

I. Christ as the True Vine and the Two Adams

If you have your Bibles this morning, we want to turn back to John chapter 15. It has been several weeks since we have been in John 15, and we started that the last time, I believe, when we broke out of chapter 14. We began a study of Christ as the true vine. If you remember back then, I laid out for you the aspect from Ezekiel 31 and then Judges 9 that there were seven trees in the Garden of Eden, or at least seven that were told. One of those trees is the vine tree.

When we get into John 15, where it tells us that Jesus was the true vine, then that automatically leads us to the fact that there is a vine that is not true. I showed you and laid out for you that the vine tree has two aspects in your Bible. There are two types of wine that come off of that vine tree. They are associated with that tree, and they are also associated with Christ and the devil. You are going to find where, in the garden, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, we studied it when we were there, was a vine tree. That is the devil's tree.

But when we get into the book of Romans, we find that Christ is the olive tree and the vine tree in that sense of the pure blood of the grape that came from Him that washed away our sins, found in Deuteronomy 32. Along with these trees, we also saw that there are two Adams in the Bible. Most people do not know that. Everybody knows about Adam and Adam and Eve in the garden, Genesis 1, 2, and 3. Most people do not know that Christ, when He showed up at the first coming of Christ, is called the second Adam in 1 Corinthians 15:45-49.

A study of these two men and the trees that are associated with them, and the vine tree, which gives off grape juice—pure blood of the grape, a type of Christ's blood—or fermented wine, which is the devil's cup back in Deuteronomy 32, shows us our redemption from sin by the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a very simple understanding, which I have laid out to you and talked to you about many, many times.

Where the first Adam sinned in the garden and was denied the tree of life, bringing sin upon all men so that we are all now sinners, when the second Adam showed up in the same garden with the same temptation, He prayed through the temptation. For you and for me, who were dead in trespasses of sin because of the first Adam, the second Adam, bless God, became my tree of life. All I had to do was put my faith and trust in Him to have that salvation. A study of these two men and the failure of the first Adam shows us the importance of what Christ did in the same garden as the second Adam.

A secondary study out of this great study would be that these two trees will begin the basis for a great biblical truth. Adam and Eve were faced with two trees: one was the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the other one was the tree of life. They obviously made the wrong choice. I have heard people be upset with them or talk about them. Let me tell you something, if you and I were in the same place, we would have done the same thing. When you understand that great truth, it brings home something that every day we need to remember: as in Adam and Eve in the garden, life is about the choices we make. We are always going to be faced with one tree or the other, one

choice or the other. In most cases, one choice will be in the direction of God; the other one will be in the wrong direction. The tree of life versus the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One represented life, and the other one represents death.

So that is what we got into a little bit when we started it. Today, I want to continue in John 15, and I want to look yet again at another key lesson for all of us.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Father, help us today to come to the Word of God. We thank You for the good singing this morning, for the great music, and for the great spirit that is here today of people who love You and love the Word. Thank You for our host of visitors today. We pray for those on YouTube all around the country and literally around the world. For some of them, this is very late at night; for some of them, it is early in the morning. Lord, we just pray that we will be a blessing to all of those. We ask Your hand upon all that we try to do for You, that we would always give You the honor and the glory, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

II. Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

Now I want to lay all this out to you in basically two formats. I am always interested not just in teaching you something about the Bible, but I always like you to see how you get things out of the Bible. I want to raise up a group of Bible students here, which we already have, and some of you new folks, as you come in, you are going to fall in love with the greatest book the world has ever seen, and you too are going to want to learn it on a level. So I think it is my job and my responsibility to be able to give you everything that I can so that you can use it as a tool to get out of it in time what you want to get out of it.

I am going to teach it in two formats. First of all, I am going to show you how what I just read applies to you as a New Testament Christian. But at the same time, I want to show you how some of it does not apply to you. One of the great lessons, or one of the first lessons you should learn when it comes to anybody who wants to become a Bible student, is you need to know that certain books of the Bible have to be viewed in a proper context for you to get the doctrine right. Certainly, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are four of those books that we have talked about

many, many times. I have told you, all the Bible is written for you, for your admonition, but not all the Bible is written directly to you. As you grow, you learn how to rightly divide the Bible, which says the word of truth, and you can see things and understand what you can put into your own life, but what you have to place someplace else.

With any chapter, with any verse, with any book in the Bible, we must first define, and this is nothing new to any of you, our context. The acid test for developing a context for you and me in the church will be the writings that Paul writes when he writes to his seven churches in the New Testament, starting with the book of Romans and going up to the last book that he writes to his three preacher boys. In these books, and I know you know this, so just bear with me, in these books, you are 100% safe because he is writing directly to you. There is never a time where you have to wonder who he is writing to. But when you get outside his books, then what you read must line up with something that he gives us in the books that he writes to the church for it to be able to fit to you.

You can already see here in John 15 that some of this will not line up because if we are the branches here, some of you are going to, if you do not bear fruit, get gathered up and dumped into the lake of fire. I am like, you cannot fit that into you and me, but how do you fit it? What can you fit? I am going to show you today. I want this to be more than just a lesson you go home with something with. I want you to go home also with another couple of tools in your spiritual toolbox. We are going to find that when we get outside Paul's books, we have to then, when we read something, be able to put it into another format. It is either written to the Jew or the Gentiles in general, and that is the rule you follow in determining a context. For you and for me, the foundation is Paul's writings. Everything else in the Bible has to line up with what he tells us, and if it does not, then we find another place to put it and see what he is telling us there.

John 15 is probably one of the best examples of this, and I like to use these examples to help you not only learn some great truths for your own personal life but help you be able to develop your skills with the Word of God.

III. The Purging of the Branch

Now I want to talk about two aspects of this passage. The first one will be the purging of the branch, found in John 15:2 and John 15:5. The second aspect will be the concept of abiding in Christ in John 15:4. Most likely, we will not get to the second one today. We will focus on the first one. Next week, we will look into the second one.

The first thing I want to pull out of here that I think is a great verse, and this applies to anybody, is in John 15:3 that says, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." That verse will go in any dispensation. What keeps us clean is the Word of God in our life. The Word of God is likened to water. When you got saved, the Bible says in Ephesians 5 and Titus 3:5 that you were cleansed by the washing of regeneration by the Word of God. That is how you got saved. But in Psalms 119, David is talking about back then, Psalms 119:9, where he says, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." So that is a verse that fits Old Testament, New Testament. This is why many times in the Old

Testament, if people get confused about this, you will find that they sprinkled water on things in the offerings. The water is a picture of the Word of God being put onto something. So you find it in type in the Old Testament, but it is also in practice. Getting clean with God means you have to come back and get clean through His Word, whether you are in the Old Testament or the New Testament.

IV. Israel and the Olive Tree

The last time when we were dealing with trees, I took you back to Romans 11. So let us go back there for a moment, and I showed you that Christ is the olive tree. In the Garden of Eden, you had two basic fundamental trees that are central to the story. You had the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which we now know is the vine tree. And then you had the tree of life, which we now know from our study back then was an olive tree. In Romans 11, you are clearly told that Christ is the olive tree.

Now watch what he says here, and I am going to put this into an understandable format for you, but let me read in Romans 11:15-21:

For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

Now I guess half of you out there are saying, "What in the world is he talking about here?" Here is what he is saying, and if you do not have your note down around this in your Bible, you need to put it in. This is one of the great chapters in the Bible on the restoration of the nation of Israel. I cannot emphasize enough, and I tell you all the time, the importance of getting, if you are going to study the Bible, the natural breakdown of each book of the Bible. Each book of the Bible, God has provided a natural outline breakdown that if you get that, you can pretty much figure the Bible out as far as laying it out as the book of the Bible.

When we first started our church, you will remember some 19 years ago, one of the first things I did, I think actually it was the second major study that I did, is I brought all of you through every book in the Bible, all 66 of them, and I gave you the natural breakdown outline. They are on the website, so for time and eternity, somebody could go back and study it even though we did it 17-18 years ago, and it is a thing where that is imperative that you do that. The book of Romans is

probably, from an understandable standpoint, the hardest book in the Bible to try to get down. It took me about five or six times going through it with a microscope and a magnifying glass to finally break it down, but the key that broke it down for me was getting the outline, how God naturally chapter by chapter gives you what Paul is doing and why he is doing and why he is writing it.

You will notice that the book of Romans is written in your Bible, found right after the book of Acts. You have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and then the book of Acts, and then the book of Romans. So what you have is this: you have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which brings you up through the first coming of Christ. He dies, He is resurrected. The next book, Acts, He goes back to heaven. The first seven chapters, He gives Israel their chance to get the kingdom back. They reject it. Immediately, He then begins to move into the church age, does He not? Paul gets saved, Acts 9. He is the apostle to the Gentiles. He goes to the church at Antioch in Acts 11 and 12. We saw this with Timothy a couple of weeks ago, and off he goes. He goes on three missionary journeys. What does he do? Starts New Testament churches. At the end of the book of Acts, those churches are firmly established for you and I to follow it through. Then what is he doing? Well, now we are the church. We have been established. What in the world are we supposed to believe as a church? Romans is your next book. Out of the book of Romans, chapter by chapter, he goes through and explains everything we need to know about what the church should believe. Romans is the fundamental bedrock foundation of Bible doctrine for the New Testament church.

I do not have time today; we have done it many, many times to walk you through the chapters, but when you get in chapters 9, 10, and 11, that is where we are at here, chapter 11, he starts to deal with the nation of Israel. What he does in those three chapters is give you and me, the church, the understanding of what God is doing with the nation of Israel. You know what he does in chapter 9? In chapter 9, he shows us how Israel got messed up. He goes through it in great detail. You know what he does in chapter 10? Chapter 10 is the gospel going to you and me, the Gentiles, and he shows us how because they got messed up, now in chapter 10, the gospel went to the Gentiles. But then we come to chapter 11. You know what he tells us in chapter 11? He told us in chapter 9 why they got messed up. He showed us in chapter 10 how you and I got in. Now in chapter 11, he wants you and me to understand he is not done with the nation of Israel. Romans 11 is the great chapter in God regathering Israel and bringing them back to be His people.

So what he is saying here to you and me is that Israel was the natural branches. Christ is the olive tree. Israel was the natural branches, but because they disobeyed and got away from God, God sent them into captivity in 606 BC under Nebuchadnezzar, 587 under Sennacherib or about of Assyria. At that point, God broke the branches off. He put them into captivity. Then what happens? Oh, by the time we get into the New Testament, He gives Israel another chance. They reject it and crucify Christ. He gives them another chance in Acts 7. They killed Stephen. So now they are broken off still. What happens? Now God takes the wild olive tree branches. You know who that is? The person sitting next to you. You and me. The Gentiles. When the natural branches, Israel, got broken off in 606 BC in Acts 7, then He grafts in other branches, which are

Gentiles, me and you. What he is saying here is he is telling us that, and he is saying we need to understand that. We also need to understand, because we got grafted in and Israel, the natural branches, got broken off, "Do not get high-minded and puffed up because God is going to bring those natural branches back." See, he is giving it all to us so we can understand.

You know he says in Romans 11:18 for the church, "Boast not thyself against the branches." In Romans 11:25-29, he says, talking to the church after he lays all this out:

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

He is saying, "I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery." Now there are seven mysteries in the church. You know that from Bible Institute; this is one of them. "Unless you should be wise in your own conceits." He is saying you need to understand what I am saying because if you do not, you are going to puff yourself up, you are going to get wise and conceited, and you are actually going to think that God is finished with the nation of Israel and you have taken their place. You know there are a lot of people out there, not just the Catholics, there are a lot of churches out there that we would call Protestant churches or whatever, that they actually believe that they have taken the place of the nation of Israel. They think God finished with Israel, and now we have taken their place. You have guys like Ted Gernor Armstrong around the start of the century, Bullinger. All of these guys who believe in British Israelism and the fact that God is finished with the Jews, and when the church came into being, you and I now take the place of the nation of Israel, and we are spiritual Jews. Of course, nothing could be farther from the truth. You might be spiritual in the sense that you got your salvation from the nation of Israel, but that is where it ends. God is not finished with the Jew, and when a Gentile thinks that he is, then God is finished with that Gentile, and that is what he is saying here.

He says that, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits. That blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved. As it is written, there shall come out of Zion to deliver and shall turn away the ungodliness of Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them." You see, that is the thing that most people do not get. God made a covenant with Israel, and the covenant was, no matter what you do, no matter how far you get from Me, no matter how you turn your back on Me, I may whip you, I may beat you, I may turn you over to Adolf Hitler and the concentration camps, I may give you to Nero, I may give you to Herod, I may give you to Caesar, I may give you to Babylon, but I will never, never, never not bring you back. He is not

done with them, and we need to know that because if we do not, then we become somebody who thinks God is finished with the nation of Israel. Paul in Romans 11 gives us the New Testament doctrine for the church, understanding God dealing with Israel.

Now he says this, "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes, but as touching the election, that is Israel, they are the beloved of the Father." What he is saying there is this: you know, you as a New Testament Christian, you need to have some brains about you. You need to realize that the Jew is going to look at you as an enemy because they hate Christ, but we are never to look at them as our enemy. You see, we are to understand Romans 9, how they got in the mess they are in. We are supposed to understand why they are struggling right now and what they are going through, but we also understand how we fit in, and we also understand God is not finished with them yet. That is the greatest concept of the Bible if you can ever get it down; you will truly get it down. It is the beginning of it.

This breaking off of the natural branches will be the purging that he is talking about in John 15:1. Right now, from 606 BC up to the present, going into the tribulation, up until the millennium, Israel is going through that purging. They are going through the purging, as it said in John 15, because they never bore fruit. The real fruit that they are going to bear a thousand times over will be in the millennium, but He has to purge them first before they can bear the fruit. Keep that thought in mind. Right now, they are being purged by going through everything that they are going through.

V. Purging and Adversity for the New Testament Christian

Now let us leave Israel for a moment and let us look at how this applies to you and me. This purging of Israel for the growth of fruit bearing, how it fits into your own life. When you got saved, you began a growth process spiritually speaking. We know from our past studies on Bible study and many other things that in the Bible, there are seven stages of your spiritual growth that Paul talks about. Your spiritual growth will come into your life in time, but it comes through your purging and adversity. As you grow through different levels, you will face higher levels of testing and purging.

I have never understood why God's people cannot get that because you see it all the time on people's t-shirts. If you go to the gym to work out or you go down the street, somebody will wear a t-shirt that simply says, "No pain, no gain." When you go to the gym, you do not build your body by eating toasted Twinkies. No, I wish you could. You have got to go through. You have got to tear out muscle to build muscle. You have got to push it harder every day. I watch these people at the gym when they get on these tread things where they walk, you know, and I think those machines are good. I could never do them; I get too bored, but they are up there, you know, and I watch them. When you are on one of those tread machines, you ought to be sweating like a stuck pig. You ought to just be burning them up. They get to the point where they do it, and then they get a book and lay it up there, and you can watch them. You cannot hit it hard while you are reading. You are either going to read or you are going to hit it hard, and you watch them. They are like, "You are not doing anything." You have got to put something into it. You have got to sweat. You had to be people that do not want to get on the machines on either side of you

because you are slobbering sweat all over the place. Hit it hard. No pain, no gain. That is an easy concept.

Well, for you and me as Christians, we will never gain the spiritual strength without going through the pain of adversity. You do not get to where God wants you to be because you are living in lollipop land. You know why Paul was the man that he was? Look what he went through. Everything that he did for God, they wanted to kill him. You will grow through different levels, as at each level, you will face a different level of adversity. Last Sunday was Vision Sunday, where we talked about heading up the ladder to another spiritual level, and we must maintain, you know, all of us with where we are going and what God wants to do. We must maintain the camaraderie of staying together and pulling together to do the work. As we build, take, no matter what level you are on, building individual leaders and building teams of leaders together, you know, we go through the purgings together.

I told you, I think it was Aaron asked this question, I did not say it Thursday night, but I think he is the one that asked the question back there in Exodus 35 and 36 about building the tabernacle. I took the time to show you that back there, and I told you when you look at those two chapters and you see them building the tabernacle, it is a picture of you building your body because your body is the tabernacle of God. I gave you two things: one, in that chapter, everybody is bringing everything they had to build that temple, and I told you it is going to cost you something to build the temple, your body, for God. Then the second thing they did, and this was his question, he talked about giving people wisdom and understanding and skilled labor, and I took you back to Hebrews 8 and showed you that there was a pattern in the building. You must follow the pattern.

Hey, some of you are great athletes. I remember back in the day when we used to have the Turkey Bowl out there, you know, and you guys would all, I was amazed at some of you guys, how good you played ball. I know many of you played ball in high school. Alex Chino for the Chiefs, he did not make it, but it is a thing where, but it is a thing where I was amazed at you guys. You guys were really, really good. You have trained your body, and I, this is stupid, I know, but I watch how you guys catch passes. When I played football, we used to have Turkey Bowls back in the day. Nope, I always used to get behind Jim Lake because nobody could get past him. But we would catch the ball, you know, and all those things, and but you know, you guys were trained that when you kept your hands out there like that, see, now that does not mean nothing to you guys. I really, I like that. That is neat stuff, man. I mean, you are not just catching the ball. You have artistic talent. You know that you were taught. I do not know why, but you were taught to reach out there to catch that ball. I watched it even though you are playing in a goofy little Turkey Bowl. When you played for Raytown or whoever you played, that is how you played, and you brought that in. That is great stuff, but I am going to tell you right now that will not cut you any slack at all in your spiritual building or your tabernacle. That is not the pattern. It is good. It built your physical body, which you need. You need stamina. You need all of those things. But there is a pattern to building your spiritual tabernacle, and there is going to be a price involved.

I look at all of you. Honestly, I like to give everybody the benefit of the doubt, probably too much so, I am told. But I am telling you right now, I think everybody in here has the ability to be

whatever God wants you to be; otherwise, God would not have brought you here. I certainly hope that God does not have somebody who is worthless and He says, "I am just going to send them to Bob's church." I do not think He does that. I think He brings you here based on where we are at and where we are going to see if you want to do what God wants you to do with your life. But I am going to tell you right now, whether you make it or not, it will not be based on whether you have the ability or not, or you could be trained or not. It is going to come down to whether you want to or not. Are you willing to pay that price? We pay prices for everything. Five-dollar gas never stopped most of us from going to do what we wanted to do. We paid the price. You go to the grocery store. It is terrible. But you still buy the food you have got to eat. You pay the price. I mean, fly on an airplane. Are you kidding me? I mean, if you fly enough, you could own it. It is ridiculous. But we pay the price. We pay the price on everything for us in life. But when it comes to God and building our tabernacle, we do not want to pay that price. Something is wrong with us.

Now, we will grow within that pattern through God purging our lives. I have got two passages here that I want to talk about, and I want to show you how this thing really works. The first one, go back to James 1:1-4.

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Now this will be beginning to see the New Testament application to our lives. James 1 first of all tells us in James 1:2 that you and I are to count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations. That will help us get the right perspective on our purging. The second thing he says in James 1:3, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. Now he just defined for us what that is. When you go through a temptation, it is a trying of your faith. It is not God tempting you to do something wrong. It is God tempting you to try your faith that if you go through it based on faith, you come out better on the other side. He then tells us in James 1:4, "But let patience have her perfect work."

Now let me show you how this thing works from Israel, Old Testament, not written to you, and then getting something that Paul writes to see what you can get out of it to you. Now you know this is true what I am about to tell you. James is not directly written to you. It was not written by Paul. You know when Paul wrote to all the churches, he says, "To the church of Corinth," and "To the church of that." You notice James, it is not written to a church. It is not written to you. James is written to the twelve tribes that are scattered. That is the Jew in the tribulation period. See, if you do not catch that, then you just jump into it and try to apply everything down to you, and you cannot. You just cannot.

Come over to James 5 here for a second, and let me show you how this thing, how you cannot. Look at James 5. The whole book of James clearly is the nation of Israel, the twelve tribes that

are scattered during the tribulation period, and God telling them that the temptation and the purging and the adversity that they are going through is for a reason. Now watch. We just saw in James 1 where he talked about patience, did he not? Look at James 5:7-11, talking to Israel, not you and me.

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

I do not have time to get into that, just why you already should know the early and latter rain deals with the tribulation period, last three and a half years. "Be also patient, establish your hearts for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," second coming. Look at James 5:11, "Behold, we count them happy which endure. You have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

Look at James 5:17-20:

Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and he shall hide a multitude of sins.

He brings Elijah in, and Elijah in the Old Testament, he shut down heaven, it did not rain for three and a half years, former and latter rain, and he comes back in the tribulation and does the same thing in the last. None of this is to the church, not a thing of it. I am not waiting for the former and latter rain; it just makes my grass grow, and I have got to cut it. If I had my way, I would pave it over, paint it green, and from the air, I would have the beautifullest yard in the neighborhood. It is not talking about you and me in no way, shape, or form. I do not have to have the patience of Job. Job is the type of the Jew in the tribulation period; the whole book of Job is a picture of the tribulation.

I grew up in churches that never understood this. I was a young guy in churches, you know, grew up there first when I first came to Kansas City, I did not, I did not have any say in anything, but I

watched a lot. In the church that I was in back at that particular time, they had no clue about any of this. When somebody, two guys in particular, they had cancer, and the doctors had given them all the treatment they could and basically said, "This is the end, you know, there is nothing more we can do." So they came to the pastor, came to the deacons, I was one of the pastors that was there, and he asked the pastor if they would invoke James 5 and anoint him with oil that he might be healed of cancer. Well, the pastor said, "Absolutely." So we all got in a conference room. I was a little man on a totem pole, so I was detailed to get the oil. I went down to the kitchen, stood there in the maze of it. I am thinking, "If I get the wrong oil, this guy is cooked." I looked at the shelf: Wesson oil, WD-40, 40-weight crankcase oil, three-in-one oil. I thought, "That is probably the most spiritual." From this day to today, when I go past that in the hardware store, it is Trinity oil to me. See, as stupid as I was, give me some credit, even back then, I was trying to be biblical. I did not think Wesson oil would do it. I did not think 40-weight motor oil from Pennzoil would do it, but God drew my attention to the three-in-one. So I got me a little Dixie cup, filled it about halfway up with three-in-one oil. Took it up there, pastor took it, everybody prayed, put the oil, put it on the guy's forehead. Guy cried, everybody was moved. He died two weeks later. Had a second guy. I took responsibility for that when I figured that my theology on three-in-one oil was not correct. So I did try the Wesson oil next time. He died. That is not written to you and me. That is somebody in the tribulation period dealing with the nation of Israel. But when you try to take that and put it into the church, hey, I saw the widow at the grave talk to one of the pastors, and she just could not understand, "If the Bible says that the anointing of the oil would save the sick, why he died?" Now I was a nobody, but even if I was a somebody, I was not going to look her in the eye, put my arm around her, and whisper in her ear, "Wrong dispensation." But it was. You see, this is why you have got to be able to separate these books out.

Now James is not directly to you. We know that now. But I want you to notice how we can use things out of it. Maybe not chapter 5, but chapter 1, verses 1 down through there, that lines up with what Paul tells us in Romans 5. This is the example of how you do it or how you do not do it. Because in Romans 5, Paul tells us:

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.

That is James 1. See, now we are going to be able to take James 1, and we are going to see now, because Paul gives us the same information, we can use some of that. What Paul does, he takes James 1 and takes it a little bit farther. Watch. "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience." Ah, here it comes, "and patience, experience; and

experience, hope; and the hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

Now Paul tells us that we should glory in tribulations because it does something for us, just like James 1, and this will be the perfect work that James talks about. He does a perfect work with Israel in the tribulation, but you can take that because of what Paul said in Romans 5, and now we can learn what that perfect work should be in your life and my life. Are you ready for this? Here we go. Ready or not, here I come.

VI. Tribulation Worketh Patience, Experience, and Hope

Let us look at Israel first. Three key areas: tribulation worketh patience. Doctrine to the Jew first. The Jew in the tribulation, see James 5:7-8, we always looked at it. They have to have the patience of Job. They have to have long patience waiting for it. Oh, that was from 606 BC up to the tribulation period, almost 3,000 years. They have to be patiently waiting for God to turn His hand that is against them toward them.

Then the second thing, through patience of them going through this purging, they will get experience. The Jew in the tribulation, through his trials, he will find Christ. Sometime during the middle of the tribulation period, when Moses and Elijah come down and all that thing, God appears to them someplace, and now they begin to pull it all together because now they are gaining experience of what they are really going through. Now they see the Antichrist for who he really is. Now they understand the abomination of desolation. Now they experience, they have learned, they now learn to survive.

Then the third thing, then the experience, they are going to get hope. They get patience waiting for it, waiting for the Lord to come, realizing that they are in this situation because they put themselves in this situation, and they have got to have patience now waiting for the Lord to come and get them. That patience gives them experience how to survive. Then through experience, they are going to get hope, and for the Jew, look at Psalms 16:9, Psalms 22:9, Psalms 21:24, Psalms 33:18, Psalms 38:15, Psalms 71:5, Psalms 119:49, Psalms 119:81, Psalms 119:114, Psalms 119:160, Psalms 147:11. Twenty-two times in Psalms alone, the word hope is translated to the nation of Israel as a second coming of Christ. That is their hope.

Now let us go to the church, now me and you. We saw how it fits to them. Now James 1 goes along with Romans 5, so let us see how it works. Let us look for it. Let us take patience first for you and for me. If you are going to build your life to be what God wants it to be, patience will be the key to anything God wants to do with you in your life. Last week was vision week, and I showed you how that I had to wait 19 years for God to bring everything together. Yet during that time, He did some tremendous things. Many times, we look at things wrong. I was thinking back this week of all the opportunities that God has given us, and I could not even think of them all. But I looked at when we worked with the military in the few. Well, I looked when we went down to Restart for four or five years. We have been doing the mission for years. We have got softball coming up here in the next couple of weeks, and then obviously volleyball. We had our crews that went up to Lincoln in the Delta program. We had all the different things that we did. Our

ladies' ministry down there on Wednesday night that we just stopped a few weeks ago. Some of those things we still do, and some of those things we do not do anymore. The average person has a tendency to look at things that we do not do anymore and look at them as they were the wrong things to do. We need not still be doing them. That is not the question. The question is, what did you learn through it while we were doing it? Do you just go through things, and if you do not like it or it does not work out, you just cancel it out and do not know? God wants you to learn from everything that you do. If it is a success, He wants you to see why. If it does not work out, He wants you to evaluate why. You do not just want to look at things that God brings into your life and say, "Well, the things we are still doing are good, but all those other things we are not doing anymore, they were not so good." Yeah, you know why they were not so good for you? Because you learned nothing from it. You should learn from everything. I try to learn from everything and everybody that is around me. I try to look and be aware because I know that God's classroom is never out. He always wants to teach us, and it is a thing where, you know, God's, you want to be ready for whatever God does for you. We want to get ourselves ready like a Sabbath, wise to impact the world. The whole nations of this world have arsenals of democracy. I want an arsenal for Christianity.

You see this in Ezra and Nehemiah. Oh, you see it so many places. When God sent them back after 70 years of captivity. Nebuchadnezzar came down, took them into captivity 606 BC, and then 70 years later, they go back to the land, a remnant of them. They go back under Ezra and Nehemiah, the two books in your Bible, and Esther. People look at that, and they do not ever understand why. God sent them back in His timing because the Jew had to be in the land established for the first coming of Christ. I have read guys' commentaries and heard preachers preach that that was God, you know, bringing them back, and they did not do what was right. It had nothing to do with that. It had to do that when the Messiah came in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Jew had to be back in the land. That was God's timing of it. God's vision for Israel. But at the time, they did not see it. When Ezra and Nehemiah go down, and they look at Jerusalem, totally destroyed, totally just in ruin because of Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar. All they saw, all they ever saw, was a destruction. All they saw was the job they had to do to put it back together. When you see the people that are working, some of the people work grudgingly. You know what the problem was? It is the same problem today. They never saw what they were building was their future for the Messiah to come back to the nation of Israel. All they saw was the wreckage. You know that is what a lot of God's people are. That is all you ever see is the wreckage. You never see through the purging, the adversity, what God is really trying to do. Seventy long years, and finally God moves. Now after 70 years, God had the right man in the right place at the right time to do what He wanted to do. But it takes patience. It will take patience in your life, just like it took patience in my life, to wait for God was ready to do what He is about to do. Patience. God had to get them ready, and God will have to get you ready in His own time. The sooner we learn to wait on God and be patient, the better off we are going to be. Bad choices and bad mistakes almost all of the time come from impatience, our inability to wait on God.

Then in God's perfect work for you and for me, patience will lead to experience. We saw how it did with Israel. Now let us look at it for you and for me in the church. While you wait, while you

are patient, you work. With the work, you learn, and with that learning, you will develop into experience. You disciple people. Both people benefit. You do, you know, athletics. Somebody is a captain. Somebody is a co-captain. You have a team. You have devotions. Everybody benefits. Bible Institute. Everybody benefits. Working in ministry. Everybody benefits. You know, coming up on September 9th, when we have our first ministry training time, and I have got some other things planned to help you, using the older guys in this church that really can help us put everything together. I mean, all to do what we are doing better. God using this church and the men and women in it, and the older ones help training the younger ones.

You know, I look at, we talked about last week, Operation Arkansas, and I have a method to everything I do. Sometimes I do not explain it very well, but I know what I am doing. When I look at this, you know, last week, I was overwhelmed. Sixty people signed up, and we will probably get a bunch more sign up today. Immediately, I went home and put the teams together. As a leader, you have got to look long range. You cannot just look short range, and if you grow to be that leader in this church, which I am sure many of you will, you have got to remember that. You do not just take 60 people and say, "Oh boy, I am going to put them into a team, and we are going to get on there and have fun." You have got to look at who you have got, and then you have got to look at where you are probably going to go, and you just do not take this now, and then when something else changes down the line, you scratch your head and say, "Oh man, I wish that I saw that." You have got to see it now. So what I did is take two really hot couples that are leaders, and I put them in a team together, and then I filled it in with the younger ones underneath of it that they are going to help train. Now why would I do that? I do that because I know how this thing is probably going to go, and I know that this thing is going to take off, and it is going to be one of the most incredible things that we ever did, not only for them but for you. You are going to get a chance to impact people's lives in Arkansas, three and a half hours away, that you never have an opportunity, but God is going to take that what you do, and He is going to give you experience through it, and He is going to make you everything you need to be through it, and along with everything else you do it. But I know there is a time coming where I am going to have to put some more teams together. I have got six right now. I could envision probably down the line maybe 12 teams, maybe more. But when I have to do that, I am not going to have to go back and pick more leaders that and introduce them to what is going on. I have got two sets of leaders already training. It is going to be down there that when the time comes, I just pull out one of those sets of leaders who is already familiar with it, plop them down with another team. You have got to look ahead. You have got to look ahead. We call this in ministry training. We call this in leadership training. It is called visionary leadership. A real good leader will never look at what he is doing for God with the people God gave him from a one-dimensional aspect but rather from a multi-dimensional aspect. This will separate the men from the boys. Somebody looking at something and just seeing what they see. Somebody else looking at the same thing and seeing all the ramifications that God is probably going to do or could do, and whether He does or whether He does not, you need to be ready for it. You need to be prepared, and it is a thing where when you know, you look at something and you see all the different things that you can get out of it for God.

I do that with people. You know, it is a thing where when I first saw you, when you first came into this church, I have said it many, many times, I do not care where you are from. I do not care what you have done. I do not care. All I care about is where you want to go from this point on. When I look at people fundamentally, I never see the bad things that they do, did, have done, want to do. I never look at it that way. I mean, I am aware of that, but I have realized that if I just look at people because of what I do not like about them, I will never give them a chance to do anything for God. I do not have that right to do that. You know why? You know how I looked the first time God looked at me? Why, if God had taken my approach or a lot of God's people's approach, I would not have ever went anywhere. God looked beyond where I was in my stupidity and saw the potential, and I have the ability to look past your stupidity and see your potential. Now maybe you will never develop it. That is your call. That is your tree. You have got to pick which one, but I will never come to the place where I look at anybody and say, "Now they are worthless." I will give you a chance to prove your worthlessness, but it is a thing where all of you have potential. I say it again, God did not bring you here because He did not know what else to do with you. He brought you here because He sees in you something that you do not see in yourself, and He brought you to a pastor who has the ability to see in you many times what you cannot see in yourself. Now I do not do that because I am so spiritual or I am so in touch with God. I do that because there was a man in my life that looked into my life, and he saw things that I could not see, and he taught me through that. Many years later, he sat me down, and we talked and laughed about all the things like last week about waiting for me out there in the garage, down the back door, you know, and all those things, and he said, "I saw something in you, Bob, and God just would never let it go," and now I know what it is, and I feel the same way about every one of you. God has got something for you. It is my job to get you experience. It is my job to look, teach you to look around you and see all the things that God has put around you, the people, the places, the ministry opportunities, and pulling it all together to move forward in your growth. But that takes patience, man, and from patience of doing the work, learning everything you can, you get experience, but there will be a cost involved.

I told you last week, I believe in delegation of ministry. I believe my job is to train you to a certain point, give you responsibility, and as you meet that responsibility, keep giving you more responsibility. One of these days, you will wake up doing something for the Lord on a large level, and there will be a price that has to be paid, a purging that has to be in your life that you grow through for you to bear more fruit and get to the next level. Most pastors, good or bad, they have the mentality of being unapproachable. They are the pastor, you are the people, you know, there is the church, there is the steeple, open the door, and there are all the people. That is all it ever gets, and they distance themselves. They get that God complex like a lot of doctors get, and you know, it is a thing where they, they, they do not want to, they do not want to become one with their people, but I believe in absorbing people into my life and into my ministry. When you absorb, I do not just put them in, I absorb them. I take everything that they are and have, good or bad, and then together we try to work through that process. I try to get them as much experience and guidance as I can. I allow them to have as much of me as they want, or in some cases, as they can stand. This will be that perfect work. This will be when you have patience and you go to work with it in a New Testament church. God, through that work, will purge you, but through

that purging, you will gain experience. God creating opportunities for our growth as individuals but as a church also.

Then he says patience, experience, and then hope. Now the hope here for you and for me is not the same as Israel's hope. Now the hope here is not, "Gee, I hope all this works out for me," but rather through your growth, patience, and experience, you come to the place when you see and understand the totality of the Word of God in your life. The only thing that is worth investing your life in is the Word of God and that God gave you and the people God gives you. Now I know most of you believe the Bible has all the answers in life. I get that, and that is a good thing. Most of you, because you are in this church, you know, we believe the AV 1611 is the complete, total, inspired Word of God without proven error. I get that, and that is really good, but I am going to tell you right now, you probably do not get this right now, but there will come a time in your life, even though you believe it now, there will come a time in your life where you really believe it. See, right now, you will believe it intellectually, and that is good, great, nothing wrong with that, you are on your way. But as you gain experience and you go through adversity, if you do with me what I am trying to do with you in the next five years, you will look at the Bible totally different in five years than you do right now because you are going to have to go through some things, you are going to have to pay some prices, you are going to go through some adversity, and through that adversity, God is going to make Himself real to you through that book. Now you say He is real to you right now, and I believe you, but He is real on a very limited level. I am talking about frontline combat duty where you pay the price, and that book, when you are in a circumstance or situation that is impossible, and nothing a man can do, and if God does not come through for you, you are messed, a mess. That is how you learn the real hope of the Word of God. You see, the Word of God is my only hope, but once you and I are saved for God's program, you are not going to like this, we are His only hope because He is not going to get it done without us. You see, it is okay for Him to be our hope, not okay for us to be His hope. Watching through the Word of God, the power to change the course of lives and to change the world.

I remember this one time. I was actually flying up to Mount Puyu, Vermont, to preach for Jim Lake's church back in, buzzing, 25-30 years ago, and I was flying through someplace, I do not remember where, and I had to preach that night at six o'clock. If everything went well on my flight, I was to get in at four o'clock, it is an hour to the church, and then preach. So I am in this airport, and they get on the loudspeaker, and they say that they have overbooked the flight and that they were going to have to cut some people off the flight, and they said that they were going to have to cut 10 people. Well, I have got to be there. If I miss this flight, I am done preaching. I might as well just go back home. I thought to myself, "You know what, this is really not my problem. You know what my problem is? I am hungry, and there is a great hotdog stand right here. That is my problem." So without panicking, running up and trying to plead with him, "I have got to get on this plane, you do not understand who I am, and I have got to preach tonight," which would have meant nothing, I just told God, "Look, You know this airplane, You are the one that keeps it up. This airport, You are the one that keeps it open. That church up there, they are told I am coming to preach tonight. Now if You do not want me there, hey, it is okay with me. I am going to go get a hotdog. I am going to sit right down here. You figure it out. I will do my

job, You do Yours." So I got me a hotdog, sitting down there. The moment I finished that hotdog, wiped my mouth, I do not think I wiped my mouth, the moment I ate that hotdog, they get on the loudspeaker, and they called my name and gave me a seat. I wish I could say I handled everything in my life that way. I would be lying if I did, but I ought to, and so should you. That is hope. That is, "Lord, I cannot, I am not in charge of the circumstances, so why am I going to worry about it? When You start giving me Your paycheck, God, I will start worrying about what is Your job."

Patience, experience, and hope. You cannot see those things on your own. There are some things in life, my friends, that you and I cannot change, and they are not always good things, but that does not mean we cannot learn from them. That does not mean we cannot grow through it. It does not mean we all have to look at it like it is a national disaster. This is how you build people. This is how you allow God to develop you, growing up through the leaders, the levels of purging and adversity, gaining patience, gaining experience, understanding what hope really is in your life. For all of us, adversity will never not be part of our lives, guys, because it is by God's design that He purges us to bring forth more fruit because through that, we get the experience, we learn to trust God more. Your level of adversity will grow as you grow. Today, my level of dealing with things is on a higher level than yours. You have, you maybe your job, your family, you know, in some cases, if you have a family, I have my family, I have, you know, my own deals, plus 200 of you I have to worry about, you know, and figure out the, you know, getting the book moved, getting Georgia and them guys moved up here, getting all the things set up, getting this, get the stuff ready for Branson. I have got five pastors I work with throughout the week. I mean, getting softball set up and ready to go, how I want to structure that in some different ways this week, and probably, you know, with, you know, 50 phone calls this week with people with problems, "What do I do with this? What do I do with that?" I am not saying that because I feel sorry for myself or for you, feel sorry for me, or like, "Wow, he really got a lot." No, what I am saying is this: as you grow and take on responsibility, you too will get to that same level of responsibility, and when you do, you will be invaluable to my work. Everybody has to share the load. Everybody has to do their part. Just as you grow as you work through God's purging, so does the church. God will take a church through different levels of testing and trials and adversity.

In a nutshell, trials, temptations, testing, adversity, and purging, they will either drive us to God or they will drive us away from God, and you get to choose. Many times, we will have a real blessing at the end of the trials, if not most of the times. I think of our church here, how we got here. We got here because things changed, and adversity came into our world. We were now told that you had to be out of the church, off the property, by nine o'clock at night. I was told that we could not have anybody in the church past two o'clock. I was, you know, Steve probably knows better than anybody, all that we went through, of what the harassment that we went through, and at any time, I looked at the fact that, you know, that we could be booted, and we would have no place to go. No, I did not panic. I did the same thing there I did in the airport, except I could not find a hotdog stand. I just, "God, You deal with it." We looked at a church right down the road here, and it was not for us. It was way too much money. We would have to put way too much money in it, and it was not where we wanted to be. So we were driving home. Jamie had found

this church out in, way out there someplace in, where was it, Pleasant Hill? That would have been good for you, would it not, Donnie? It was a beautiful church, and it was dirt cheap. You know why? Who wants to build a church in Pleasant Hill? No offense, but it was a beauty. It had everything we wanted. So we are driving home. Jamie, in her playful little way, sends me a picture of this church out in Pleasant Hill and says, "Dad, you better rethink this." You know what happened? That church did not come up. This church popped up. To this day, we do not know how that happened. So we all turned around and came over here, and we drove up here, and I thought, "Wow, I like this. We need to try to get in to see this." About that time, a car pulled up. It was the pastor's son. We introduced ourselves. We said, "We would like to see the church." "Oh, come on in." He took us all through the place. He was not even supposed to do that. It was for sale, and all through the events, we got to the place where we made an offer on it. They took the offer, and here we are. See, through that adversity, there was a blessing on the other end of it, and now we have the ability here to grow to levels that we never could back there. My point is, it takes patience, and through that patience, you get experience through the adversity, but there is always a blessing at the end if you can see it. Sometimes the blessing will just be, "You are stronger now than you were when you went in."

It is like having a baby. No, I have never had one. You go through nine months of carrying that baby. Toward the end, it gets very uncomfortable, and then you have the baby itself, and that is a very painful experience. It is probably as close to death as a woman would ever get when having a baby. But you know, once they bring that baby in, and you hold it in your arms, you forget all about the pain you went through because the baby now was worth it, was it not? Well, I am going to tell you something, whatever pain you go through in your Christian life to get to where God wants you to be, it will be worth it, and when you get there, you will look back at it and you will say, "It was worth it." Just the way it works. Just the way it works. So that is how you take a passage in John 15, line it up with a New Testament passage. Next week, I am going to show you where you cannot do things with it, and you gain everything you can and everything in life, and you grow through it. You go up through those seven layers of levels of spiritual growth, letting God do His perfect work in our lives.