

I. The Importance of Rightly Dividing the Word

Last week, as we have been in John chapter 15, we have been laying out the aspect of abiding in Christ. As we found it in John chapter 15, I have been taking every opportunity I can and every example to show you, no matter where we go, to get the fundamental aspect of the Bible down. As I have said many, many times, I am not interested in just giving you a sermon or giving you a lesson or teaching you this or that. I want you in the process of time to learn how to put your Bible together. Everything, and every message anybody preaches, there will be examples to show you how to do that. Most guys just never get to that point for whatever reason. But I want to show you how to rightly divide the Bible.

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

For those of you who have been around here for a while, three or four years, we have a lot of intense programs for Bible Institute, for the people ministry, for everything that we try to do here. You know now that there are many divisions in the Bible that if you are going to learn your Bible, you are going to have to get down.

Obviously, the easiest one will be:

- The Old Testament versus the New Testament.

Probably the key division, if you are ever going to get the Bible down, is going to be:

- The kingdom of God versus the kingdom of heaven.

We talked about, and there is a book on it in the bookstore in there, that how your Bible is divided down into 11 or 12 dispensations, depending on how you count them. The New Testament itself is divided up around three books:

- Matthew
- Acts
- Hebrews

That is vital for you. I have showed you and told you many, many times how that each book of the Bible has its own natural divisions in it. Of course, this is what you have got to begin to learn to do because fundamentally the greatest division in the Bible is going to be to the Jew, or what is written to the church, you and me. The key division is going to be who the Bible is written to when you read it. Who exactly is He speaking to? Is it something that you can take directly to yourself, or is it something that you have to look at it as He is giving it to Israel and then apply it to yourself?

Most of us would not have a problem understanding that when we read Genesis about Noah and God told Noah to build a boat, you cannot apply that to yourself. You are not going to go out and build a boat. When you see that Moses was told to give him the commandments to do sacrifices, we do not do sacrifices. That is a different time period. That is not written to us, but you can learn some great practical spiritual lessons from that even though it is not written directly to you.

Now that is easy to see. Where it gets complicated is when you get into the New Testament because most Christians believe, unfortunately, that everything in that New Testament is written directly to you. Of course, that is not true. That is why we have what we call heresies today. I already told you that your New Testament is built around three books: Matthew, Acts, and Hebrews. You get those three divisions out of whack, you will be in trouble. It is just that simple.

When I wrote the book, **How to Study the Bible**, it is over in the bookstore. I probably wrote that close to 40 years ago now, and it has sold well under a million copies. It was a book on the basics of putting your Bible together. I saw the need in my people's lives. It actually started out in a whole series that I taught, and then we took it and put it into a book. My goal then, as my goal today, is to make the Bible become alive to you.

II. The Bible as a Living Book

I am sick and tired of churches, preachers, and Christians that just come to the Bible like they do any other book that you go to the bookstore and buy. What sets the Bible that you hold in your hand apart from any other book that you have got? A guy said one time, he said, if you took all the literature that man had written in the last 6,000 years, every book, every pamphlet, everything that was ever written, and you put it in one pile, he said you would have a pile that would be 10 miles square, and if you stacked them on top of each other, it would go out past the orbit of the moon, which is 250,000 miles. That is the amassed literature that man has written.

Now if we could do that today, we cannot, but if we could do that today, I would tell you this: You could put that pile of books, put it out past the moon, and put one Bible over here and judge everything in that pile by the book that God gave you. That is the Bible. The Bible is different than any other book out there. You know why? Because the Bible is alive. It is a living book. It is a book that is alive.

The Bible, just like you if you are saved this morning, you are alive in Christ Jesus. You are made alive by the power of God's salvation and then through God's inspiration. God's salvation only came to you through the Word of God, which was God's inspiration.

Job 32:8-9

But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it.

I am telling you right now when we talk about you getting facts, when we talk about you getting wisdom, anybody in the world, even unsaved people can get that. But an unsaved man can never get understanding because understanding is the equation of life of what God is doing and that

only comes as you get into the book and that only comes as you get saved and through that book that is inspired, God gives you your understanding.

Of course, you know that for man to be complete, for man to be alive spiritually, he has to have three of his parts when God made him all online at the same time.

Genesis 2:7

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

There is your body, soul, and spirit right there. When God made man, He made him in a Trinity form, but man in an unsaved form is incomplete. His soul and his flesh are stuck together so he is only two parts. When God made man, He made him in an unsaved state today as he is born and he has a human body and a human spirit, but his soul is stuck to that flesh so he is dead in sin and he only has two parts.

When you got saved, we know from Colossians chapter 2, an operation of God took place, an operation without hands.

Colossians 2:11

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

God in that quickening of your salvation separated your body, your flesh, and your soul, and then His spirit became one with your spirit, and now you are complete. You have a body, you have a soul that is independent that you can fellowship with God with, and you have the Spirit of God that will lead and guide you into all truth. That is how it works.

Once you got complete and got all three parts online and working, now God can use you. Now you can do something. Now God can teach you. Now God can grow you spiritually. Now He can begin to give you understanding through the inspiration of the Word of God that He gave you because now you have all three parts to be used of God for His perfect work, what we talked about last week. God has something that He wants every one of you to do if you are saved. He has a calling for you. You may never realize it, you may never fulfill it, you may never answer the phone, but He has something that He saved you for a purpose that you fit into this great scheme of God's plan. The only way you figure that out is first to get those three parts working in your life and then get the inspiration through the Word of God that God will give you the understanding. That is what this church is about.

The Bible has three parts to it. You have three parts, the Bible has three parts. You become alive in Christ Jesus when you have got all three parts up and working. The Bible becomes a living book when you get all three parts working for you. You know what those parts are?

1. Your Bible has a historical application.
2. Your Bible has an inspirational application.
3. Your Bible has a doctrinal application.

Most of God's people have no clue. Most of God's people have no idea that the Bible is the greatest history book the world has ever seen. That is why they do not know anything about their history. They go to a church, they believe this, they believe that, but if you pin them down and ask them why you believe what you believe, they would have to tell you because so and so told me. There is no real understanding of their roots. They have no understanding where they came from. They may be in the wrong church or the wrong place being taught the wrong things, but because nobody ever, they never investigated. They never sat down and said, "Hmm, I wonder why I believe." I know you believe a lot of things that you believe. The real question is, why do you believe them? That is the issue. The Bible is a living book when those three parts get balanced out in your life. And boy, will this answer a lot of questions.

Without the three parts working for you, the Bible becomes just a boring book like all the other books you read. How many times have somebody told me, "Well, no, I do not read the Old Testament because it is boring. I start to read that and I get confused. I start to read that and I get in all the begats and all the beginnings and all this and all that stuff and begat, begat, a habahu, a habahu, a habahu, a habahu, a him and a hab," and it just gets so boring. And they give up reading it.

They have no idea. The Bible says, when you got saved, you got a new name written down in glory. Do you know what it is? It is not the one you have now. I wonder where, if I wanted to find that name, where I would go. That name is in this book. If nothing else, it would keep my interest to come through here to see if I could find my name that when I get home to heaven, I can say, "Ha ha ha, I knew it all the time." The Old Testament is as fresh as next month's newspaper. 85% of the Old Testament may have been fulfilled historically, but there is a doctrinal prophetic application and the way you learn what is in the future is by learning what God did in history. God's people are oblivious to that. They do not see it. They do not understand it. So there is no completeness of understanding. The Bible is just a boring book that is the jumbled mess of history, or a jumbled mess of little spiritual doodads that you get inspirationally that somebody tickles your ear with. But there is no completeness. God's people today, if their life depended on it, they could not tell you what God is doing, where He has been, and where He is going. And even more complicated would be, how do you fit into it?

You know why I keep this guy over here? One of these days I am going to reach over and pick up the real one. You know why I keep this guy up here? I know I played around with it and we called him Mr. Jingles. But this is a great little example. You put this guy in a lab experiment. You put this guy in a maze, all kinds of ways, and then at the end you put a big piece of cheese. You put him down at the beginning and then cameras rolling and everybody watches. He bumps into everything. He goes here, dead end. He goes here, does it? Kind of like those Halloween mazes we all go to. Anyway, he bumps into this one and he bumps into that and then he comes back and he bumps into that and he works his way here and he works his way here and he just keeps working around and it takes him an hour and a half. Finally, at some point, he gets to the cheese.

Most of God's people are just like Mr. Jingles here. You are in the maze of life and you keep bumping into dead ends. You keep blood in your nose on the wall. You keep going down dead

end streets. You take your family down to dead end streets. You keep going down places that have no value in them, no future in them. You keep investing yourself into things that just will not get you anywhere and yet you are trying to get to that golden city at the end of the maze. Like he wants the cheese, we want the millennial arena of Christ. We are just like Mr. Jingles. We spend our whole life trying to find where we are going and getting home to heaven and there are so many dead ends in our lives. There are so many disappointments. There are so many broken families, so many kids that will not come to church today, so many kids that are out in the world today and Christian parents are scratching their heads and wondering why. I will tell you why. Too many dead ends. Understanding who you are in the plan of God. This is the sad condition of the world. The sad condition of the average Christian, child of God today, who have been in church for 20, 30, 40 years. No working of the Bible in their lives. If you would ask them they were saved, they would get the biggest smile on their face you ever saw. They would praise the Lord, praise Jesus all day long. The problem is you have to ask the right questions. Do not ask them why they believe what they believe. Do not ask them about the roots of where they are coming from, Christianity. They do not have any answers for that. Christians are the greatest pretenders the world has ever seen. We pretend we are happy when we are not. We pretend everything goes all right when it is not. It is not about getting honest with each other. It is just about getting honest with God and understanding is the key.

Those three parts, body, soul, and spirit, when you got saved, you are alive. The Bible, when you get the historical application, the inspirational application, and the doctrinal application—history being your body, inspiration being your spirit, doctrine being your soul—this book comes alive. It is now a living book. It is now different than any other book because it tells you not what man is doing down through history. I had a guy one time who was a professor at a Bible college and he says the Bible is a record in the history of man's doing down through time. I thought to myself, what an idiot you are. The Bible is not a book about man's doing. The Bible is a book about what God is doing and how does man fit in. How do you fit in today? Really, honestly, that is really the question. How do you fit in today?

III. Doctrine: The Spark Plug of Understanding

The key to opening up the Bible and really ministering to people will be just two simple words. If you do not get anything else today out of my sermon, I hope you do, but if you do not because you are all bug-eyed from being down at Branson, some of you did not get home last night till midnight. If I would have got home at midnight from Branson last night, I would have not been here today. I want you to just define two words for you. If you just get these two words, not only will the Bible come alive, but then you will understand the ministry that God has for you.

➤ 1.) Doctrine

IV. John 15:10-16: Abiding in His Love and Bearing Fruit

Today, I want to show you out of John chapter 15, this next section here. I want to show you how that it fits right into everything we are doing. Some things will, some things will not. You have got to be able to learn and discern what you can apply to you and what you cannot.

John 15:10-16

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Father, we ask You today to help us to learn and glean from this. Thank You for these good people here today. Thank You for our church. For the 19 years, Lord, we have been here to lay the foundation in people's lives, watch God grow them up, watch families raise their kids and their kids become part of this ministry. It has been such a blessing to see Your hand in this church. We just thank You, Father, for all that You are doing and You continue to doing. The last 19 years have been a great ride. Unfortunately, I probably will not be around for the next 19th anniversary, but I know that it will keep going because of the men and women that You have given this book to and have fallen in love with it. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. Amen.

Here is a passage in the Gospel of John chapter 15 that even though it is written to Israel, because this is before the crucifixion, church is not even in effect yet. I know that does not bother some of you, but it should. I want you to look at verse 10. He says here that the Word of God is key to our abiding in His love. This is different from verses 4 through 6 we looked at last week. Last week, it was abiding in me. This week, it is abiding in His love. I showed you how last week a New Testament Christian cannot abide in Christ because you are part of His body. But it is different now, is it not? This is a good example of how and where you can apply it to you and where you cannot. So I want you to learn from this.

Keep in mind now, you and I are a Son of God if you are saved this morning. We are also told, and these are things you will want to look for in Exodus chapter 4, that Israel as a nation, not as individuals, as a nation is God's Son. The next thing you want to learn about your Bible with the divisions would be what I would call the parallels. See what in the Old Testament parallels to

what we have in the New Testament. At the same time, see what does not parallel that you cannot put into the New Testament to you and me. It is a simple little rule. Now, let us go through these verses. Let us look at these and let us apply them now directly to us because the parallels here are perfect. I am God's Son, Israel as a nation is God's Son. So there will be certain things that the parallels will be right across the board. Here we go. Now watch how this verse fits into our relationship and fellowship with Christ. I can apply everything here to me abiding not in Him, but abiding in His love. Now watch.

V. The Fruit of Love and Joy

Look at verse 11. "These things have I spoken unto you that your joy might remain in you and that your joy may be full." I want you to note if you have got any kind of spiritual eye, you can now see where we saw that back in the book of 1 John, did we not? "These things right under you back in 1 John that your joy may be full." He told him that 1 John chapter 1 verse 4 of these things right under you that your joy may be full. Now we find it in the Gospel.

When we went through 1 John and I showed you the difference between the Gospel of John and the epistle of 1 John. In the Gospel of John it was written for a man to get saved and God displays His salvation. But in 1 John it is not about salvation. It is about fellowship after you get God's salvation.

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

1 John is not about salvation. I told you 26 times in five little chapters you find the phrase to know God, to know Him, to know Him, to know God, to know Christ. It is about fellowship. It is about knowing Him through fellowship. As I said, 1 John 1:4, "these things right under you that your joy may be full."

When you got over to Galatians chapter 5 verses 22 and 23 you have the fruit of the Holy Spirit of God. Everybody knows about that. Nine fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Look my friend, the first one is love and the second one is joy. You cannot have joy in your life without you loving God with all your heart, with all your mind and all your soul. You know what we do today? We pump ourselves up like we are really having joy when we are not. We are like the lady one time that was every time the preacher preached and to give the invitation she would come down and she would hit the altar and she would wail and cry and she would say, "Oh God fill me, oh God fill me." I do not care what he preached, when he preached, this old lady would come down, hit the altar and cry and say, "Oh Lord fill me, oh Lord fill me." After about two years of that the pastor just got fed up with it and one night she came down and hit the altar,

hollered over to places and said, "God fill me, God fill me." The pastor said, "No God, just fix the leak."

Why are you not filled today? Where is the leak? Do not pretend to me that you have got the joy, joy, joy down in your heart. There is a leak someplace. The first thing you have is your love for God and that produces the joy that you have. That is after you are saved. As a Christian your salvation is sure, you cannot ever lose it. You have been sealed under the day of redemption, but not so your joy and not so your fellowship. He says in 1 John 1:6-7 that if we walk in darkness we do not the truth, but we are to walk in the light as He is in the light. You as a child of God can never lose your salvation, but you can lose your joy. When you lose your joy it is because you have lost your fellowship. Because I do not care what you go through in life, I do not care what issues you face. You are all going to go through some tough times. We are all going to go through some tough times. There is only one thing that will get you through the tough times of life and it is not how strong you are, it is not your determination, it is the joy that you have in your heart. Because when you have joy in your heart based on your love for Him and your relationship nothing can take that away. But you can give it away, nothing can take it away, but you can trade it. You can trade it for something, but nobody can just come down and take it. You have got to say deal one, deal two, deal three. I will take this one. That is how we do it. So I do it and you are any better than me.

VI. Laying Down One's Life and Being God's Friend

Now look at verse 12. "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you." Remember that is the first fruit of the Holy Spirit, love. It is not just about loving God, it is about loving God's people. It is actually about loving unsaved people. This will be the New Testament principle for all of God's people loving each other. The key to the New Testament church and getting a job done is unity. The key to unity is our love for each other. That is how it works.

Now I am going to be very honest with you. Sometimes it is hard to love some people, you know that? I know some of you have a harder time with that than other people do. I have a lot of problems, but one of my problems is not loving people. I do not care what anybody does to me. If it is not hurting my kids or shooting my dog, there is not anything that you say, "Hey I am sorry let us go get lunch together." I do not hold grudges because I have learned some great lessons about grudge holding. I have learned some great lessons about not loving people who maybe were not as lovable or did not fit into my social mindset of what I thought they should be. Or I did not love them because they said this or I do not love them because they did this or they did this and it hurt my feelings. So they said that or they did not do this therefore I am upset about it. I do not have those issues. Do you know why? Because He says right there, "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you."

Look at the last part of that verse. You say, "Well so and so I do not like them. I do not like the way they dress. I do not like the way they talk. I do not like what they say. They hurt my feelings. They did this. They did that." How many times did we do that before God before He saved us? Do you think as an unsaved person you did not ever cold burn God's ears by using God's name in vain? All the things that we did before we got saved and the times we cursed God

and the times we had evil thoughts but that is why God tried to touch you with His word and you blew it off. We were pretty unlovable back then were we not? He loved you anyhow. You know what I thank God for? I thank God. God does not treat me like some of God's people treat other God's people. Because none of us look too hot. I know we get going a ways, we get spiritual, we get self-righteous and now we think, "Oh, I do not like so and so. I do not like what they did." I bet they had that conversation up in heaven many many years before you got saved talking about you and me. You see you are okay with that. Looking at people, God's people, unsaved people, and seeing them as God saw you and me through His eyes.

Verse 13. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Now back here we saw, "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you." Now we see, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Now we see in this one that love of God is defined. You will remember I told you a while back that there are three John 3:16s in the Bible. Most people do not know that.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

We all know that one. But you know in the book of 1st John there was another John 3:16.

1 John 3:16

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

It says here that hereby we perceive the love of God. Now you see John 3:16 was about God loving you and dying for you. Now we will begin in the first John. It is about once you are saved as you grow, you need to listen to me. You need to perceive what God's love really was for you. Most of God's people have no clue. We just take God's love. Do not even thank Him for it. You sit down and eat your grub on lunch or supper or whatever. Do not even thank God for the food. Yet if you choked on it and were about to die you would be begging God to send you a paramedic. I am telling you right now we do not perceive what the love of God really is. So he says in 1st John chapter 3 verse 16, the second John 3:16 in the Bible, where the first one tells you what God's love is, this one tells you how to perceive it and defines it for you.

It says, "Hereby perceive we the love of God because he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our life for the brethren." You know what the key to the Christian life really is? One word. It is sacrifice. Now when he says here lay down your life for the brethren, I know we all think that if you saw walking across the street and a car was coming and you did not see it, I should run out and push you out of the way and get hit with a car. That is not going to happen. Wrong dispensation. What he is talking about here is simply this. When you minister to people, when you go down to Arkansas, when you disciple somebody or you work through somebody's problems in life, you have to put your own life aside for a time. You cannot work in your own time frame anymore if you have got something you are doing on Tuesday night and that is the only night that they can meet to get the word of God, you put off what you are doing on Tuesday

night so they can get the word of God. You have to put yourself out. You have to come to the place where you make yourself available. You have to become the living sacrifice so they can be told about the sacrifice that died for them on Calvary's cross. Our responsibility to ministry. What He did for me on the ultimate sacrifice which I could never repay but in my little world down here of my calling to God I will do the best I can to sacrifice what I have to sacrifice that you can have the truth that He sacrificed for me to be able to give to you. Laying down your life, what you want to do, the things that you enjoy if you have to, to give somebody else the truth of God's word. You becoming the living sacrifice for the cause of Christ and do it joyfully. It is just that simple.

I look at us going down to Arkansas doing down there. You have no idea if you were at the meeting we had down there and the one we had last Sunday, you have no idea what God is doing down there. Unbelievable. This thing is going to, I cannot even, I cannot even tell you, but it is going to be a sacrifice on all of us. You are going to have to give up some things up here to go down there. You are going to have to make some arrangements in life that you normally would not have to do to do that. You are going to have to see if you are willing to lay down your life that you do every day for somebody down there that needs the truth that you have. I would not care at all if God would not call us to do it. If He would have called First Baptist or this church or that church I would have said have at it. He did not. He called us and now we have to stand up either we fish or cut bait as the term goes.

Verse 14. "You are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you." That verse tells me to be God's friend I must follow the word of God. This is a powerful thought and a statement. Do not miss this. Let us define this. Let me just tell you this. You are not going to like this but let me just tell it to you because we all get our fluffed up thinking we have a real relationship with God, da da da da. "Oh wow I love Jesus he loves me. We walk down the road together holding hands picking daisies." I get that. Here it comes. "You are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you." My relationship with God, excuse me, my relationship with the word of God will be the exact same depth of my relationship with Him. If you are sitting here this morning and you are saying, I give you the first five, six, seven years to get yourself all put together, we are all good with that, but let me talk to you if you have been saved 20, 30, 40 years, come on now. There is no depth to it and yet we want to pretend we have this great relationship with God but we just do not really have one with His word beyond surface stuff. The four spiritual laws.

God's friend. Two men in the Bible that the Bible correlates and tells us that we are God's friend. One is Moses.

Exodus 33:11

And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

The other one is Abraham.

Isaiah 41:8

But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

I would suggest that if you really, really, really wanted to know how to be God's friend, study those two men. Neither one of them started out being God's friend but there was a pathway that they got to be in God's friend. I get on that path.

Verse 15. "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." That to me as a pastor, that is a powerful verse to me. It should be maybe to you too. What a great principle this is for me anyhow, for all of you who are involved in my ministry. I am your pastor, that is one of the two offices of the church, the other one being the office of a deacon. You find this laid out in first and second Timothy. But I am not only your pastor but I am also your friend. Most pastors, most guys, they want to be your pastor but they will never let you into their world that you could be their friend. I always tell people if you are going to a church that your pastor will not give you his personal cell phone, get out of that church. You have my and you can call me anytime you want to.

It is a thing where most churches if you want to see the pastor if you have got a problem you have got to go through Martin Borman. Most people do not know who Martin Borman was. Everybody thinks Adolf Hitler was the most powerful man in the Third Reich. He was not. Martin Borman was. Martin Borman was his secretary and you could never get to see Hitler without going through Martin and if Martin did not like you, you did not get in. When you go to most churches you have some secretary that you have to go through to get to him. Do not you dare, he is done preaching, he is out of there. Do not you try to catch him down the hallway say, "Can I talk to you?" Martin Borman will get you. He wants to be your pastor but he does not want to be your friend. He will not do race cars with you. He will not have fun with you and joke around with you. He will not put his arm around and tell you he loves you. He will not have fun and do stupid things. He will not let you laugh at him. He will let you get in a little fisticuff back and forth with things because we enjoy each other. I tell people all the time if I do not play with you I do not like you. We get on each other, we say things to each other. Guy said one time, "Well that church, I am not going to your church no more because you guys say things about people all the time." Yeah we do, we say it back and forth all the time, we have fun doing it. It is what we do here. "You are ugly, you are uglier, you are right." It is a thing where for us we are family. I may be your pastor, I may have to crack the whip, I may have to get into your face, I may have to deal with things but at the end of the day, hey, I am just like you. We have fun together, we do things together.

The last part of that verse 15 he says this: "For all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." There is no secret between friends. Everything I have spent my whole life, 19 years here, my whole life giving you what God has given me. I hold nothing back from you. Why? Because Jesus did not hold anything back from me. He is God. He does not need me. He can look at me and just blow me off the universe. No, you know what He did? He is not just my God and my Lord and my Savior, He is my friend. He says, "You know what Bob, everything that I have that God gave me I am going to give to you." I said, "Well thanks Lord I do not deserve it." "I know you do not but I am going to give it to you anyhow." I said, "I will tell you

what I will do Lord, You give me everything and I will do the same thing for the people You give me and I will give everything You gave me." That is how it works. Most pastors follow the isolationist mode. Do not touch me. Do not come close. Do not do this. Do not do that.

VII. Ordination: Investing to Establish

Then verse 16. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another." This is one of the clearest verses in all of the Bible of why God saved you and why He saved me. It will fit into Israel as God's son as a corporate nation and it will fit into me as an individual in the church age. Israel as a nation was chosen by God to be God's representation in the Old Testament times to bring the world to God. They were called to bear fruit. You will find that in Matthew chapter 21 verses 33 through 34, Ezekiel chapter 12 verses 1 to 8. You will find it all down through there that there was a time when they were to go bear fruit and they did not do it. Then you are fine by when Christ shows up in Matthew chapter 21 verse 18, the illustration is clear, now Israel is like that barren fig tree. She did not bear any fruit.

Matthew 21:33-34

Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:

And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

Ezekiel 12:1-8

The word of the LORD also came unto me, saying,

Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house.

Therefore, thou son of man, prepare thee stuff for removing, and remove by day in their sight; and thou shalt remove from thy place to another place in their sight: it may be they will consider, though they be a rebellious house.

Then shalt thou bring forth thy stuff by day in their sight, as stuff for removing: and thou shalt go forth at even in their sight, as they that go forth into captivity.

Dig thou through the wall in their sight, and carry out thereby.

In their sight shalt thou bear it upon thy shoulders, and carry it forth in the twilight: thou shalt cover thy face, that thou see not the ground: for I have set thee for a sign unto the house of Israel.

And I did so as I was commanded: I brought forth my stuff by day, as stuff for removing: and in the evening I digged through the wall with mine hand; I brought it forth in the twilight, and I bare it upon my shoulder in their sight.

And in the morning came the word of the LORD unto me, saying,

Matthew 21:18

Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

Now you and I in the New Testament church, we have got the same calling. We do for the world today after the crucifixion what Israel was to do for the world before the crucifixion. Now verse 16 says we are ordained. Here is the second word I wanted to define for you, the first one was doctrine. Here is the second one, the word ordained.

➤ 2.) Ordained

There are two aspects to this. The first one is allowing God through our relationship with Him to purge us to bring forth more fruit. We saw that last week. The second aspect today will be that your fruit should remain. Winning people to Christ and never getting them established because you do no investment in them.

I grew up in the Christian world in 1960s, 70s, and the 80s. I went into the ministry around 1975-1976. This was the era of what we call today or you hear the term fundamentalism. Fundamentalism was big back in the day. It started with J. Frank Norris and it was the movement of the big, enormous Baptist churches way before most of you were born. This was the first era of what we call today the mega churches. Today we have the second era of mega churches, but just not by the Baptist anymore. Of course, we now see the repetitiveness of history a little bit here. It was nothing more back in my day in the 60s and the 70s in the churches as I was involved in that it was a race to the top. Education from Bible colleges became God. If the Laodicean church is a church that deals with sick churches and sick people, the Laodicean church people in my time was there was more sick people. You had more doctors running around in Christian sense than you and everybody was still sick. Every Baptist church in the country wanted to be top dog.

I watched this. I was part of this. I have talked to these guys. I was a low man on the totem pole. When these guys would fly in to speak in a church someplace, they would send me out to pick them up at the airport. Guys like Cecil Hodges from Savannah, Georgia. Guys like Jack Hyles. He ran 10,000 in his church back in Hammond, Indiana. Akron Baptist Temple with Charles Billington, 10,000. Harold Henniger from the Canton Baptist Temple. We ran three or four thousand back then. Temple Baptist down in Detroit under A.V. Henderson. They ran five thousand. I drove down to Branson yesterday and you all went past it. Nobody even saw it right there as you are going through Springfield, that big old monstrosity of a mausoleum called High Street Baptist Church. Back in the day, that was the church that hauled the mail under Dr. Cavan and Dr. Dow. We drove right by it and mostly you did not even see it. I was looking for it. I saw it long before. I saw that big old steeple up there and I said, "Here she comes." There it was.

Jerry Falwell, eight or nine thousand people. Tom Malone up in Detroit, three or four thousand people.

During that time, it was an all-out race to see who could get the most people in church. It was all under the pretense that we want to win them to Christ, but they used every gimmick in the book to get a crowd. I have seen them. I have been there many times. I laugh many times. I stuck my head under the pew. Could not believe it. We had Patch the Gospel Pirate. He would come in and he would wear a pirate uniform with a patch over his eye and he would tell you about Jesus. My favorite was the Gospel Cowboy. I cannot remember his name, but he actually had two six shooters and he would put beer cans up on the Baptistry and with wax bullets, he would shoot the beer cans off and everybody would cheer. Hundreds of people would come to see this guy do this. We used to have parachutists come down in the parking lot. We had Parachute Sunday. I always thought they were going the wrong way. I wanted to see somebody go up, but we had Sunday School campaigns. Ten weeks running. We would find another church across the country that had us different about the same size, and we challenged them to a Sunday School contest. At the end, if we won, then that pastor had to come and present some plaque or something. If we lost, then we had to send our pastor out and do that. All to get a crowd.

This was the years of the bus ministry. Jack Hyles was running 10,000 in Sunday School. Everybody was saying, "Wow, it will be like Jack Hyles." But he never told anybody he was running over 200 buses that were going 200 miles to bring kids into church just so they could count them. So we could have 10,000. We had giveaways. We had dunk the preacher Sunday. We would bring in one of those dunking machines. If you did not make your Sunday School goal of 5,000 people or whatever, then the preacher had to go sit in the dunking machine, and you got to come up, and everybody in the church got to throw a ball and dunk him in the tank. Then the evangelists got into it. Guys like Lester Roloff. Guys like Curtis Hudson. Guys like Jack Van Impe. Guys like Jerry Johnson. Oh, then we had the big days. We would have Friends Sunday. "Now, next Sunday, everybody brings your friend." And here is our goal. 4,000 people. Friends Sunday. Then somebody got the idea, "Let us have a Heaven Sunday." And we will talk about Heaven. Everybody wants to know about Heaven. So we would have Heaven Sunday. And the pastor would get up there and he would say, "Do you want to know what Heaven is like?" Well, if it is like what he said, I want to go to Pittsburgh instead. I always try to tell him in the staff meetings, "Let us have Hell Sunday." That would really get him going. They did not want to do that.

Elmer Towns. Nobody knows who Elmer Towns was anymore. He was out of Springfield. Elmer Towns was a guy who was caught up in all this, and he went around to all these churches, and he took pictures. If we were a church of 5,000, you would be sitting out there. The pastor would be standing here like this, and Elmer would be up here, and he would take a picture of the pastor with all that crowd out there. He went around to churches all across the country, and then he wrote a book. The book was called *The 10 Top Sunday Schools in America*. Every pastor on this planet wanted to be in Elmer Towns' book to have you stand there, have your picture taken with all of you, and then be in Elmer's book. It was a pride thing. It was so popular that he wrote a second book, *The Second 10 Top Sunday Schools in America*, and did the same thing.

All this was done under the pretense of getting people saved, but the real issue was having a big church, raising a lot of money. Pride was unprecedented. It was more like P.T. Barnum's *The World's Greatest Showman* and *The Greatest Show on Earth*. The parallels, I go back to Israel when David numbered the people. When David numbered the people, it was a picture of them putting themselves in the national pride of their numbers and the power of God. Back in that day, Baptist churches and all the different fellowships fell into the same trap, "Look at us," and they numbered the people. Not one of those churches ever applied the last part of verse 16 to work to keep the fruit. There was no investment in their life. Do not tell me, folks, I lived it. I was there. I saw it. No one, no one-on-one, no discipleship, no teaching, no investment in anybody's life. You came to church, we got you saved. That is as far as it went. The plan for their spiritual growth was simple. Come church, get saved, get baptized. Come to church every time the door is open. There will be Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, Thursday night visitation, everything we do and tithe and submit to the set of rules that we have and that will solve every problem you got. It did not solve anything.

Churches back then, I am going to say it, I could say it, I was there. You were not, so shut up. Churches back then in the 60s and the 70s, 80s, they were more like a slave labor camp. The camp commandant was the pastor and the pulpit was his whip and his bully thing that he beat everybody with. He put them under a legalistic system of rules that did not do anything for them and then he worked them to death. I have seen a guy come down and get saved, give his life to God when he would get up. Three pastors would grab him and they were in such a state for people to work. The guy would say, "I think God has called you to the bus ministry, pal. I think God has called you to the elementary. I think God has called you here. God called you here," and they take those brand new baby Christians and they throw them into the meat grinder of ministry. No training, no discipleship, no nothing. That was their mentality. That was what they did. The deacons were the Gestapo. They did not win anybody to Christ. They did not disciple anybody. They did not work with anybody. They made sure you kept the rules.

Here is how it worked at the average First Baptist slave labor camp. When you worked them to death, they got saved. You put them into ministry. You would get them to this. You would give them that. You did not give them anything. And you put them right to work. Some of them had marital problems, problems with their kids. Some of them were struggling with this. They were struggling with that. That did not matter. As long as you come to church, you tithe and you do what we tell you, you will grow spiritually. No, you will not. When they worked them to death, and they did, and when they never invested in them, when they fell, then we had the audacity. When they fell and we quit, we just blamed it on the fact that they were not really spiritual to begin with.

Those big churches today, they are gone. Canton Baptist Temple, 3000. You can hold roll call in a phone booth on Sunday morning. Tennessee Temple does not even exist anymore. Up in Detroit, Temple Baptist was J. Frank Norris's old church that ran five, six thousand in the heyday. Could not even find it. It is gone. Elmer Towns wrote a third book. The third book was *The Ten Most Beautiful Churches in America*. You know why? Because they did not have any people anymore. That is why. It was a joke. He says, "I have ordained you to go and bring forth fruit and

your fruit should remain." Your ordination, my people, is to invest in people's lives to establish them. He has called you to do that.

I saw through the phoniness of all this, years and years ago, and I saw not only the destruction of the people coming into the church and being left to themselves to figure it out. In time, they were swallowed back up into the world, and I would watch how the pastors and the staff members would castigate them. "Well, they probably really did not get saved anyhow." "Well, they were not, you know why they saw them? They did not do this. They did not give this up." How can you ask somebody to give something up if you are not willing to give them something in place of it? We did not do it. No investment. None at all. Churches became a revolving door. But I watched the kids suffer.

I remember when I first came to Kansas City in 1976 as a youth pastor, we had our first camp that next year in 1977. You were there. Steve was there. Penny Hansinger was there. Probably some of you other ones out there that are missing. You were there. This was way back in the day. We had about 120 kids. Most of them were Deacons' kids, Sunday school teachers' kids, the upper echelon hierarchy of the church. Mel Shabaka came in and preached that first camp. We had 70 kids saved. All of those kids saved were the kids of Deacons, Sunday school teachers, pastors in that church. Now you would have thought when we went back and told about 70 people got saved that the church would be Hallelujah, Hallelicious. "We are great." That caused me more problems. You have no idea when I am baptized in Brother so and so who is a Deacon, his kid got saved because the Deacon did not win him to Christ and he got saved at the camp. You would think they would rejoice. They did not. They blamed me for it. I should have just let their kids all die and go to hell and everybody would have been happy. You see, they were so prideful. They could not realize that this little world that they had their family around was not working. It did not do the job. They all were in a Christian school someplace, Tri-City. They all were out there where they were trying to isolate them and now the kids are growing up. We go to camp and 70 of them get saved and mom and dad are not happy because mom and dad just could not believe that their little collective world that their kid just would not grow into salvation. No, no, no, no, no.

Let me tell you something. You learned some great lessons watching out in life and that is when I wrote my discipleship lesson. That is when I sat down and I said I am not going to lose another person because of this. If I got to do it by myself then I will do it by myself and I started with my high school. I started with the next college career and for the last 50 years of my life I have taken the word ordination seriously. My investment in you to establish you and when you get saved you are ordained now to invest in somebody else. It is just that simple and it is a thing where I just followed years ago.

VIII. The Threefold Investment: Reading, Exhortation, Doctrine

I saw Paul laying out the importance of sound doctrine to Timothy and he said that sound doctrine will be the key to everything Timothy. Then I just followed that simple little outline that

he gave Timothy based on his own young men that he was training back there in 1 Timothy chapter 4.

1 Timothy 4:11-13

These things command and teach.

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

- 1.) Reading
- 2.) Exhortation
- 3.) Doctrine

That is how in John 15, a passage given to Israel. Some of it like last week you cannot apply. Here the parallels clearly go across. I am a child of God. I am a son of God. Israel is a nation. There is a son of God. Many things he gives them will flow to me but it is to them directly. You have to be able to rightly divide it and work in those areas of making the Bible come alive to you by having a complete balance in your life of historical, doctrinal, and inspirational. You cannot just have one or two. You have got to have all three. Just like for you to be complete and used of God, you have got to have all three, body, soul, and spirit. The Bible has got to have an inspirational application, a doctrinal application, and a historical application and this is what we will do. This is what we have invested the last 19 years here in my life before that taking every young man and young lady that could stand it and get him into that book to get those three things done. So make sure you sign up for that tonight. Get everything else out there you need to do. Next week we will continue on in John's...