

Numbers 13

Sunday 12/31/2023

Dear Lord, thank you for this day and thank you for the opportunity to show what you have been doing in my life. Thank you for all the people here at this church that mean so much to me, to be able to do something like this. Lord, just give me the words to say. I pray all these things in Jesus' name, amen.

I. Introduction to Caleb

I am going to be talking about Caleb from the Old Testament. If you all want to turn back with me to Numbers chapter 13. As you are turning there, let me just set the scene of the context of what is going on in this passage. In the Old Testament, Israel was in slavery in Egypt for 400 years. This event in Numbers 13 takes place shortly after Moses, the man of God, leads Israel out of Egypt, out of slavery, all through God performing miracles and delivering them out of the hands of the Egyptians.

God delivers them through the Red Sea and gives them the law. Ultimately, everything is setting up for Israel to be ready to enter into the Promised Land, the land that was promised to them for generations, that Israel had been looking forward to, a land known for its fruitfulness, a land known for its beauty. They are getting ready to enter this land, and God wants to send some spies into the land to seek it out and see what it is about, see what is in it, and see if it is like the land that Israel really wants to settle in.

Among these twelve spies, Caleb was one of them. We will pick it up here in Numbers 13:17.

And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain:

And see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many;

And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds;

And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the firstripe grapes.

II. Characteristics of a Reliable Christian

Caleb and eleven others were given a charge by Moses, the man of God. They were given the same charge that we are given as Christians: to go into an unknown land and search for the fruit of the land. That is ultimately what God wanted them to do. Let us take a look and see what it is that Caleb did to be counted reliable by the leaders of Israel, to be in that position where he was trusted by Moses to say, "Just go out into this unknown land, I do not know what you are going to see there, but I want you to bring of the fruit of the land."

So, what can we do as Christians to be considered reliable, to where God trusts us with sending us out to bear fruit? Fruit, for those of you who do not know, is a picture of the lives that we invest in, people getting saved.

- 1.) Investment
- 2.) Consistency
- 3.) Willingness to Go

III. Caleb's Perspective vs. Other Spies

The next thing I want to look at is there were eleven other spies that went into the Promised Land, all with the same criteria that we just went over. A nation of two and a half to three million people, there was a total of twelve people that God trusted, and so they all fit the same criteria that Caleb did, but what set Caleb apart? What made Caleb different than the other spies?

We will read in Numbers 13, picking it up in verse 26.

And they came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.

And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.

Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.

The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

In this passage right here, you see two different perspectives. What is the difference between those two perspectives? The other spies that went with Caleb into the land, they were so focused on the giants in the land, they did not believe that God was big enough to overcome the giants of spiritual battles ahead of them. Whereas Caleb, on the other hand, his focus was on the fruit of the land. He saw that the land was good, and what God had for them in store in the land, that he was willing to look past and understand that God would fight the battles for them, and would be able to overtake the giants, a picture of our spiritual battles in our own personal lives.

So, what are the giants that you might have in your life that might distract you from being able to see the fruit of the land? Is it bitterness? Is it fear? Temptations? Anxiety? Self-doubt? Lack of faith? All of that is irrelevant when you have the faith of God, and you have God on your side, because God is bigger to overcome those things. That is the perspective that Caleb had where these other spies lacked. When you look into the world, the unknown land, do you see the giants in the land, or do you see the fruit of the land?

Another interesting thing is in Numbers chapter 13, Caleb is the only one listed for believing that God could deliver them into the Promised Land. But when you read in chapter 14, you will see that Joshua stands with him. Is your faith contagious? Does your faith encourage others to take a stand for God?

IV. The Result of Unbelief

God makes a promise to Moses because of Israel's lack of faith that God could deliver them. He makes a promise to Moses that because Israel had seen God's glory and God's miracles, and yet doubted that He could deliver them into the Promised Land, that none of the entire generation that refused to go into the Promised Land would get to see the Promised Land besides Caleb and Joshua. That just begs a question for us on a personal level: will you let the spiritual battles in your life prevent you from feeling what God has in store for you?

Because of this, Israel spends the next forty years wandering in the wilderness, whining and complaining about how horrible the wilderness was. The wilderness that they put themselves into, a picture of a Christian out of fellowship, wasting away the years not having any sort of spiritual growth. Years where they could have been taking over the Promised Land, all because they did not think that God was big enough to overcome their spiritual battles.

V. Caleb's Faithfulness and Inheritance

If you all want to turn with me to Joshua chapter 14. Israel is wandering for forty years because of their lack of understanding and believing that God could take them through and deliver them into the land because of the giants. In Joshua chapter 14, this is forty years later after God had finally brought them into the land. The entire generation had died out besides Joshua and Caleb, the only two who stood and had the faith in God.

We will pick it up in verse 7 here. This is now Caleb coming to Joshua and reminding him of the promise that God gave him of this land that God had set aside for Caleb, of the inheritance that He had formed because of Caleb's faith in God back in Numbers.

Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadeshbarnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart.

Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God.

And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God.

And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.

As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.

Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said.

Caleb waited faithfully forty years plus five years after entering into the Promised Land to get to this point where he is ready to claim the inheritance that God set for him. The thing that is really interesting to me is when you look at this passage and compare it to what we read in Numbers, Caleb's perspective has not changed at all. He has the exact same perspective then as he did now. Meanwhile, Israel on the other hand, the whole time they were in the wilderness, they were whining and complaining and upset with God at every opportunity they could be.

VI. How to Not Burn Out

It just raises the question for us, how can you and I as Christians ensure that we will not burn out in a world full of trials and a world full of uncertainty? How can we be like Caleb and stay stable through those forty, forty-five years and not let our faith be any less than it was before those trials and tribulations? We have seen way too often just people burning out, getting saved and giving a good two or three years and then burning out. So, what did Caleb do to keep that perspective and not let his faith be changed?

- 1.) Keep Your Mind on Eternal Things
- 2.) Wholly Follow the Lord

VII. The End Result: God's Faithfulness

The way this story ends is very cool. We will read in Joshua chapter 14, verse 11, continuing on from what we read before.

As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.

Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said.

Caleb at age 85 says that he was just as strong in this day as he was at age 40 when the Lord first sent him as a spy. From a human standpoint, all the odds were stacked against him. He was 85 years old, but his strength was just as strong that day as it was when he was a young man. It says that the cities were great and fenced that he was going to go in, and at age 85, he had such a faith in God that he had no doubt in his mind whatsoever that he would be able to overtake the land. His perspective was that the cities were great and fenced, and "if so be the Lord will be with me."

Where will you allow your faith to take you? Because that is ultimately the limiting factor of God's infinite, God's eternal. So, the ultimate limiting factor on how far your faith can take you is dependent on you and your level and depth of faith and investing in the things of God, focusing on that which is eternal, and never let the size of the giants in front of you deter you and let you forget that the power of God is bigger than all those things.

Dear Lord, Father in Heaven, thank you for this day. Thank you for everything that you have done for me and my family. Thank you for all the people in this church. I just pray that you can help get me out of the way this morning and help me speak clearly so that people can understand. I just pray that you can use me as a vessel to get the Word of God out to the people that need it. I just pray that if there is anything in this message that these people need, that you help them get it. I pray for the rest of the night and I pray for the rest of the preachers, that everybody can be in the right headspace and the right heart space. I ask all this in Jesus' name, Amen.

VIII. Introduction: Personal Struggles and Israel's Failure

Before I get started any further, there are so many people that I have to thank in this church. I have been going to this church since I was 8 years old and I am now 23. So, it has been a really long time. I have grown up in this church. I have been in the kindergarten classes. I went through all of the grades and now I am in what we called "big church" back in the day. I am so thankful for the families and everybody that helped me and my family. I also want to thank everybody who helped me and encouraged me in putting this message together. I am just so thankful and I cannot say enough good things about everybody.

In my message today, I am going to get a little bit personal. There have been a lot of changes that have been going on in my life recently. I just graduated from college this last year. I have a new job. I work at a hospital. With my schedule, I work nights, so while all of you get to curl up in bed, I am slaving away at the hospital. I really like what I do. It can be tough though. It is 24/7. There are sick people all the time. On Christmas and Thanksgiving and stuff like that, it is a 24-hour service, including weekends. It can just be hard sometimes.

I also moved out of my parents' house and now have two roommates. If you were to ask me when I was 18 years old if I was an adult, I would say yes. But I did not realize until I finally got out on my own that I was not an adult, because now all of my decisions that I make are my own, and I cannot blame anybody but myself whenever I find myself. So, that is kind of what I want to talk about this morning. Throughout all of those decisions and all of those big life choices in my life, I did not always take God into account whenever I was making decisions.

A job is important, your education is important, it is important to know what you are talking about and stuff like that. The thing is, I took a lot of the blessings and the tools that God gave me, and I used it to build myself up, and I used it to clothe myself. It is just one of those things where it is all a balance. Paul was a tent maker; he needed a means to support himself. But it is all a balance, and a lot of what I was doing in my life and the choices that I made with my job and my career and my education, a lot of it was for me. It really made me take a step back, and this message is really personal to me because I needed to figure out a way to express how I feel. What does God have to say about all this? Getting back to the Bible basics, stop complicating life, stop worrying about all of these things, just get back to what the Bible has to say.

So, I asked myself a few questions:

1. How is it that someone who is in the right church with the right Bible and surrounded by the same people can still get caught up in the things of the world?
2. If I have these struggles with the right tools and the right Bible and everything that I need to be successful, what does that say about the church age that we live in and the life that we are leading?
3. Lastly, the nation of Israel also had all of the tools that they needed to be successful, but yet they still failed in what they were doing, and they still chose to turn away from God. So, what did God have to say about it, and how did He deal with them?

IX. The Problems of Israel (and the Church Age)

Why do not we turn to the book of Hosea? While some of you struggle to find the book of Hosea, I guess I will explain it a little bit. Hosea is one of the minor prophets. At this time in history, the nation of Israel is split up into two groups. We have the ten northern tribes, and we have the two southern tribes. The two southern tribes are going to be referred to as Judah. The ten northern tribes at this point in time are going to be referred to as the nation of Israel, but specifically in this book, we get into the tribe of Ephraim. So, just know that whenever God is mentioning Ephraim, He is talking about those ten northern tribes.

There were many minor prophets that were sent to these two sides of the nation at this point in time, and Hosea just happened to be one of the people that was sent to the ten northern tribes. So, He does something with Hosea that is a little bit different. He makes his life an object lesson for the life that Israel was leading at this time. So, He has Hosea take a wife of harlotry, named Gomer, and that was to picture the relationship that God and Israel had at this time. It is important to understand that doctrinally, the Israelites and the nation is the bride of God the Father. Throughout this entire story of the Bible, it is a love story between, obviously us and Christ, but then also between the nation of Israel and God the Father. Israel betrayed God the Father. This book is about an object lesson and the punishment that follows, but then also what happens at the end when they get restored.

So, let us look at some of the problems that Gomer had and Israel had. Understand that a lot of these same problems that Israel had are the same problems that we personally have, and that we in the church age that we live in has.

In Hosea chapter 1, I am going to read verses 2-5.

The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.

So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.

And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.

And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

So, we are going to look at some of the fruit that Gomer bears. The first child that she has is named Jezreel. What Jezreel means is "God disconnected" or "God scattered." So, we can see in this passage here that Israel is not following the law of God. They are not doing the right things. They are out there living their own lives. So, at this point in time, we can see that Israel has become disconnected from God. They are not doing what is right, just like we sometimes are not doing what is right, and we become disconnected from God, we get out of fellowship.

What that results in is the next fruit that she bears. It says in verse 6.

And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And God said unto him, Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.

But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

So, we can see what happens ultimately when God is disconnected from them. At this point in time, Israel is split up into two groups, and very shortly, the Israelites are going to cease to exist as a nation, and they are going to be taken into captivity.

In Hosea 2:2, we see the official bill of divorcement between God and the nation of Israel.

Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts;

So, we can see that at this point in time, God is finished. He is done with the nation of Israel. We see the ultimate result of God's disconnect in verses 7 and 8.

And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.

For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.

God said that is the ultimate decision that the nation of Israel made. When they disconnected from God, God said, and Israel is completely and 100% on their own now. At this point in time, we are about to enter those 400 silent years. God does not speak to Israel, He does not have anything to do with them. They get taken into captivity, they get spread all across the Middle East and all across the world at this point in time. They do not ever hear again from God until Christ shows up in the first coming. And what do they do? They crucify Him.

X. The Laodicean Church

Those same fruit that Gomer is bearing at this point in time is a lot of the same fruit that we as the church, the Laodicean church, is bearing at this point in time. So, turn with me to Revelation 3. Let us see what God has to say about the day and age that we live in. I am going to read verse 20 right now.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

So, what does that tell us about the day and age that we live in? That God is completely disconnected from the church at this point in time. I mean, if people want to do what is right, God says that He will still sup with them. But what does it say? "I stand at the door and knock." God is standing at the outside of this church age knocking, wondering when we are going to let Him in. But the thing is that no one can hear the knocking because we are all too busy partying up on stage. Everybody has got smoke machines now and a rock band up on stage.

Here is the thing, people think that they are with God when really, they have nothing to do with God. I went to a church service one time with a friend of mine I was trying to invite to church. The reason why I went is because I wanted him to understand that if I want him to come to church, that I am willing to go to his church. It was one of my first experiences ever with some of these churches that are out there today. It was a thing where you show up and everybody visits before church and stuff like that. Then you have 45 minutes of singing and praising the Lord, and all of that stuff is great. But then somebody gets up and gives a little message and is like, "You know, Jesus is your shepherd. I lost my kid at the boardwalk one time, and that is what it is like whenever we walk away from God, and God just loves us so much, and He is just trying to find us, and God is your shepherd. I was so happy when I found my kid, and you know what, that is what it is like whenever you get back to God."

That was the whole message. We spend 45 minutes singing, throwing up our hands, and listening to everybody on stage. Then we hear like a 10, 15 minute message about Jesus is your shepherd. The thing was, it was so crazy. When I left that service, I felt so hungry for the Word of God. But the thing is that everybody else was like, "Wow, was not that such a great message? Did not you get so much out of that? I just, oh my gosh, it makes my heart so full." I am just leaving, I am like, "When are we going to go eat?" That is how it felt spiritually speaking. I felt like I was spiritually starved. But the thing is that when people are disconnected from God in that way, they do not understand what they are missing. Instead of asking questions about the Bible, they are asking how far can they dip their toes in the world before it becomes socially unacceptable as a

Christian. We are worried about, "Am I able to drink and still be a Christian?" We are worried about, "Am I able to smoke weed and still be a Christian?" We are worried about the wrong things, and that is what happens when we get disconnected from God like that.

- **Lo-ruhamah: No Mercy**We understand that God has mercy on His people, us as the children of God. God is never going to turn His back on us. So, what does that mean? That means that there are lost people in the church today. There are people out there that claim to be Christians, go to church every single Sunday, and yet if you were to ask them, "What does it mean to get saved?" they cannot tell you. They do not understand. The same church that I visited, they are up there saying, "You know, you accept Jesus into your heart every Sunday," and all of these things about salvation. They use generalities like, "You are born again. You are saved. You are washed in the blood." But if you were to ask them, "What was the process that took place in your life? What was the moment that you accepted Jesus Christ into your heart?" they do not know. They cannot tell you. What that tells me is that there are lost people in this church. That is who He does not have mercy on. Back in the day, if you were to ask people what it means to be saved, they could tell you. Now, whether they chose to be a part of God's plan or chose not to be a part of God's plan, that was the decision that they made. But there was nobody that did not know who Jesus Christ was. This is the day and age that we live in where there are people out there, people in America, who do not know what Jesus Christ did for them on the cross.
- **Lo-ammi: Not My People**This is saying that we do not have an identity in Christ. I am going to read Revelation 3:14-17. This is what He has to say about the day and age that we live in. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;
I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.
So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.
Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: Verse 17 tells us that we truly have nothing with God in this day and age that we live in. We do not understand our identity in Christ anymore. We do not understand the purpose of the church age anymore. If you were to go and ask 99% of churches out there, "What is the purpose of the church?" they cannot tell you. Just like they cannot tell you what salvation is. They have no idea who they are in Christ and what their purpose is. Personally, I had lost my identity with Christ. I did not know the plan of God for my life anymore. I did not understand what I was doing. I was doing things for myself. But despite all of the sin and despite all of everything that I did, and everything that Israel did as well, God is going to tell us how we are supposed to get back closer to Him, because He knows that we are going to mess up. He knows that we are going to go down those paths. And God gives us a way back.

XI. The Way Back to God

So, turn with me back to Hosea. I am going to read chapter 3, verses 1 and 2.

Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.

So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley:

- 1.) Identify Your Problem What does God tell us that we need to do first? We need to identify our problem. Understand that in verse 2, just like it says in 1 Corinthians 6:20, just like Gomer was bought with a price, we need to understand that we are bought with a price too. Understanding who Israel had forgotten all of the things and all of the trials and everything that God had taken them through, just like we forget everything that Christ has done for us in our lives, including saving our souls. In other words, we need to identify the fact that the reason why we get so caught up in the world is because we forget what Christ has done for us.
- 2.) Separate Yourself I am going to read verses 3 and 4. And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: So, after we identify our problem, what is the next thing that we need to do? We need to separate ourselves from the things that took us away from God in the first place. Israel is told not to play the harlot and do not give themselves over to idols. How does it make God feel whenever you give yourself over to idols and you say, "Well, you know, I do not worship a graven image like Israel did"? I am going to get a little personal here for a minute. Here is my idol. Here is what I care about more than God. I probably spend just as much time on my phone on average that I do at work, eight hours a day. Think about how much I could accomplish in the Word of God and learning what Christ has for me if I had spent just as much time as I did on my phone as I did in the Word of God and the true riches what God had to give for me. I spend so much time thinking about my life and the way that I live. I spend so much time thinking about my life and the way that I want it to look: how much money I want to make, how do I set myself up good for retirement, what kind of car do I want to drive, where do I want to live, what kind of house do I want, what do I want my house to look like, what do I want my life to look like? The fact of the matter is that all of that stuff when eternity hits, it is all going to burn up, and none of it is going to matter. The only thing that matters is Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and the souls of men. And those are the things that are going to last for eternity. We need to separate ourselves from those worldly things. Look at verse 4. For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: Honestly, when I read this verse the first time, I am thinking, some of these things sound like good things. Israel had a king. The job of the king was to lead his people to God and be a leader. The princes, the sacrifices, that is literally the basis of the law, doing the sacrifices in order to cover your sin and be acceptable to God. But when we take a look back at the history of Israel, you understand what they did with all of those things that God had

given them to be successful. I am not going to turn there, but in 1 Kings chapter 10, we see that Ahab is being overthrown by Jehu. He is killing his family, he is killing everybody. Then he takes over the throne and kills all the priests. God blesses him for killing the priests of Baal, but he still ends up doing his own thing and leading Israel astray. When you look in the history, you understand that these kings, they are killing each other left and right. They are trying to take each other and take power of the throne. We see that happen with Saul when he tried to do it with David. We see that happen with David and his son. But the thing is, yes, some of the kings were good, but when you look back in Exodus, God told them that they never needed a king in the first place. When you look at the sacrifice, I mean, the sacrifice is the basis of the law, that is what God told them to do. Why is He saying that He wants them to be without a sacrifice? I mean, when you look back in 1 Samuel, what were these priests doing? They were stealing the sacrifice, they were letting the light in the temple go out. At the end result, what does Jesus end up doing whenever He sees what they are doing in the temple? He throws over the tables and He tells everybody to get out because they are not doing it right. Obviously, we know that the image is bad, we just talked about that. The ephod, that is something that God gave them to be successful, but when you look at it, it was used by Saul, it was used by so many people. The last time that it was used correctly in the Bible was by David because it needed to be used by a priest. A teraphim, what the heck is a teraphim? That is not mentioned in the Bible, just like the Sadducees and the Pharisees were not mentioned in the Bible. It is a family idol. It is something that they used to distance themselves from God. All of these things that they are talking about in verse 4, these are the things that Israel used to pad themselves from having a personal relationship with God. They did not know how to have a personal relationship with God. They did not know their identity in Christ anymore. They had not separated themselves from the world. So, instead of having a personal relationship with God, they needed to come up with the incense, the communion, all of the things that the church comes up with today and all of the rituals that we use to make ourselves look spiritual.

- 3.) Replace with the Right Things What does God say in verse 5? Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days. So, what do we need to do after we identify and separate ourselves from our problems? We need to replace them with the right things. All of these things that He talks about in verse 4, again, were things that Israel used just like we use things in our life to pad ourselves from having a personal relationship with God and making ourselves look spiritual. God makes it real simple: return, seek the Lord, and fear the Lord. That is it. That is all you have to do to be successful in the Lord. You need to return away from your sin, you need to read your Bible. The thing is, we already all know what the right things are. We know what we are supposed to be doing. God does not have to complicate it for us. But the thing is, yeah, it is simple, but why is it so hard to do? It is because we are not separating ourselves. We are not cutting the cords, we are not burning the ships, we are not separating ourselves from the things of the world.

XII. The End Result: God's Restoration

So, after all the sin and after everything that Israel did, let us look at the end result of everything that Israel has done in chapter 14. This is the last chapter of the book of Hosea, and this is what God says that they are going to get for everything that they had to do.

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.

They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found.

So, what is the end result of everything that they did? God says that He is going to restore them. After everything that Israel did, after everything that they had done that was against God, and after the Bill of Divorcement, and just everything that Israel had done to show that they were not faithful to God, God was still faithful to them. And He said that He is going to restore them.

For me, the key is in verse 8: "I have heard him, and I have observed him." I understand the doctrinal significance of this passage and a lot of what goes on here, but allow me to take some liberty for a moment. For those of you that are doing what is right, hearing the Word, and observing God, and the things that He has planned for your life, let me just say, keep doing what you are doing. One bad thought, one bad attitude is all that it takes to ruin everything that God has for you.

For everybody that is on the edge, just like everybody in the Laodicean church, you are not hot, you are not cold, you are too godly for the things of the world, but you are too worldly for the things of God, and you are stuck in this limbo. Understand, do not wait until you hear Him say, "Come up hither," and observe Him at the judgment seat of Christ before it takes you to do what is right. Romans 14:12 tells us that every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God. It is a thing of, we do not have to be worried about God being faithful to us. We need to worry about our diligence and our dedication to the Lord. The thing is, God is going to be faithful to us, but whether we like it or not, we are going to be faithful to God.

What do I mean by that? It is so much better for us to choose to be faithful down here, when it is more or less on our terms. Do not wait until the judgment seat of Christ, do not wait until you hear Him say, "Come up hither," and observe Him at the judgment seat before God forces your knee down and tells you that you will be faithful. For those of you that are unsaved, it does not say that saved people will bow and saved people will confess. It says that every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess. Understand that your day is coming too, where you will need to give an account for everything that you have done for God, just as Christians will.

Here is the thing, God was willing to forgive the sins of an entire nation and restore them back to God and love them. After everything that they had done, God can forgive you too for some of the

things that you have done, for everything that you have done. Christ loved you enough to die so that you could be restored in the sight of God the Father, just as Israel was.

I am going to pray. Dear Lord, Father in Heaven, thank you so much for this opportunity. Thank you for everybody in my life that has helped me get as far as I have. I just pray and ask that you bless the rest of the night and bless the preachers and everybody that is going to get up and help us all. Take away everything that you have for us and use it to help ourselves in the new year and be better for you. I ask all this in Jesus' name, Amen.

XIII. Becca's Testimony

Hi. I do not really like public speaking too much, so I said Bob said he would stand next to me. I am not going to speak for too long. I have been told that I have an accent, so I am going to try and speak slowly. I do not hear it, but apparently I do.

If you have not met me, my name is Becca. I am from England. I live about an hour north of London, because I think that is kind of the only place most people know is in England. I was raised in a Christian home with eight siblings. So, I have got six brothers and two sisters. Of all of us, I have got three brothers who are not yet saved. It is tough in England. It is really, really tough. There are just very, very few churches left. That is kind of the main thing I am going to talk about. My salvation story is a little bit boring. I was raised in a Christian family, so I did not really have that whole "go into the world thing and come back out." But I think the most interesting thing is obviously how Jesus saved me, but also kind of everything that has just happened since.

I am grateful for the three brothers and two sisters that I have who have accepted Christ, and I just stay in faithful. They really encourage me, and I do not really know how far I would have got if I did not have that. My mum was the one who led me to Christ originally. She really pushed it. She was raised in quite a strict Baptist family, a Baptist church, and she just, it was really important to her to see us saved. She had nine kids, and she wanted all of us to kind of make something of ourselves for God.

I remember, I must have been seven, eight, nine, and I just remember praying in the bathroom with her. It was kind of the only private space you can get in a house with eight siblings. So, we prayed in the bathroom. I just remember kind of sitting on the floor with her, and I just knew. I had been raised listening to the Bible stories. She was really good at teaching them to us before bedtime. She always put us in church. But I just got to the point where I knew that I needed to be saved, and I was getting older, and I just, yeah, I just knew that I needed Jesus to save me or I was going to go to hell. She was amazing. She sat with me and she prayed with me until I felt better. I have heard preachers say if you do not know if you are right with God, you should just stand in one spot until you know you are, and just pray, pray and pray until you know you are. That is what she did with me, so I am really grateful for her. I have to wave at her, she said, to say hi. I thank the Lord for her. She is a faithful, faithful, faithful lady.

She is also the one who found Old Paths about ten years ago. I remember her coming into my room with her phone, and she was like, "Look, look, there is a guy and you ask him questions on

a Thursday night, and he can answer them off the top of his head." She could not believe it. She could not believe it. That was an amazing thing to us. We had never seen that before where people knew the Bible. That was not a thing that we had been taught. We grew up in different churches, and it is kind of more, "You have to remember the church, you have to do this, that and the other." But we did not know that you, you know, we each have a personal responsibility to learn the Bible. It is important to each and every one of us. It is not, you cannot hide behind a church, you know, you need to know this stuff. You cannot get through life without it. I would not have got through an airport without it.

Since we found His Thursday Night Bible studies, we just listened and listened. We listened to every single thing you had said and every sermon you had said. My mum has probably read every single word from your bookstore. I remember her, I do not know if this is legal, so I am sorry if it is not, but she downloaded all your sermons and we, she put them onto CDs and we listened to them in the car everywhere we went. We just listened to them all the time at home. That was how we learned. That is what she did for us. She just taught us and taught us and taught us and really hammered it into us as we grew up. It is just something that we had not really heard of before, just learning the Bible.

God really showed Old Paths at the perfect time because, like I say, about ten years ago we found it. In the last ten years, all the churches that we know of have become so lukewarm. The church that my mum grew up in was probably one of the few strict Baptist churches left, and it was pretty strict. But even now, they have just turned to modern Bibles and modern versions of the Bible, and they are just really, really lukewarm. They are not doing as they should. We definitely had never, in all the churches that we visited, we had never seen one like this where there is love. There is a lot of love here. I come in and people say hello to me and they ask me how I am doing, and they actually care how you answer. So many people have said, "What have you done with the last six months?" And I just kind of have to stop and think because I was not expecting to be asked that question. People just love on you all the time. That is the main thing that I stress when I go home and I am talking to my family about you guys. I just say, "They just love on you. You cannot get away from it. They smother you with love, and it is amazing."

In the whole of England, which obviously is where we originally got the King James Bible, the whole of England maybe has 10 King James churches left. Of those, I do not know how many are Calvinist or Lutheran and things like that. But there is nothing left. It is a really spiritually dark place. Throughout my childhood, my mum always tried to find really good churches for us to go to. It was really important to her that we were in church every Sunday. But it kind of just got to the point where we, we tried every single one. I mean, I have memories of being in Bible studies where I had to wear a long brown skirt and a headdress and things that, you know, like really on that kind of end of the spectrum, really, really strict, and you cannot speak unless you are spoken to kind of thing. Then I have memories of being in Sunday schools where me and my siblings would be sitting there kind of good as gold waiting for the Bible to come out, and it just never did. They had the Nintendo and they had the games and stuff, but the Bible was never taught and salvation was never taught.

For a long time, my mum just kept us in church. She wanted us to be that good influence. She wanted us to set an example for people. It just kind of, it got to the point though where we were so young that it kind of, in the last three years, she just did not want that influencing us as we are getting older. She did not want them rubbing off on us more than we are rubbing off on them until we were really strong in our Bible. So, that is kind of when we decided that there is nothing in our area. There is no way for us to go. So, the last three years we have been doing home church. We listened to the live streams and just try and stay as involved as we can. Praise the Lord, He has really encouraged us along the way. It was really tough for a long time. It was kind of discouraging. But He has really encouraged us along the way.

One thing I noticed about when Caleb came to see us, it is just, it is one thing to listen to live streams, but it is another thing to be in discipleship and be in lifeline and be talking to people and ministering with people. Live streams are good, but church is more than that. Church is a people, it is not a place. It is a people that we really want it to be part of. So, I have kind of thrown myself into it, and I am loving it. The discipleship, lifeline, just doing as much as I can from where I am. But it can get lonely. So, praise the Lord, July was the first time that me and Adam have been able to come out. We went back and it kind of melted my heart because my little brother said that he could see we changed. I was just like, "Okay, cool," because we had just, we just got our zeal back. We had lost a lot more than I realized we had lost from just not having fellowship around us. It was not until I was here and I was in it that I was like, "Oh, yeah, wow, like I am not used to talking to a hundred people in one day." Just a lot that we realized we did not have anymore.

When me and Adam went home, we were on fire. We were just talking to everybody we knew about Jesus and ministering to people as much as we could. Praise the Lord, I have had some really good opportunities with people. I had the blessing of reuniting with an old, saved friend of mine who I had not spoken to in six years because we just, we lived far apart and we just had not really kept in touch. She is the only saved friend that I have. It is just me and her. Praise the Lord, He just never leaves us alone. He never leaves us lonely. It was cool when Logan Miller was talking about Caleb and how he waited 45 years for his inheritance. We waited three, and kind of now I feel like it is really here. I have got a church finally to be part of. I have got, God has reunited me with saved friends, saved families. He has given me opportunities to just witness to people and minister to people. It has not been without its discouragement, but God always blesses you much more than Satan will discourage you. It outweighs it 10 to one.

It is just a real blessing to be able to be part of a church. I would never have imagined I would be able to stand up here and talk for more than 30 seconds. So, that is really cool that Bob pushes people. He really knows how to train people up and push people. It just goes to show what God can do when you are faithful. I do not want to blow our own trumpet or anything, but my family has just tried to be faithful in the little things, and God has finally given us a really big thing. So, I am just really grateful for that. I thought I would just end with a Bible verse because that is really why we are all here.

Galatians 6:9

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

So, just keep going. You guys are doing such an amazing thing here. I will stop before I cry, but you guys are just doing such an amazing job, and it is touching so many people. It is not going unnoticed. You guys are doing a really good thing here, and just do not faint. You will keep reaping if you faint not. That is what I have.

Dear Lord, thank you for this day, and thank you for this time that we all get to spend in your Word and just listening to what you have put on so many people's hearts today. Just pray that we can all walk away from this better because of it. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

XIV. Introduction: Understanding the Times

If you have been here the past couple weeks of Sundays, you will know that Bob has given a little something about David's mighty men of valor. That is what I am going to be talking about a little bit today, about David's mighty men of valor. You might think that I got the inspiration from Bob, but actually, I have been a fan of David's mighty men of valor since day one, since I first heard about guys like Benaiah, the lion and the lion-like men's slayer. Day one being when Danny preached about it a couple years ago in a camp. Eleazar, the son of Dodo, the bean defender, he is my homie, big fan of him.

In all seriousness, go ahead and turn over to 1 Chronicles 12:32. A little bit of context, 1 Chronicles chapter 11 is talking about all the stories about David's mighty men of valor. That is when you see the great things that some of these men did. Chapter 12 is talking about David's mighty men in each of these tribes specifically. Something that sticks out to me is in verse 32.

And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.

It says the children of Issachar had understanding of the times. That is something that was important to David. That is something that is important to God. It is something that will mean something to you as a Christian if you really want to do what is right and if you really want to do something in this day and age.

XV. Your Job as a Christian in These Times

To understand the times, something that is important is you have to know what your job is in these times. What is your job as a Christian? I know it is obvious: you should learn the Bible, talk about the book, try to witness to others, get others saved. But things have changed throughout history, and there are a lot of details and minutia that are a lot different than what it used to be.

For example, the times that we are living in today, the Bible says, and books like Ruth say that we are gleaning of the field. We are not in the time of plentiful harvest anymore. You hear the story, two hundred years ago, people had a lot better understanding of the Word of God and what

it meant and the power of the Word of God. Unsaved people had better understanding of the Bible than most saved people do today. Bob has told the story about Benjamin Franklin writing a draft of the Constitution, and they sent it back and they said, "There is not enough references to God." Those are unsaved men, if you read what they believed and what they talked about, those are unsaved men. And they said there were not enough references to God in the Constitution, and that the nation would mean nothing if it was not built on God. That is what it was like two hundred years ago. If you struck up a conversation with people about the Bible, everyone had a little bit more of a concept than just the average people today.

I know that can be confusing, might not seem right because we have all progressed so far in technology and everything in knowledge and everything like that. But in terms of knowledge of the Word of God, we have without a doubt regressed. We have gone backwards. People have taken away the power and the work that God can do in your life. We are in the time of gleaning, we are gleaning the field. Your approach to people might have to change accordingly. You might have to meet them where they are at. You might have to be very intentional about whatever opportunities that the Lord gives you, because those opportunities might be few and far between. So, just take advantage of what you have, take advantage of what the Lord gives you, and redeem the time.

Even though the results might change in this day and age, even though you might have to work twice as hard for half the results that people fifty years ago would get, if you ever listen to Ruckman sermons, it is pretty common. He is always talking about the great revivals and all the great things that they were doing back in that day. It can be a little bit discouraging if I am being honest. You hear about the great things that the Lord was doing, and Ruckman is talking about how upset he got about, he went three Sundays and nobody got saved. I mean, three Sundays and nobody got saved? Why is that such a big deal? Obviously, I know it is awesome to have it happening, but three Sundays, that is not a long time. In that day and age, so many people had just a better understanding and were closer with the things that God was doing.

You might have to work harder and you might get less results, but that does not mean that you yourself are doing anything wrong. If you think about that verse that says, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man." Noah was a righteous man, that is God's words, not mine. You find him in the Hall of Faith. You find him in that passage in Ezekiel when he is talking about how if Noah, Daniel, and Job were alive today, only they would be spared based on the state of the nation of Israel at the time. I do not know, it is not important. The important thing is Noah was a righteous man, and he had 120 years to preach the Word of God and to perfect his preaching. You see how good Bob gets after, what, 20, 30 years of preaching? You see how good guys like Mike Veach and Johnny Romero are after only a couple years of preaching and being diligent and working on and perfecting the craft of preaching. And yet, after 120 years, Noah only saved his family. He only brought his family on the ark with him, and not for lack of trying. If Noah could only save his own family in 120 years of preaching, I guarantee you one thing, you will face disappointment, you will face frustration if you try to live godly in Christ Jesus. Still though, your job in these times, it is simple: just be faithful, be

diligent, learning about the Word, preaching the Word, giving it out to people, and taking whatever opportunities that the Lord gives you.

XVI. Your Adversary in These Times

Your adversary in these times is described in 2 Timothy chapter 3. The sister passage for that, if you want to study it on your own, is found in Romans 1. But we are going to be going over what you are going to have to face in these times. Understanding the times, it is important to know your job, it is important to know what you are up against.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

The context, 2 Timothy, it is written to the church, it is written to pastors specifically. It is important for Christians, it is important for pastors to know what this is talking about. It is going to be what you are up against as Christians. If we go through some of these things, in the last days, like it says in this verse, it is talking about the days approaching the rapture. That is the days that we are in today. This is written specifically to you, for you, for your edification. These are your enemies, or what you are going to have to deal with if you want to do what is right for the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, it describes the world, but the worst enemy, something that is going to be more devastating to you as a Christian, is other Christians that are not doing what is right. This describes a little bit of what you will be up against.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

Just a side note, I always find it interesting how "unthankful" is in this list of things. You read all these horrible things like blasphemy and boasters, covetous, lovers of your own selves, and yet unthankful is up there. Why is that there? We just had Christmas, and I am sure for parents, one of the most devastating, one of the worst things that they could experience on Christmas is if they worked really hard to get a gift for somebody. Maybe picked up extra shifts, worked overtime, something like that to try to pay for a gift. If the kid is unthankful, ungrateful for what the effort that it took, what is the point in the first place? It is the same thing with God. If God is answering your prayers, working in your life, and you are unthankful, what is the point? There is no reason that He should continue to do what He is doing in your life if you are not even thankful for it. That is just a side note, but thankfulness is a lot more important than I give it credit for anyway.

We see all these horrible things that Christians are going to be up against, and what is the answer? What are you going to have to do as a Christian if you want to do what is right? How do you beat this? How do you get around it? Solution: what did Jesus do when He was tried by the devil? "Thus saith the scriptures, thus saith the scriptures." Just always going back to the book.

Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

It says, "despisers of those that are good." You will be despised by the world if you try to, and Christians that are not doing what is right, if you try to do what is right, because they will see the

difference in your life, at least they ought to, and they will realize that there is something different about you. That is what should happen. You should be living separate from the world. You should be living in a way that others can see what a life of Jesus Christ is all about.

Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

The thing that I notice when I read these couple of verses is that "lovers" shows up three times. It shows up once in verse 2, twice in verse 4. "Lovers" and "love" and all that stuff, it is something that is really common today, especially in Christianity. You hear all sorts of really horrible phrases, like, "God hates the sin, not the sinner." That is a lie. That is not found in the Bible. That is not scriptural. That is not the way that it is, because both the sinners are going to have to burn in hell for living a life without Jesus Christ, and God hates that, and there is no way around it.

You hear things like, "Do not force your religion on other people." Of course, I know, you have to be cautious, you have to be smart. Whatever opportunities the Holy Spirit gives you, be smart, be active, be forward-thinking about it. But just that idea of "do not force your religion on other people," and "respect everyone's opinion," all those things, they sound fine, they do not sound like a bad thing, but it has probably sent more people to hell than drugs and alcohol and partying could ever hope to. What is the solution? Back to the book, "thus saith the Scriptures." That is always going to be your answer, anything you are up against, "thus saith the Scriptures."

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

This is really, really accurate for what we see today. It says, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." We see, I see it so many times, that the Bible, it has no power today, at least in most people's minds. They think it is a collection of historical documents. They think that maybe, at one point in time, maybe the originals were inspired, but what we have today, what you have in your hands, they do not think it can do anything. They have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. There is power in the book. It can change you. It can save you. It can do something for you. They take away the power in the Word of God, and they take away the power of the Holy Spirit. Again, this is what you are up against. Understanding the times, what is the answer? "Thus saith the Scriptures."

If you skip to verse 12, it says,

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

This is your litmus test for you as a Christian. If you are living godly in Jesus Christ, this is what it says the result is. That is not a warning. That is not a bad thing. If you think that is a bad thing, all that needs to happen is just change your perspective on it. It is a promise. It is actually a good thing. If you think about Acts 5:41, it says, "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." They were rejoicing to suffer shame for His name. If you think that suffering, persecution, because of your living for Christ Jesus, it is a bad thing, all you need to do, again, just change your perspective. If you see what they said, they were rejoicing, because you are counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

If you read this whole chapter, you will see exactly what I am telling you right here. Paul is giving Timothy a warning, and giving us a warning in this day and age about what you are going to face. What you are going to face as a Christian, what you are going to face if you try to do what is right. What does Paul say is the answer, again, like I have been saying, if you read these last couple verses of the chapter, especially verse 14.

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

It is just always going back to the Scriptures. If you want to live godly in Christ Jesus, you will have to suffer for it. But the answer, again, just rely on the book.

XVII. The Difference Between Physical and Spiritual Soldiers

I have always liked the military. I have always liked Bob's perspective on things, especially the similarities between a physical and a spiritual soldier, the physical and spiritual warfare that we are in today. It has always been really interesting to me. Like Bob was going through these past couple weeks, things like loyalty, determination, courage, and honor, those are all going to be very important for both physical soldiers, but they are also really important for spiritual soldiers. That is what makes a good soldier in this warfare that we are in today.

But there is a difference between a physical and a spiritual soldier, in my opinion. It is that if you think about the top of the elite of the elite, the Navy SEALs, something like that. If you think about what they have to do to become Navy SEALs, BUD/S training, it is a weed out process is what it is. I am sure the guys who get through it, they are definitely hardened by the experience. They are made better soldiers because of it, but if you do not get it, you do not get it. That is the difference between physical and spiritual soldiers, is that if you do not have it physically, whether it is circumstances, genetics, something like that, or you just do not have it mentally, and no shame in that because I do not think anyone here today would have it. But that is the difference between physical and spiritual soldiers, is that spiritually, the Bible will take you as far as you will let it. Nothing will limit you. Circumstances, friends, family, even like a disability, something like that.

I heard a Ruckman message the other day when he was talking about Romans 8:28. He said, he gave some good examples of some guys that had horrible disabilities, and yet even through that they were able to overcome the circumstances and really become a soldier for God. He had one where he was talking to a blind guy, and I think Ruckman was kind of going through something at the time, feeling bad for himself. Then this blind guy, he was talking to him, I think they were doing some street preaching, and just kind of out of the blue, he was like, "You know, I am glad that the Lord never healed me of that, of being blind." And then he said, "Really, why is that? I mean, there are plenty of cool stuff to see on this earth. I mean, you have cool sunsets and nature and everything like that, you are missing out on all that." And he said, his response was, "Because when I finally do get to open my eyes, the first thing that I will get to see is the face of

the one who loved me enough to save me." That is a good perspective, and that shows you someone who is overcoming the circumstances.

There is no limit to what the Bible can do for you. You are drinking from a fire hydrant when you are getting the Word of God. It can be a little overwhelming, to be honest. But if you just take your time and rely on people who have been through it and know what they are doing, that is how you get it. You can take the Bible as far as you want, or rather, a better way to say it, is the Bible can take you as far as you let it. Again, there is a cost for each level of spiritual growth. It might cost you time, it might cost you money, it might cost you friends, maybe career ambitions, something like that. But the reward of bringing honor and glory to the one, again, who loved you enough to save you, should be all the reward that you need. If that is not enough, you are also going to get spiritual rewards out of it too.

XVIII. The Urgency of Living for God Now

As the rapture approaches, AJ did a great message about a couple years ago about we are 75 years into overtime. Israel became a nation in 1948, and since then the Lord has just been waiting and waiting for the rapture. We are ready for it to come any second now. But you have never been guaranteed of tomorrow. You are not guaranteed that you will even make it home tonight, I hate to say it. The Bible says, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." You are not guaranteed tomorrow. The time to live for God is now. If you are going to make the decision to live godly in Christ Jesus, this is the day and age that we live in. This is what it means to understand the times. The rapture is approaching, and you need to get ready for it. You need to start living godly in Christ Jesus.

I think everyone has, some people, I am probably guilty of this too, is that we kind of have the idea that we can beat the system, maybe that you can put it off until the last possible second, and then you will start living godly, and then you will have all those, you will do what is right, and you will not even have to face the consequences, because then you will get raptured out of it, and you will just time it perfectly, and it will work out great. I mean, that would be great if that is how it worked, but I mean if you think about something like if you are in serious debt, and it is due a year from now, you are not going to wait until the last possible second. You ought to be able to be forward thinking and to do what you need to be doing from day one. This is the situation that you are in right now. It is never going to be easier to do what you should have done today, to do it tomorrow. The longer you wait, the more difficult it will get.

AJ also told me about a book about people who, before we had modern medicines like morphine and all those painkillers to kind of drug people out of their minds in their last seconds of life. He was telling me about just about those people's last moments when it is in their right mind and they know exactly what is going on. He said that even some of those people who are being witnessed to and they are on their death beds, even some of those people will put off salvation because they still want to enjoy the pleasures, short pleasures of sin, for whatever couple seconds until they can put it off until the last possible second on their death bed and then they want to get saved. That is not a game that you want to play. We honestly are kind of playing the same game with other people's souls if you are not willing to live godly in Christ Jesus right now.

2 Corinthians 6:2, part of that verse says, "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." That is all I have.