

I. Introduction to Christ's Passion Week and Old Testament Cross-References

Every aspect of that week, from Palm Sunday up to the day of His crucifixion, and then on into the three days in the tomb and the resurrection, is crucial. There is so much misinformation out there today that so many of God's people, good people, get caught up in and never really understand the fallacy of so much that is out there. As we talked about and laid it out very clearly from our Bible studies and other things that we have talked about, we know that our responsibility is to reach our culture, and we will use those things that are in our culture to win men to Christ, but we understand them.

I took you back through the Old Testament and laid out hour by hour the day of His death and the sufferings that He went through. If you would want to take a further study of that in the Old Testament, I will give you here a list of some of my main Old Testament cross-references that you might want to go through. I would start at Exodus 12. Exodus 12 is where the nation of Israel is delivered the Passover. It is such an important event that up to that point, the beginning of the new year for the nation of Israel was in September at the Feast of Tabernacles.

But in Exodus 12, this day was going to be such an important day to them. This event was going to be so important to them that God saw fit to now recalculate, and now they begin their year on a yearly basis from this Passover. There is a lot to that that I do not have time to get into today, but it shows you way back in Exodus 12 how important the first coming of Christ was going to be to the world. It changed the nation of Israel's beginning of their year.

When Christ showed up, and I told you this a couple of weeks ago, at the first coming of Christ, His death-barreled resurrection, that was the focal point of all history for Gentiles. All history before His death-barreled resurrection is considered BC, Before Christ. After His resurrection, in the years following, it is AD, which is Latin for "in the year of our Lord." Most people think that it means "after death." That is not true, but I kind of like that, but that is not what it means.

So, in Exodus 12, you are going to have recorded for you step by step, day by day, the taking of the Passover lamb up to its being killed, which is a picture of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. The inspirational picture out of there would be what I have preached many times, and you probably all have in your Bible, "The Gospel according to Exodus." What an incredible picture of Christ coming and dying in Exodus 12. That is where I would start.

Then I would tell you that the next book that you will want to look at very carefully would be the book of Job. Job is the book that represents for us the sufferings of Christ, and you are going to find many references throughout that book. In particular, I gave you some of these last week: Job 30 and Job 16, but it is throughout the whole book, so I would go there next. The next book I would look to would be the book of Psalms. Much of Psalms deals with Christ's death on the cross, in particular Psalms 89, Psalms 22, and Psalms 16. It is an incredible book.

Then I also gave you the book of Isaiah. In Isaiah, Isaiah looked forward in Isaiah 53, which is one of the greatest places in the Bible on the death of Christ, Isaiah 52, and then of course the famous Isaiah 50 last week, "Of whom is my adversary? Let him come unto me." These places here, if you want to do a really good study, you take Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you lay those out in a long, protracted way of what is happening, and then these are where you fill in the blanks, and it will give you a complete picture.

Last week, my goal was to show you the five different ways that people look at the death of Christ on the cross. I showed you how the world looked at it, showed you how the devil looked at it, I showed you how God viewed it, and I showed you how Christ looked at it, and then I wound up showing you how you and I should look at it. The importance of understanding how men think and look at things differently. That really is what you have to do if you are going to work with people, if you are going to reach people, if you are going to minister to people. You have to be able to understand why they look at the things they do, the way they do, and the way they think. The Gentile mindset, and I gave you an Old Testament passage with Elisha on that. That is especially true when it comes to the Bible, but it is true of everything. It is true of sports, it is true of politics, it is true of anything, but especially when it comes to the Word of God. Then we revisited that great verse in Hebrews 12:1-3, which talks about considering Him and dealing with the cross. All of this will bring into play us getting the right perspective of Christ's death on the cross.

II. The Resurrection Story and the Supernatural Bible

Today we are going to move into John 20, and we are going to move now into the resurrection story of Christ. We have covered in great detail His death. Now we want to look at His resurrection. So I want to begin reading here in John 20, the first four verses, and then we will just kind of work our way through this. It says this:

John 20:1-4

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

Let us pray. Father, help us today to learn from this great set of verses. Lord, there are some tremendous things here that we can look at, that we can learn from, and apply to our own lives. Holy Spirit of God, first off, we pray that You will forgive each one of us where we have failed You, and Lord, make us clean today in Your sight. Cover the blood of Christ over this church, over the people in it today, that we might be able to clearly hear and understand what is being

said from the Word of God. We will all be careful to give You the honor and the glory and the praise. In Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it, Amen.

Somebody asked me one time, years and years ago, "Why do I love the Bible?" There are a number of reasons for that answer, but I would say specifically that what makes me love the Bible the most, putting aside what it has done for me and my family personally, but putting that all aside, I would say that what I am about to show you in a couple of different ways today is why I love the Bible. The Bible is the most supernatural book the world has ever seen.

I know, forget the world for a moment, most Christians think the Bible is just like any other book. They do not see the DNA or the fingerprints of God through that Book, that God would give us a Book that is perfect, that has no error in it, that is absolutely everything that God wanted us to have the way He wanted us to have it. That is not the world that says that, that is God's people that say that. To me, one of the things that I just love about the Word of God are the couple of things that I am going to show you today that are hidden deep within this Bible. The scholarly world will never get it, the average Christian will never get it, but if you are a Bible student and you have a thirst and a hunger for truth and you want to invest your life in that Book, I can clearly tell you that God will invest that Book into you, and that is the key.

Let us start by saying here, it is very early in the morning on the first day of the week. This would be around four or five o'clock in the morning; it clearly tells us before the sun comes up. Christ has risen from the dead sometime now after 6 p.m. the following evening, the end of Saturday, the beginning of Sunday, the first day of the week. Now let us talk about His resurrection just for a moment and let me show you something.

You will remember I showed you a couple of weeks ago the greatest verse in the Bible out of 1 John 5:6-7 dealing with the Trinity. I told you back then that there were no clearer, greater verses in the Bible than those two. In fact, I took the time to lay them out systematically for you. Then I told you that the greatest verse in the Bible on the Trinity has been taken out, cut out, and removed from all the new Bible translations. The only Bible that has that verse in it will be a King James 1611 Authorized Version.

Today, a lot of people still do not believe that Jesus Christ was very God. They still reject the Trinity. You find different religious sects that believe that: the Mormons believe that, the Church of Christ believe that, the Jehovah's Witnesses believe that. They do not believe that Jesus Christ was very God. They reject the theological teaching of the Trinity. In the Bibles that they have, that verse is taken out. For years and years and years the Jehovah's Witnesses used the King James Bible, but they were getting their tails kicked so much on the Trinity and Jesus Christ being God that they had to come up with their own new Bible. So they translated out of the wrong manuscripts what became their official Bible called the New World Translation. Yes, they took out this verse plus all the other verses to prove their doctrine. If your religion is such that you have got to change the Bible to make your religion work, you are in a bad position. But that is what happens.

I asked a Jehovah's Witness one time, "Who really raised up Jesus?" He said, "Well, God did." I said, "Okay." Then I showed him something that God gave me years and years and years ago,

one of those little secret places in the Bible when it comes to the resurrection of Christ and Christ being God and the proof text for the Trinity. Now watch this. He said, "Well, God raised Him up." Okay, I got that. I will turn over to Acts 3:26 and Acts 17:31. Clearly it says there that God raised Him up. Then I will run over to Romans 8:11. There it says that the Holy Spirit of God raised Him up. Then I will go a little bit farther in John 2:19. There it tells me that Jesus says He will raise Himself up after three days.

So the Jehovah's Witness was right. God did raise Him up because God is a Trinity. All three persons of the Holy Trinity, you are told, raised Jesus from the dead because all three of them are God, the three in one. One in three, the one in the middle died for me. That is how it works. All three raised Him, and this is what Deuteronomy 29:29 tells us: that there are secret things in the Word of God. There are hidden things in the Word of God. Most of God's people, and they are good people, but they never get to that level in the Bible where God will give them His secrets.

If you have a secret and you want to tell somebody your secret, I suggest that you make sure that is somebody that is going to appreciate what you are telling them and keep your secret, or do not give it to them. The reason why God does not give many of God's people His secrets is because you cannot trust them with it. You will get the Bible. The Bible is great. You get all of those surface things that you need, but the Bible tells us in Deuteronomy 29:29 that the secret things belong to God. Then it says He will give them to us, and then for us to give them to our children. The Bible has got so many of these little things underneath the surface. Little keys like this are the keys to the Bible, hidden from the skeptics of the Word of God.

III. Peter, John, and Doctrinal Consistency

Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been rolled away. As I was writing this down, this little song popped into my head that I used to sing years and years ago that I just loved to death. It is not in the hymnal, but it is one of those chorus things. She came to that place, and the stone was rolled away. By the way, your sins were rolled away with it. "Rolled away, rolled away, rolled away. All the burdens of my heart are rolled away." That happened the day that stone got rolled away. So did your sins. He is out of that tomb.

Then in John 20:2, she runs and finds Peter and John. Now, a trained eye, when you read this account here, what pops out at you? Let me read it for you again here. "And she runneth, verse 2, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him.' Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre."

Now, what jumps out to you there? What jumps out to me there? He never calls John by the name John. He called Peter Peter, but he never called John John. He calls him "that disciple that Jesus loved." Then a little bit later on he says "that other disciple." Now, if you are a Bible student, that ought to just drive you crazy. That ought to be something that catches you right then and you see that because that really does not fit. Now, why is that?

This is the beauty of the Word of God. These are the things that make you love the Bible, or make me love the Bible anyhow. I call these things—you are going to get a new word from me

today—I call these things doctrinal consistency. If there is anything that sets the King James Bible against every other translation out there, we could talk about the manuscripts: the Alexandrian, the Egyptian, the Hesychian, and the Textus Receptus. We could go through all of that. We could talk about the true line versus the false line. We could do all of that, and all of that would be true.

But put all of that aside. The thing that makes the Bible you have in your lap the absolute Word of God, the absolute Word of God that outdistances everything else, is doctrinal consistency. In all the new Bibles, they take out words, take out verses, take out phrases, and you lose any hope of doctrinal consistency. Only one Bible, and when you see that and apply it in your life to what you study, there is no other book like it.

Now, here is why John is not mentioned by name. The Bible never misses an opportunity to protect the great doctrines in every story in the Bible. The reason why John is not called John is because John, we know, is a type of the church. We know in Ephesians 5:32-33, the church is a mystery. So, to protect the great doctrine of the mystery of the church, when you are dealing with a man who is a great type of the church, probably the greatest in the New Testament, he is not called by his name. You have to love the Book. I mean to tell you, it is the only true consistent thing in this world today. The deeper you get into that Book, the more these things will come to the surface.

Now I look at that from a practical standpoint, and I think to myself, "What an honor!" What an honor to be called by God, not by your earthly name that everybody else called you, but what an honor to be called by God, by simply "the one whom Christ loved." I wonder if each one of us looked into our own selves today and what God would call us compared to what He called John. It might be quite interesting.

Now, a trained eye, here again. I will never forget when I was laying my Bible out and I was coming through John. When I got to this chapter, a number of things popped up. I am not saying I had all the answers right away, but I got them in time. Here again, when I started reading after the resurrection, I found our two guys who were so important before and during the crucifixion, Peter and John; now they show up again. Most people would just think that that means nothing. Once you understand that everything in the Bible is there for a purpose and a reason, I will tell you right now, that means something.

Now we have a choice at this point in time. We can just blow it off and go on and read the rest of the story, or we can stop and see what the doctrinal consistency is here. This will set up a great picture, not only of a doctrinal standpoint, but also a great practical, inspirational one. Let me lay a little groundwork here. We already know from our past studies about Peter. He is a type of the nation of Israel. In Matthew 16, he is given the keys to the kingdom of heaven to open up the keys and the gates to the nation of Israel. When we get past the beginning of the church age and Paul comes on the scene, we see that Peter is down in Jerusalem, and he is the apostle to the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, he is an incredible picture of the nation of Israel. He has the keys that Israel needs.

We also know from our past studies about John that he is a type of the New Testament church. We have laid all this out before and made it very clear so we do not have to go through it again. This story will be a great picture of Israel (Peter) and the church (John) that is now moving into the New Testament period of grace. We are about to see in this story doctrinal consistency and the life and the story of a man who represents Israel, the other one represents the church, one represents the Old Testament nation, the other one represents the New Testament Christianity. What we see is what we get out of the book of Acts and what we see in many other places. Here we see the actual doctrinal story of the transition that is taking place.

IV. The Race to the Tomb: Doctrinal Transition

Mary runs and tells them the news: the tomb is empty. John and Peter take off running to get to the place that he was buried. At this point in time in John 20, according to Hebrews 9:16, whether anybody knows it or not, in God's mind we are now in the New Testament. He has not revealed that to anybody yet. That does not get revealed in time through Paul. There are some things that have got to happen in the early part of the book of Acts. But as far as God's mind is concerned, Hebrews 9:16 says that the New Testament comes into effect with the death of the testator. That is Christ. So we are clearly in our story here after the resurrection; we are in the New Testament church as far as God's mindset is concerned.

We are clearly told by Paul that this New Testament Christianity will be a race. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 9:24, I gave you this last week:

1 Corinthians 9:24

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

The prize here that he is talking about is a crown. I already gave you in Hebrews 12:1-2 where it said, "consider Him." It talked about that we are to get rid of the extra weight that so easily besets us, that we cannot run the race the way that we need to. In 2 Timothy 4:7, Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, the race, I have kept the faith." You are going to find that in the Bible, talking about Christianity and the nation of Israel, there are two crowns you have to consider. There is a crown that goes with the Old Testament nation of Israel with their kingdom, the kingdom of heaven. But then there is also a crown that goes to the kingdom of God, which is the spiritual kingdom. When Christ comes, He gets both crowns. It is a thing where you have to see that in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

We are told that to win this crown, to win this prize, we have to run lawfully. 2 Timothy 2:5 says:

2 Timothy 2:5

And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

Here is where this story, the picture of Peter who represents the nation of Israel, and John who represents the church, is found. This is where your doctrinal consistency always will be folded very neatly packaged within every story that is found in the Bible because the greatest thing

about the Bible is its doctrinal consistency. What you have here is Israel did not run lawfully. Israel in Exodus 4 is called God's son. I have told you before in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, every picture of every man when it says "there was a man," that man is a picture of the nation of Israel. Israel did not run lawfully. She rejected the law, and now she has lost the crown of the kingdom of heaven.

I would suggest you go back to Psalm 78. The greatest, in my knowledge and estimation, the greatest place in all of the Bible that shows that the nation of Israel has lost the crown and lost the kingdom. If you want to get even more specific, you can go to Lamentations 5:16 talking about the nation of Israel, and it says, "the crown has fallen from her." Then you would go to Hosea 1:4, and you would find the kingdom and the crown are not gone.

So when Peter, who represents Israel, and John, who represents the church, run to the tomb after the resurrection into the church age, Israel now will come in second place. The kingdom of God, the church age, will now become number one. So John wins, gets there first, Peter comes in second. That is the doctrinal teaching within a story of which you get in Romans 9, Romans 10, Romans 11, and all kinds of other places in the Bible. It is the transition in the story of what is actually taking place in history. The amazing aspect of the Bible is doctrinal consistency. In every story in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation—now you may not be able to see it all yet, but you keep going here and keep getting involved and keep growing and let us help you, you will get there—every story in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, you will see the great doctrines of the Bible pictured in every story.

I talked about Exodus 12 earlier on in our study. There is the same thing. I could take you back to Genesis 5 with the life of Enoch. I could take you to Genesis 6 with Noah. I could take you to the life of Abraham. I could take you to the life of Jacob. I could take you to the life of Lot. I could take you to the life of anybody in the Bible, any story in the Bible. The greatest thing about that Book that you have in your lap today is doctrinal consistency. I love it. It is the greatest Book this world has ever seen.

Let me just say this, and we will get to this here in a little bit. While I am here, for all of us, doctrinal consistency should be the rule throughout the story of our lives. God's people, not only is the Bible doctrinally consistent, but God's people need to be too. Also, it shows us that everything that is in that Bible is important. It is there for a purpose and it is there for a reason. May I ask, what is the relevance of this race to the tomb? Does anybody really care who runs the fastest? Is there any real input to the fact that they start out running and John gets there before Peter does? Does anybody care who can run faster than the other guy? There is no importance to it until you see the great doctrinal consistencies of what that story represents. God never misses a chance to teach us the great doctrines and the teachings of the Bible. That is why 2 Timothy 3:16 says that the purpose of the Word of God, and it is for you and me, number one, is doctrine. Doctrine will always be in relationship to the two crowns in the Bible, to the two kingdoms in the Bible. I do not care if it is doctrinal about the Old Testament or doctrine about the church. It will always be in relationship to the kingdom of God for the church and the kingdom of heaven for Israel, end of the story.

V. Peter as a Type of Emotional Christian

Also, within this story is a great practical personal application for all of us concerning our race within the Christian life. The race that we are told that we need to finish the course, the race that so many things in life become weights around our legs that hinder us in the running. In the Christian life, there will be many issues that we will face that will become the weights that so easily beset us, Hebrews 12:1. We as God's people, as we go through our Christian life, are faced with challenges. Some are worse challenges than others. Some seemingly could put us under as far as our faith if we did not have faith to keep us sustained. I have seen some of God's people go through some tremendous things. I have seen God's people face some great adversity.

When you look at this story, Peter will be the type of Christian—we are moving him now from a type of the nation of Israel to show you the doctrinal consistency in an inspirational way. Peter will be the type of Christian that will always look at any circumstance that he is faced with through his emotions and through his feelings. He never sees the thing as it is. When he is with the Lord for those three and a half years, he makes some of the most erroneous statements about things that you could ever want. There are lessons in that for us. I told you when we looked at him in our character study that Peter is a picture of a young Christian, and there is no question about that. Every young Christian will be like Peter is. Peter grew up, and I remember I took you through that whole process at the end of John. Peter grew up. Unfortunately, a lot of God's people who, as young Christians, are like Peter, they never grow up. They go through the issues that Peter had all of their life. God's people, as good as they are, many times will struggle all of their lives.

There is a great verse in Proverbs that is, without a doubt, one of my key verses. It is something that I never forget, something that when we talk about you are faced with something that you have to deal with, you pull out the principle that you can rest on. This is one I probably use more than any other. It says in Proverbs 25:28:

Proverbs 25:28

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, and without walls.

Your spirit is your emotions. Your emotions are part of your decision-making process. If you do not have rule over that spirit, if you do not have control of your emotions, then you are like a city in the Old Testament that the walls were there to keep the enemy out, but when the walls are not there, the enemy just comes in and takes over the city. That is why in your life and my life many times we get taken over. We make bad choices. We make bad decisions. We see something and we react to it instead of responding to it. When you react to something, that is through your emotions. When you respond to something, that is through the promises and the principles of the Word of God. You have to rule at some point in your life. This is Peter's problem.

I have to tell you, Peter got past that, but not all God's people always do. I am not talking about bad people. Please understand that. I am talking about some really nice people. I am not even talking about nasty people today. I will get to them next week. I am talking about good people. I am talking about people that are really nice people. I am talking about people that when I look at

them, I see great potential in their life. I see the young men and the young ladies that are in our church. I saw it New Year's, and then I have seen it closer as we have been past that. I see the ability that you have. I see the personality that you have, the friendly spirit that you have. I see you having the ability to see something that God is showing you and you are able to move toward it. I pray for you every day because I know that the devil would like to shake you upside down. The reason how he will try to do that, and the way that he will try to do that, is if you do not have any defensive walls up around your life.

You young Christians, look around to the older Christians in our church, the ones that have been with me for many, many, many years: some 30, some 20, some 10, some 15. Look at their lives. They are faced with the same challenges that you will be faced with. They were once your age, and they had to work through and grow through everything where you are at right now. You know what got them through? They built a wall. That wall is biblical principles; that wall is Bible doctrine. That wall is the ability to see a situation instead of reacting to it and making the wrong choice. They respond to it and look at it through the principles of the Word of God, not around the principles of the Word of God.

Thursday night, we only got the one question, but it was worth the time. That was the question of seeing how God wants to perfect your faith through the perfecting of your work for Him, how the two go together. We talked about how special you are that God would pick you and save you—and I do not mean in a predestination sense in any way, shape, or form—but God would bring you, save you, and put you where He has put you for you to learn what He wants you to learn so you can do what God has called you to do. Peter, like so many of God's people, will be for us a pattern of emotional decisions and statements that, in time, leads to him denying Christ. He did not deny Christ because he was a coward. Make no mistake, Peter loved the Lord. There is no question about that. Peter loved the Lord enough to die for Him. He is like so many of God's people; he is a good man. But he just cannot get past his emotions. He cannot get past the bad decisions that he makes in his life. He cannot get past the things that he says because he cannot grasp the reality. He does not have the ability to rest in the midst of adversity. When we live like that, we too will wind up at some point denying the Lord one way or the other.

Bad choices and emotional decisions will never just be one by themselves, but they form a pattern in a person's life. A person like Peter who cannot get past it, and many times it turns into a stronghold. I have had people over my many years in the ministry that struggled with eternal security. They struggled with the fact that they just... I would meet with them on a weekly basis, and by the time they left, they had it. By the time they came back next week, they lost it someplace. It was them looking at their salvation through their own eyes, their own feelings, and their own emotions. They could not take the principles and the promises of the Word of God and erase their feelings and run what they are feeling through what the Book says.

I have had some that thought that because of their past lifestyle before they got saved, and even some of them after they got saved and then got right with God, they just thought God was out to get them. Everything in their life, they thought that God was against them. They thought that God... they lived in fear that they were going to go to the doctor and the doctor was going to say, "You have cancer," because God was just really around the corner to give them cancer. They

could never get past looking at the issues in their life from their own physical, human standpoint, and then making bad choices and bad decisions because it is based on their feelings, and not the promises or the principles of the Word of God. Which, in time, as you continue to do that and do not fix it, becomes a lifestyle.

Peter fixed it. If you remember our story, it took a one-on-one, face-to-face conversation with the Lord to get his head screwed on straight. But I have seen many of God's people—good people, people that I thought had a lot of great potential—never got there simply because of this very issue. Their bad choices, their emotional distress, their inability, forms a lifestyle of bad choices that, over time, will lead to a disaster because what happens is, ultimately, if you do not fix it, you get married, then you take it into your marriage. Then you have kids, and then you bring it into your kids. I have seen girls that had a terrible father. They wanted out of the family so bad, and they wanted out of the family and away from it because they thought that once they got out, they would have a better life, and they wound up finding a guy and marrying a guy, and the guy is just like their father.

We sometimes make really bad decisions that border on stupidity. I had a kid one time, he was 18 years old, he did not want to deal with his dad, he did not want his dad telling him what to do, he did not want his dad telling him what time to come in at night, he did not want his dad telling him what time to get up to go to work. He just was against that, and he said, "I am getting out of my family so I can do it. I am joining the Marines." That is a bad choice; that is an emotional decision. God's people, God love them, I know they struggle. But you carry those emotional things, and your kids pick them up. They work into your marriage against you. Your own walk with God suffers tremendously.

The ultimate terrible thing would be suicide. Suicide is a terrible thing. In my over 50 years in the ministry, I have had to deal with eight of them. They are always the hardest thing you will have to deal with. Somebody asked me one time, "What is the hardest thing you ever had to do?" The hardest thing I ever had to do was preach the funeral of a man who was really a good friend of mine, who helped start this church. Then one night he got so despondent that while his wife and his grandson were asleep, he took a .45 automatic, shot the woman, shot the boy, and then shot himself. Now I had to preach that funeral. How do you preach a funeral like that? By using biblical principles. You do not sugarcoat anything. I laid out in that funeral, and some of you were there, that this was a good guy. He helped me here. How did he get from point A to point B? The answer was simple: He got out of fellowship with God. He got out of the Word of God. He started making decisions based on his own feelings of how he saw things instead of the Word of God. In time, it led him to that.

I got a call from the detective that was assigned to the case in the Liberty Sheriff's Department. I met with him. He asked me if I knew any reason why he would have done what he did. It was one of the greatest witness opportunities I probably ever had because I got to go back and tell him what this man was at one time in his life, and what he was to me. He was always my friend. But then I told him how he got out of the Word of God. He quit coming to church. He quit coming and doing the things that he should have done. Then he started to take over his life the way he saw it. He started making decisions based on what he saw it to be, not really what it was.

He got so caught up in making so many bad choices. I am going to tell you right now, I love you to death. I am going to tell you what makes a person come to the point where they think that the only way out of their problems is to take their life. How desperate does someone become that they think, "Here I am, and the only way out of this is for me to kill myself"? I am talking about a Christian.

The answer to that is simple: Nobody wakes up one morning and says, "I am going to kill myself today." Nobody does. Somebody said one time, "Suicide is a terrible thing." Yes, it is. But suicide is just the last desperate choice in a life of terribly bad choices. Bad choices in life compound in your life. It is not just one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine bad choices. It is all one big bad choice that grows legs and connects itself, and in time, takes over every aspect of your life. The farther you get away from God, the farther you get from the principles of the Word of God. The more you let down the walls of that city. Pretty soon, suicide looks like it is the only answer. Suicide is a terrible choice, but it is only the last choice in a life of a bunch of other bad choices. But it is ultimately the last choice.

You are going to find back in the Old Testament, when the Jews went back after the 70 years captivity, and they were allowed to go back under Cyrus through Esther to Jerusalem, Jerusalem was in complete disarray. I have always looked at that as a picture of all of our lives when we got saved. The first thing that Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah did, they cleaned off the rubble and they rebuilt the walls because they knew that the walls were the only protection that they really had. For you and for me, the walls will be the principles of the Word of God that you build in your life the day you get saved. That is what keeps bad decisions out of your life. That would keep you from making the mistakes, like Peter, a pattern of bad choices and statements that will lead to the ultimate denial of Christ, which is exactly what it did.

VI. John as a Type of Steadfast Christian

Inspirationally, Peter and John are two types of Christians; they picture two types of God's people in the church today. We are told that in the New Testament we are to run a race. That race started at the resurrection and it runs all the way up to the rapture of the church. One of these guys comes in first, and the other one comes in second and loses the crown.

Now let us look at John for a moment. I laid him out for you in great depth so many weeks ago. We know that he writes the five New Testament wisdom books. We know that he is the only one that Jesus says He loved. We know he lays his head... We have all that down. I did not say this at the time because I was just waiting to see; sometimes I will not give you everything just to see who is paying attention. In this case, you all got enough. I never said anything to John because I try to play him up in his... You do not have to. He is a great picture. But he was not perfect, was he? I thought surely somebody would have caught that and said, "Bob, you said... I mean, you catch me on everything else." I thought somebody would say, "Well, Bob, if he was so perfect, why not this?" Nobody did, so I will give it to you today. It is a great picture in itself.

I want you to notice that in all that he did, he was not perfect. He really got it all together, but he is still a sinner and failed, just like the best of us do. In all that he did, he failed to be at the tomb

when Christ came out. Can you imagine him sitting there? I would have been there in a laundry room, sharing a Big Mac and a Diet Coke. Can you imagine sitting there at six o'clock Saturday night, believing everything that God told you, and all of a sudden, that stone just rolled away, and out He came? That was the greatest event in the history of the world. It was the event that before that time is recognized to that time, and the time after that time is recognized back to that time. John was not there. It shows me, and it is a great picture, no matter how good we are, no matter how much we are in that Book, no matter how much we love God, the best will fail. He is human just like you and me.

I love things like that. I love things that show me that though a great guy can be in the Bible, and we all ascribe to be like that, at the same time we know that he fails too, because we all fail. But in spite of that, John will be our example of a child of God who will not operate on his feelings, but rather on the solid promises and principles of the Word of God that he was given. You see, putting it into perspective, he too goes through that most terrible time of the breaking up of the twelve. Could you even imagine the emotional trauma that that must have been? These guys had been together for three and a half years, and suddenly they are scattered everywhere. Nobody has any cell phone to call anybody. Nobody knows; it is gone. It is over. They are now faced with the end of Christ's ministry, all the things that He said to them. Now they know that He has been crucified on the cross and He is dead. They all know—John knows this too—that they are no longer under the protective hand of the Lord.

Yet when everybody else left and Peter denied, he stayed strong. Something sustained him. Something kept him solid through it all. Something kept him in the race when everybody else checked out. He dies around 90 AD sometime up there. That is some 60 plus years, or minus maybe a few years, from this point here. He is still as solid as the day he was here. There is a rock-solid soundness in his life. His feelings and emotions: It does not mean that he does not have them. It does not mean that he did not feel things. It does not mean that he was not sad. It does not mean that he was not afraid. It does not mean that he was not heartbroken by what he saw, what he was going through. His emotions and his feelings, I am sure, are running at record levels. But he keeps them under control. He goes as far as he did with the Lord because he has learned the ability that we all need to learn: the ability for us, through the principles and the promises of the Word of God, to rest in the midst of adversity.

Romans tells us that the visible things of Him, of the creation, are clearly seen and understood by the things that God made. I have told you before how everything that God made, every facet of it, again, doctrinal consistency, will go back to the Word of God. Every time, and we are into the season right now, by the way, of hurricane season and tornado seasons and all those things. Already some have destroyed whole towns. One of them down there was a mile across and just devastated a little city. But I have always looked at tornadoes and hurricanes. I have always thought that they are an absolute perfect picture of what your life and my life should be. Because in any hurricane, in any tornado, you have all this destruction. People die, cars are picked up, tractor-trailers are picked up like toys, and there are houses and destruction. But in the middle of that tornado and that hurricane is what they call the eye of the tornado. In that eye, it is as

peaceful and quiet as you could ever hope for it to be. I have always thought that is what the Christian life really should be.

For us, the world is being destroyed. The destruction is rampant. It is unbelievable. It is unprecedented. The world around us is being destroyed and ripped to pieces: lives, families, the country. Yet for the Christian, we have that rest of being in the eye of the Word of God. That is where the rest is. That is how you keep yourself in the midst of adversity, sane. That is how you keep yourself when your world is falling around you, or the world is falling around you, or your faith is faced with some absolute adversity. There is always rest and peace in the eye of that tornado. The eye of that tornado will be the principles of the Word of God. It will be resting in what God gave you that will sustain you and get you through. That is a picture of the Christian life, our world today. I am at rest and I am at peace with the world being destroyed around me because I have the promises of the Word of God that tell me that God is greater than anything that is going on. All this is part of His plan. I can rest in that.

John is a perfect example of what I try to build in each of you. I try to give you everything, whatever personal time you need, whatever teaching I think is appropriate. I just bend over backwards to make sure that you can have whatever you want to have because in my endeavors, I want to build you with the ability to stand in the face of life's issues. Ephesians 6:11-14, where it talks about the armor of God, it says that we are given all that to stand and to have done all to stand. Then he says, "Stand therefore." I talked last week about Isaiah 50, about Christ when He was in His adversity with the devil on the cross. His face was like a flint, and how important that is for all of us to develop that mindset that nothing—I mean nothing—no issue, no problem, even if it is something stupid that I caused, I can take care of it in 30 seconds and then pick it up and move on. There is no reason for us to have those weights around us that so easily beset us, unless we just, like Peter, keep making those bad choices. Bad choices will compound in your life, just like they did Peter's, until you wind up denying the Lord. He got right. So many of God's people, bless their hearts, they never do.

VII. Building a Sound Christian Life

We are told that salvation, 1 Corinthians 3:11, is our foundation of our Christian life, and then we build upon that foundation.

1 Corinthians 3:11

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Then we build on that foundation of building blocks of your Christian life. Isaiah 28:9-13 gives you insight into that, where it talks about building a foundation. In fact, he asked the question in Isaiah 28:9, he says, "To whom shall we teach doctrine?" Then he shows you the process. It is the process of the foundation the day you got saved, and then each Bible doctrine is a building block that you build on that foundation. What you do when you build that up in time, 5, 10, 15, 16 years, there is the wall of Proverbs. There is the wall that protects your feelings and your emotions. But most people never build anything on that foundation. They are saved, they are good people, they are nice people, they are wonderful people. They are fun to be with, but they

never build anything on that foundation. That is why they make some of the most horrendous decisions they will ever make in their life.

Using what you learn. Doctrine is no good. You can have a catalog of a thousand principles, but if you are not going to use them when they need to be used, it will never do you any good. It is one of those things that you just see throughout the Bible. When you see John and Peter and what they both represent, and their lives as they move on through the Bible. I do not know if you have ever seen this or not. It is something that I saw years ago, and there are so many things that are in the Bible. But I looked at the order of the books in the New Testament and saw how they will show me every aspect of New Testament Christianity and how I am built in my life the way I need to build it. It is a great perspective on what New Testament Christianity really is and on our growth.

You have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. That is the first coming of Christ. I need to understand that. I need to realize that that is the focal point of all history. For me as a young Christian, that is where my roots go back to. So I see Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in my Christian life as the foundational books. Then I move into the book of Acts. That is a picture of me growing through the foundational things. I see the book of Acts, and now I see the Jew and the Gentile. I see the beginning of the church age. I see the foundation of the true line versus the false line. I see in the book of Acts, and I am learning now everything that is around me.

Then I move into the next book. The next book is Romans. What is Romans? That is where I now learn the New Testament doctrine explicitly to the church. What I am supposed to believe, why I believe it, is found in the book of Romans. It builds solid, sound doctrine in my life. Once I get to that point in my growth, and I look at the books that Paul wrote, the seven churches, now I see the issues that the church will face. I see the issues as the church tries to build itself and populate itself and win people to Christ. I now get in my own Christian life of watching this progression by the order of the books in the Bible.

The issues that you are going to find in churches: 1 Corinthians, how they get fixed: 2 Corinthians. Romans was not written to the church. Romans is written to all of them that are in Rome. You need to study that one for a while. The first books to the church do not start with 1 Corinthians. Acts is not to the church. Romans was not written to a church. It is to all the being in Rome. No mention of a church. Why? Because it is doctrine to every show of belief. Then when you get into 1 Corinthians, now we find seven churches that he clearly tells us he writes to those churches. In those books for me, I now found out what churches are really about. I saw the struggles that they have. I saw the false doctrine that would come in, like in the book of Galatians. I saw that the church was supposed to be a first-century Roman soldier in the book of Ephesians. I saw all of those churches, everything that I needed in my spiritual growth, starting from the foundation of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the greatest point in history, and then building my life, understanding the historical books, the book of Acts, the practical book, the book of Romans, the doctrinal book. Now I am into seven churches, and I get everything I need to understand the New Testament local church. Growth by the order of the books of the Bible.

Then I come to the last three books that are written directly to me by Paul. But these books are not written to churches. They are written to individuals. This now to me became the end result for me personally. In my personal life, once I understand the historical Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, once I got the perspective of Acts and I got Romans and I saw all of the church stuff, now I saw the end result of where I should be through the life of three men: Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Here I saw the work perfected by what God was teaching me as my faith was perfected. So now we do not have churches being written in these last three books. After these books, it switches back to Israel. These three are directly to three New Testament Christians, to me.

In 1 Timothy, we find out about pastors. We find out about deacons. We find out about New Testament leadership. In 2 Timothy, we find correct doctrine and how to spot it. In Titus, we find Titus is about stewardship. Then I recognize that there are seven stewardships in the Bible that I am to be steward over, that God has put me in charge of as a New Testament Christian. Then I find the book of Philemon. There I find my model for my service and my ministry: a runaway slave, a bondsman, running away, Paul meeting him in prison, winning him to Christ and sending him back to his master, and explaining to him and me what real freedom is in New Testament Christianity. Everything I need in the order of the books of the Bible to give me and keep me in the race. When you look at those three, you find exactly what we should be: building the context of the books of the Bible on your foundation, solid doctrinal consistency.

In these three books, one word keeps popping up. We have had this before. This is nothing new. Maybe you just forgot. When you start coming through Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, one word keeps popping up. It is the key word for your life and my life. It is the word "sound." A rock-solid Christianity that is sound in every aspect. These men, in the layout of these New Testament books to the church, will be my model to have 1 Timothy 1:10, 2 Timothy 4:3, and Titus 1:9 says that the first thing I have built in my life is sound doctrine. My wall, built on the foundation of my salvation, protects my emotions and feelings so I do not have to make bad choices and bad decisions.

Then in 2 Timothy 1:7, once I get sound doctrine, then I am told that I get a sound mind. I do not look at things the way I used to. I do not let my emotions drive my decision-making process. I do not react to a situation. I use the principles because God has given me a sound mind. The Bible says:

Philippians 2:5

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

That is a sound mind. Then I am told in Titus 1:13 and Titus 2:2 that when you get sound doctrine, you get a sound mind. What does it produce? It produces a sound faith. Nobody shakes what you believe. Then once you get sound doctrine, a sound mind, and sound faith, 2 Timothy 1:13, these "sound" principles, found all through these books, will then form sound words. You know how to articulate. You know how to use words for the honor and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, not for yourself. Then when you get sound doctrine and a sound mind and sound faith and sound words, then Titus 2:8 tells us that you will have sound speech. You will now be able to

communicate what God has given you to other people. This is what Peter could not do. He always saw it the wrong way. He always saw it with his being in the way. He always thought what he needed to do was better than what God was doing.

When you get those five down: sound doctrine, sound mind, sound faith, sound words, sound speech, then Proverbs tells us in Proverbs 3:21, that will give you sound wisdom and discretion.

Proverbs 3:21

My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:

Now you have the ability to look at every circumstance in life, not through your emotions or your feelings or your fears or your anxiety or your despair or your discomfort or your depression. But now you look at it through the Word of God. All pictured in type by a man, John, who wins the race and finishes the course and comes in first place. And Peter comes in second. Peter and John.

VIII. Conclusion: Perspective and Full Reward

So our study today is a great picture that will lead to a great study, if you want to continue on, that will lead to a great life. As the book of Acts lays out, John pictures the Gentiles taking over Peter, the Jews, in the incoming of the church age. This will be Romans 9, Romans 10, and Romans 11. Doctrinal consistency. The Jew, who was number one in the Old Testament, and the Gentile in the Old Testament was number two, has come to them through salvation. Now, at the resurrection of Christ, the Jews, who did not run lawfully and lost the prize, the crown, and the kingdom of heaven, are pictured by Peter. Now it passes to the Gentile church, typified by John. Now we run the race of the kingdom of God, and our crown now will be found at the judgment seat of Christ.

The key to everything in that Bible that sets that Bible in your lap apart from every other Bible is the consistency that in every story, every book, every chapter, every event, everything that is happening, it will illustrate the mind of Christ when it comes to that Book. In the Christian life, it is fundamentally about one key word. I know there are a lot of aspects to it. I would come up with 40. But in the final analysis, the Christian life is fundamentally about one key word. It is the word "perspective." Perspective is understanding. Perspective is seeing it as it is, not as it appears. Perspective is seeing it in its purest biblical form without all the emotion dangling around it.

For us, inspirationally, when we develop that doctrinal consistency in our lives by the doctrine consistency of the Bible itself, laid out by the order of the New Testament books to us, the church directly, then:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John will be our historical perspective. Get it down.

The book of Acts will be our transitional perspective. Get it down.

Romans will be our doctrinal perspective, what we believe. Get it down.

1 Corinthians to 2 Thessalonians will be our local New Testament issues within the church perspective.

Our individual perspective of what we are to do with everything that we have seen to this point will be found in the lives of Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, getting it all together to make sure that we run the race that is before us, which is 2 John 1:8, one of the last things that he wrote as the greatest type of the church, his prayer for you, my prayer for you, my endeavor to help you, to teach you with the things you like and even the things you do not like.

My bottom line goal is John's bottom line goal in 2 John 1:8:

2 John 1:8

Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

There is no reason to come in second. You have everything you need to come in first. John and Peter, that is why they are found after the resurrection as two key studies, like they were before the crucifixion, two key studies. You have to love that Book. God just wraps, folds up, weaves between the lines all the great doctrines of the Bible, just waiting there to be unearthed by anybody who will love it, believe it, read it, study it, and apply it.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You so much. Thank You for today. Thank You for the good folks that are here. Lord, I realize that the Peters of this life who struggle with all of the emotional, they are good people. For the most part, they are not bad.