, slipped the safety off, and shot that guy right in front of my people. I have been held at gunpoint with my hands over my head with two guys with submachine guns while they went through everything I had. Those are the things that you better get ready for as leaders. We trained them. Some of you were part of it. Not only did we do that, but we went to what, one hundred churches at least in the United States where we taught them discipleship almost in every state of this country.

Along with that, I developed a circuit ride ministry. We had nine or ten churches in Kansas and Missouri, small churches that did not have a pastor. So I put together a team of my leaders back then who are here, some of them today. Each Sunday they would go out on a team of two. Some of them had to leave on Friday night because they had to drive three hundred miles to get to that church. They pastored and they taught in that church and taught the people the Word of God. The older guys in this church right now today, here today, that really are solid Bible preachers are the guys that came out of that time. Guys like Chris Schmidt, Dan Schmidt, his brother. Guys like John Busquette, guys like Jim Deraskiewicz, guys like Terry Job, guys like Brad Nelson who is pastoring a church in Lee Summit. Mike Pitts who was in New Jersey, now he is down south on Pace. Kenny Stadler down in Arkansas. Greg Kudowski. These guys and many others like them around this country and around the world today, they cut their teeth on this ministry and are the preachers they are today because of what they learned by doing what they did.

Well, God has just brought back our circuit riding ministry but even in a better way. You all noticed that Kenny and Sheila Stadler were here a couple of weeks ago. I never said anything about this except to a few people. Kenny and Sheila Stadler go back with me for thirty years. They are great people. They now live in Alma, Arkansas, about three and a half hours south of here. They were given a forty-acre church camp. They were given that by a man who gave it to them and then pays them to run it and simply told them, "Just win some people to Christ with it, I do not care what you do." They are discipling down there and working with a bunch of people.

Kenny has some health issues. Sheila told me she is doing five ladies right now with discipleship. There is no church in the area that believes the Bible. The only Bible believing church down there is super legalistic. We are going to put together Operation Arkansas. I am going to build teams with you young men and you young ladies. You are going to go down there starting out once a month. You are going to go down on a Saturday morning early. You are going to work with them. Some of the people will need to be disciplined. Some of the people will need to have a Bible study. You will have fellowship with them and then you will stay over. They have places for you to stay. You will stay over there and then you will preach the church service in the morning. Our target date for this is September 17th and 18th. Kenny and Sheila are coming up to Branson next week, and we will have our group together by then hopefully, or enough that they want to meet with us, and we are going to sit down with them and we will talk about what we are going to do. God has now opened up the opportunity for us to go down there and minister to the people through a circuit riding church. This thing is right out of the 1700s and 1800s. The people down there are excited about the fact that somebody is going to come down and teach them the Bible. They are starving for the Word of God. As I said, the Kecks, Alex and Carla who were listening this morning, they were up here. Their boy was at the weekend last week at camp. When I talk to them about it, they are only thirty or forty minutes away. They are excited. They are going to come up and be part of it.

So what I am looking at is simply this, teams of six, seven, eight people. This will be the concept that I have talked about before that some of you just thought I was just a crazy old hoot talking about it. This will be my 82nd Airborne Rapid Deployment Group. You are going to go down there and you are going to have to lead singing. You are going to have to teach and disciple. You are going to have to preach. You are going to have to do everything, and you are going to become a ministry team. This is not going to be where I take my leaders and some of you young guys and gals and send you down there and you sit down there. No, no. When I give you a team, you older guys and gals are going to meet and you are going to train my people. You are going to make them the cutting edge of ministry. You are going to prepare them to disciple, to do Bible studies. They are going to go down with their clip full and they are going to go into any situation and be able to do it. I talked to Kenny and Sheila. Old Path Boys. We are going to go down there once we get established. They have got a way to blanket that. Those three communities down there, we are going down and put on a concert. We are going to go down there and we are going to publicize it all around. We are going to bring in a hundred people. You guys are going to do the thing. I am going to sing bass, and we are going to get this thing to the point where then we are going to have one of you guys speaking, and you are going to come up and in time, this is going to develop. Not only them, but you. This is why I waited. This was the final piece of my puzzle. The Bible says in Habakkuk 2:3 that God had an appointed time for the vision. I had to be patient. I had to wait for it. It is here. Right time, right place, right people to get the job done. I am going to use that to train you singles. I am going to use that to teach you every aspect as we work together in ministry. I am going to use that to put everything together with you young couples. There are going to be young couples down there that need marital counseling. They are going to need help with this. They are going to have problems with their kids. They are going to have this. They are going to have that. This is every team is going to be all-inclusive in itself that I can drop you any place and you are prepared to do the job. You older team leaders are going to

train my younger ones on your team. It is not going to be why you go down and because you are a great preacher, you just preach and everybody else says, "Oh yeah, yeah." No, no, no. You train them. Nothing we have ever done will put the finishing touches on your life in ministry more than this. I am telling you right now, folks, I am hearing the rumble. I am hearing the rumble out there of other churches that want me to send the team to teach their church how to disciple. This thing is going to go over the top. It is the next level, and we have to be ready for it. We are changing everything we are doing. No more flying by the seat of your pants, pal. We have a structure. I am going to train you in the structure, and we are going to put these teams together. They are going to make you everything that God wanted you to be. Then go what God is going to do. We are going to get down there. We are going to do some things. We are going to get that thing going. Then God is going to reach down in one of your hearts. And you are going to say, "God has called me to pastor of that church." And then God will give us another one. And God will give us another one. God will give us another. We are there. Well, I am there. You speak for yourself.

## IX. The Spiritual Weapon of Mass Destruction

Today, I am almost done. Today we hear a lot about weapons of mass destruction, do not we? A weapon that by design kills a lot of people and literally changes the life of any country when it hits. In 9/11, most of you were probably not born by then, but in 9/11, our country was hit by some guys who took jet airplanes and made them into weapons of mass destruction, and we lost over three thousand people. You know what? By that one event, it changed everything in America. That is why it takes you six hours to get to the airport. The atomic age began in 1945 and has multiplied itself into the most destructive weapon mankind has ever seen. Governments now think that if they stockpile an arsenal of nuclear weapons, that that will be a deterrent, that if every country has the more weapons they have, the less chance that they will use them. In the war in Ukraine, the greatest fear is that Russia is going to use a weapon of mass destruction. China, we are scared to death that she invades Taiwan through a weapon of mass destruction. We gave Iraq and Iran billions and billions and billions and billions of dollars twenty years ago by one of our presidents, and all they have done with it now is to enrich their uranium, and pretty soon they are going to have their own atomic bomb, and look out Israel. I was alive in the 1960 Cuban Missile Crisis, long before all of you were born except some of you oldies but goodies. Russia planted inter-ballistic nuclear missiles in Cuba ninety miles off the Florida coast that could hit anywhere in the United States in ten minutes or less with no warning. The world was terrified, and the world trembles at Muslim countries or communist countries or whoever to unleash their weapons of mass destruction. I am going to tell you right now, I am not a prophet, though a son of a prophet, but I am going to tell you right now, this country is going to get hit. There are people that wake up, when you wake up and you think about going to work and having your favorite cereal or your fudgsicle on the couch where you are watching the news, there are people around this world that every morning when they get up, they think of one thing that is killing you, and they are going to smuggle across that southern border their own weapons of mass destruction, and it is going to hit one of our cities just as sure as I am standing here or

multiple cities because we are defenseless. We have opened it wide open, and they are going to bring them across. This country is going to get hit.

Yet we have all learned that everything that the world does is some kind of counterfeit of what God does, and I said all that to say this, spiritually speaking, the real weapons of mass destruction to this world should be God's people, you, me. I mean, did you ever really see what happens when a weapon of mass destruction goes off? It is a picture of what New Testament Christianity should be. I mean, right out of the gate, thousands of people are affected. Who is affected by your life? Then in weeks and months to come, the fallout from that weapon of mass destruction will affect many, many more people. Who in your circle is affected by what God has done in your life? Then the land will never be the same. In Chernobyl, in the Ukraine where they had the nuclear meltdown, they will not be able to re-organize, they just left everything, cordoned it off. They cannot go back in there for fifty, sixty years to live because the radiation is so high. Does your life change anything in this world?

Now let me get real with you for today, and I am done just about in a minute here, so get the guys ready for communion. Let us put up all of our phony Christian fronts here, can we? Let us dump our smokescreen hiding behind all of our excuses, and let me just ask you one simple question. At least for a moment in time, get honest with yourself while there is still time to redeem the time. When you die and go home to be with the Lord, how will your life in Christ, in this church, your family, have impacted this world with God's gospel? When you leave this world, how will your life have changed any part of this world? Do you actually are just going to be born, live your life, be a good person and never impact the world? Most of God's people cannot even impact their kids, much less the world. What is your vision? Yes, what is your vision for your life? Yes, what is your vision of what God is going to do with you? Is your vision, you are just going to get old and retire and then just what, die off someday? What is your vision? What is the gift that God has in you that needs to be stirred up? When you go home to be with the Lord, how is this world going to have been changed? I mean, come on. I mean, honestly, you say, "Well, I am just one person." John Huss was just one person. But through God's vision in his life, he changed the whole country of Czechoslovakia to Christ. Martin Luther was just one person. But through the right Bible in the vision God gave him, he brought the whole nation of Germany to Christ. The great missionaries of the Philadelphia Church Age, John Paton, Adoniram Judson, Samuel Knott, Samuel Newberry, Dr. Livingston, wherever they went, whatever country they went to, it changed. Dr. Livingston went to the deepest part of Africa. He was missing for two or three years. A New York reporter called Stanley went to find him. We talk about the cute, "Cusae, Dr. Livingston, I presume." He came around a little jungle trail, and there in the village was Livingston teaching and preaching a King James 1611 Bible. And it changed Africa. When he died, he is buried in Westminster Abbey in England. When he died, the natives cut out his heart and buried it in Africa. Where are they going to bury your heart tonight? Where are they going to bury my heart tonight? This is the reality. God saved you for a purpose.

Anybody know who Edward Kimball was? Sure some of you do. He is the guy that won D.L. Moody to the Lord. The greatest evangelist probably in the 19th century. Millions of people came to Christ through him. And some shoe salesman who was a Sunday school teacher won

him to Christ. Everybody knows who D.L. Moody is, but nobody knows who Edward Kimball was. Yet, not only did he win Moody to Christ, Moody began to preach and he got another guy saved called William Chapman. William Chapman became a great preacher and he won Billy Sunday to Christ. All from one guy who nobody even knows his name. What is wrong with us? Honestly, are you really satisfied just to be where you are, who you are? No sir. Are you just satisfied to be caught up in all the little nicky picky things that are so spiritual? And lose your impact on the world. I am here to train leaders. You have to decide if that is you. God has given us the greatest opportunity. I love it in Acts 17:6. One guy.

*Acts 17:6*

*And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;*

They come to them and they are talking about two or three of the apostles. You know what they said about them? He says, "You know what these guys have done? These guys have turned the whole world upside down." Why have not you? I look at this little podunk church, nothing. Shoot, we met in a bomb shelter for how many years? Was it antique mall? Was it a little bit of everything? Yet on our website, we have over twelve hundred people that follow it every week. That is not even counting the people that get on the website. They are all over the world. They are in Ireland, they are in England, they are in Mexico, they are in Philippines, they are everywhere. This little church, the discipleship is going out across this country because of you. It has nothing to do with me, it has you. It is because you bought into my vision, allowed me to train you. So there you have it. I just unloaded nineteen years of my burden, my vision, my blood, my sweat, my tears. Now we are at the right time and the right place with the right people. Now we are at the right place, and I will take those who want to go and we will go to the world. Building in you the responsibility of a true biblical leader. No more flying by the seat of your pants.

Back when I started the people ministry, you knew it was serious. It is simply that, that a place where, it is what we are going to do. Back in the eighties, I went to a New Year's Eve service, and there had to be three thousand people there. They wanted to make the impact, so they turned out the lights and they gave everybody a candle. But they only gave about five people throughout the whole three thousand a lit candle. At the command, the people with the lit candle reached around and lighted the candles and the people next to them and them next to them, and through about thirty seconds to a minute, the whole place just glowed with candles. I thought to myself, this is what it was supposed to represent. That is what ministry should be. Just you as a candle lighting somebody else's candle. All it takes is a man with a vision at his ability to take the people God sends him to build them through his leadership to make them leaders. This is my ministry. I labored for thirty years, learning by the mistakes I made that I could put everything I had into the next nineteen years to bring us to this point. You have the benefit of criticizing me. You have the benefit of not liking everything that I do. I get it. You have the ability to pick and choose what you want. I understand it, but I am going to tell you right now, you have no idea of the price that was paid for you to have what you have today. You have no clue. You have to begin to understand that to whom much is given, much is required. You are going to have to realize that

you are going to have to pay your own price. You are not going to do your own thing anymore. We have a ministerial structure. We are going to take this thing and run with it. God is going to wind up taking some young men and young ladies out of here and develop a US of real leaders. So now you know. We are going to be on the same page going forward.

Now we will end today with the Lord's Supper. So guys, wherever you are at, you can begin to do what you have to do. I think that it is fitting to do that because the Lord's Supper is based on unity. When you come to the Lord's Supper, if you have got something against somebody else, you better get it right and restore the unity of the body of Christ or not take it. It is about togetherness. It is about no division, no schism. It is about you coming to the place where you realize that we are in this together. And we are going to have to work together. Now, when you guys are done there, I am putting the Operation Arkansas list right there. You take your time. We will have it open for a couple of weeks, and then I am going to put the teams together. So if you have decided that you want to be part of this, take the time this morning when we are done to do that.