

I. Review

If you have your Bibles this morning, you'll want to turn to Psalms 25. Last week, we finished up Psalms 24, which I call the coronation Psalm. It deals with the Lord Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah, coming back to this earth on the Day of the Lord. We covered all of that, and He now takes the throne in Jerusalem. The Bible calls Him Christ, the King of Glory.

I showed you through that Psalm the consistency of God's Word and everything that He does, always built around this particular day. I showed you how Psalms 23 and Psalms 24 go from the Tribulation to the Millennium—consistency. We talked about the two key days: the Day of Christ and the Day of the Lord, again, consistency. The fact that there were two Christs: The Lord's Christ and the Antichrist. I showed you how, in that passage last week, there were two generations: one for the Church and then one for the nation of Israel. They are built around the two kingdoms: the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. I showed you the two times that Israel as a nation lifts up their head: one at the end of the Tribulation at the Day of the Lord for their salvation, and the other in the Millennium when they recognize and see Him come in as the King of Kings.

Then we completely laid out the key to life on planet Earth. I showed you that there are two basic races in the world: there is the Christian race, which Paul talks about as we finish the work of God in this lifetime—that's our race against time to get it all done—and then there is the secular or the world's race, which is called the human race. This will be people and nations who try to dominate the world through the power of racial injustice or one race against the other, going all the way back to Noah's three boys. I showed you that God originally established the bounds of the habitation for the nations. He set that up, as we saw last week, so men could find the Lord and be happy and seek the Lord. The whole concept of this worldly race, one nation to overcome another nation, one people or ethnic group to supersede another, is nothing more than them continually getting out of the bounds of their habitation, nation versus nation, all going back to the three sons of Noah.

➤ Psalms 24 Shows the End of All Man's Struggles

Man has struggled on this earth for 6,000 years. It goes back to Genesis chapter 3 when it all came crashing down and God's creation fell under a curse. Every part of God's creation is now affected by one man's disobedience. This will be Romans 5:12. You will find that the earth is under this curse. In fact, in the book of Romans, it says the earth groans because of this curse. The weather is under the curse, so we have hurricanes and tsunamis and all those things. The animals are under the curse, and the Bible says in Romans that even they look for the liberation when Christ comes back, to be out from under the bondage of this curse. Back in Genesis, when you had Adam and Eve in the garden, there were no seasons; it was the perfect environment.

Of course, man fell under a curse. Yet it has always been interesting to me, and I marvel at this, that the earth, the weather, the animals, and the seasons, even though they are under a curse, they

all will obey God in His laws and stay within the confines of that. You see in the New Testament, when on the sea with the little guys in the boat, the tempest, He spoke to the storm, and it calmed it. They obey His voice, and it has always been amazing to me that the only element of God's creation that will not obey the laws of God and be in total rebellion 24/7 will be man. Everything else He created will obey God, even though they are under a curse. Man, for 6,000 years, has been in total rebellion against God and been the tool of God's adversary, the Devil. He has been getting out of bounds physically, and we as God's people today in the Kingdom of God, continually get out of God's bounds spiritually. It is just that simple.

It all started in a garden over one issue: the word of God. The Devil showed up in Genesis 3:1 and said to Eve with a question mark at the end, "Yea, hath God said?" simply meaning, "Hey, Eve, did God really mean what He told you?" Then he proceeds to revise what God said, corrects what God said, and the Devil for the next 6,000 years has set the mode by which he is going to operate: putting a question mark to the Bible you have in your hands, and men coming up today, under the Devil's influence, trying to correct the word of God to show you that God really did not mean what He said, when we know that He did. Consistency. It all started in a garden, and in Ezekiel 36:35, when the Lord comes back, it all goes back to a garden.

II. Psalms 25 Shows How Easy it is to Build a Relationship with the Lord but also Shows why some will not

Today, we are going to move into Psalm 25. I need to say this to you: in the Bible all the chapters and all the stories are very valuable. I would never tell you that they aren't all valuable, but I will tell you this: **there are certain places in the Bible that will dig into our hearts deeper with a message of God than other places.** I am not taking that away from anything else; all of it is for us, all of it has a purpose. **But there are certain places in the Bible where God just clears off a spot and really speaks to us. This will be Psalm chapter 25.**

Everybody needs to listen to this sermon. This is one for the books, not because I am preaching it, but because of what it says. This Psalm, by far, will be our simplest Psalm that we have looked at in all that we have come through. It will have a tremendous inspirational application for the Christian life. It digs deeper than any other place I know in the Bible, and there are some really good places in the Bible. It is more than all the Psalms that we have seen so far, in how it really impacts the life that we have and how to have the victory in our life. It is one of those passages that shows just how easy it is to build a relationship with the Lord, but it also shows why we will not do that.

I have watched people all my life in my own ministry. They come, get involved, they love the Bible, they love the preaching, and then something changes. At one point, they love the preaching of the Word of God, love the Bible studies, love this, love that. Suddenly, something has changed now, but the preaching is the same. I had a guy several years ago; he had left the church way back when. He came for a long time, and then he did not like it. He got his nose bent out of joint about something, and then we were the problem. So after about three or four years of just a total disaster in his life, he called me up on the phone and he wanted to meet with me. I

said, "Hey, great." So he came in and he said, "I really want to come back to church. Can I come back to the church?" I said, "Absolutely you can come back, but you need to know this: we are preaching the same thing now that we preached that you did not like back then. So you need to understand, we are the same. You are the one who is going to have to change."

I am telling you right now, a relationship with God—what I call a working relationship with God—it is not complicated, folks. It is not complicated at all. You are going to see it today, and this is what makes this Psalm, in my own humble opinion, so wonderful. It is one of those passages that will show us just how easy it really is to build a relationship with the Lord but also will show us why some people will not. **It starts with us getting past that rebellious nature from Adam, and then submitting ourselves to the word of God, and then putting His laws, His principles, His precepts, His teachings, His doctrine into our lives.**

III. Psalms 25 has an Inspirational Lesson for us on our own Relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ

Now, I am going to break this Psalm down into two sections: one part today and the other part next week. In each section, I am going to break it down into an understandable format so everybody can get everything that you need to get. Fundamentally, Psalms 25 will be a Tribulation Psalm, but it carries a message not only for the Jews, but it is one of the simplest lessons on our own relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

This lesson, not because I am preaching it, this passage, this one will define who we think we are and then reveal to us who we really are. You will notice as we get through here, the first part will contain many devotional truths, but then the last section next week goes back to the redeeming of Israel on Daniel's 70th week, and we will cover that. Today, I want to show you this, Psalms 25; we are going to read the first seven verses.

Psalms 25:1-7. Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

2. O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3. Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

4. Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

5. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou [art] the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

6. Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they [have been] ever of old.

7. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.

Now, verses 1, 2, and 3 are clearly the Jew going through his time of trouble, the Tribulation. Here you have him calling upon God because his enemies are trying to triumph over him. In verse 7, Israel waits for God's deliverance, and this is, doctrinally, the Tribulation period. But I need to tell you this: this is a prayer, but it is a legitimate prayer for any saint in any dispensation. **What we are about to look at, God wrote historically for David, for Israel doctrinally, but for you and me, inspirationally.** Yet, through the parallels of Israel and the Church, we see the process here for our growth in a world where our enemies continually want to triumph over us.

IV. Spiritual Growth Will Be a Process

Just to kind of get it all in context here, you will remember that Israel was to be God's chosen people in the Old Testament. Obviously, they still are today. But in the Old Testament, she was God's chosen nation to bring the message of God to the world. **In the Old Testament, if you wanted to find God, you had to come through the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, if you want to find Christ or God, you have to come through the New Testament Church.** It is just that simple. That is why Israel in the Old Testament was set apart from all the other nations.

We have looked at things like this over the last couple of weeks. She was brought into existence to bear fruit of God, that the nations would find God through her. This is repeated over and over in the Bible. And she has never done that. The only period of time in the last what, 6,000 years of history, 5,000 years of history, was a 40-year span when Solomon was on the throne. Other than that, when Christ showed up at the first coming of Christ, He cursed the fig tree. That fig tree is a picture of the nation of Israel. The barrenness of that fig tree was a representation of the barrenness of Israel, not bearing any fruit. But she is in the process of going through a growth process that at the end result, when Christ comes back, she will become that fruitful nation. She is almost there, but she has got to go through the worst time yet, and that will be the Tribulation. When she comes through that, she becomes that nation that God always intended her to be.

For us, spiritually, it is the same thing. Today, in the Church Age, we are to be that tree of life, like Israel was, and bear fruit. God, too, has set us apart. **We are set apart as individuals; Israel was set apart as a nation.** But you and I are to bear fruit. It is back there in Psalms 1:1-3, when it talks about blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, and all that stuff. It says,

*Psalms 1:3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, **that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.***

Whether you know it or not, you are all in different stages of the four seasons of your life. The real question is, are you bearing fruit in your season? Because there is coming an end to all our seasons. If Jesus Christ came today and raptured the Church, that is the end of our season. If He does not come, and we live our lives out, threescore and ten or whatever, there will come a day when you close your eyes to the sleep of death, and you too will end your fruit-bearing, if there ever was any. But what I want you to see is that in both cases, spiritual growth will be a process. **Psalms 25 will be the pattern for that process, both for the nation of Israel and for**

you and me. If you are ever going to get where God needs you to be, you are going to find in the first half of this Psalm just five simple little points that are the process for you to get there.

Now, I am no fool. I understand that some of you, as much as I disdain saying this, will never get there. There will always be something or somebody, some circumstance that will keep you from ever being whatever God needs you to be. I feel terrible about that. I would do anything in the world to break you out of that prison system you are in, make you a cake with a hacksaw blade in it, whatever it takes. **But after He lays out the intro here in the first three verses, then He begins in verses 4 through 7, the process of not having your enemy triumph over you.** Five simple little principles of the Christian life with God and the process of growth in our lives.

I say this again: this is so simple. But I do not understand why some people—I am not necessarily talking about anybody here, I am speaking in generality, and if you are here and you fit into this, then that is fine—but **I have never understood why someone could take all the goodness and the salvation that God gave them and then turn on God and do nothing with it.** Now, the easy answer to that is that you really did not get saved. I believe that can be true in a lot of cases, but I also believe that there are God's people who are truly saved, that instead of having a burden for the things of God, they have developed an indifference to the things of God. So, no matter how simple the process of growth is, it will never be simple enough for them to want to do it.

V. Five Principles of the Christian Life and the Process of Growth in Our Lives

Now, I want to go through these five things here.

1. In Time God will Reveal Himself to You

Psalms 25:4. Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

First of all, in verse 4, He starts out by saying this: "Show me thy ways, O LORD." As you begin to grow after you are saved, in time, God will reveal Himself to you. Here is where we get this all wrong.

➤ There are Two Revelings of God in a Christian's Life

There are two revealings of God in a Christian's life. The first revelation of God that He gives to you is the fact that you are a sinner and that you need to be saved. Then, once you trust Christ as your personal Savior, you begin to grow. But let's be honest, you do not know God yet. You know Him as your Savior. But there are a lot of things that you have to learn in life to get to that place like Abraham, where you would be called the friend of God, where you can trust God for just about everything in your life. That is a process. If you keep growing, if you keep going through the structure of the New Testament local church, learn your Bible, get people to help you, do all that you need to do, there will come a time when God will then, after the revelation of

salvation, reveal to you who He really is, and along with that revelation will come what He has called you to do.

In the Bible, this is laid out by seven men that God changes their names. Five of the men that God changes their names are in a good format. Two of them are in the reverse format. But the five men that God changes their names, and we went through it many, many times—In the Bible, that stands for the second revelation of God, that now you see yourself the way God wants you to be seen. Now you see Him the way He wants to be seen, and your life is never the same again.

God will reveal Himself to you to show you that you are a sinner, and you need to be saved. When you get saved, if your growth process begins properly, there will come a time in your life when God will reveal Himself to you on a deeper level, and that is when He will show you from your growth where you go from there and what He has for you.

➤ The Model is Found in I Samuel Chapter 3

You know me, I am big on a couple of things in the Bible. One of them is context. The other one is patterns and models. The model and the pattern for that would be found in 1 Samuel chapter 3. To me, 1 Samuel chapter 3 is one of the most phenomenal places in the Old Testament where it is almost like God carves out of the Old Testament just a little chapter here and lifts it up and puts it into a New Testament context. You know what happens in 1 Samuel chapter 3? It is the calling of Samuel, and Samuel becomes one of the greatest prophets. But God calls him in one of Israel's darkest hours. When you read this chapter, it just shows you how that this story here is lifted out of the Old Testament and actually put into a New Testament context of the Laodicean church period.

First of all, Israel's priesthood is totally corrupted. Eli's sons are totally corrupted. It is a picture of the Laodicean church today that we live in, which is in total corruption. You will find in verse 3 as you come down through there that in the temple you have the lamp of God. In Leviticus 24:2, that lamp of God was never to go out. It was to burn 24/7. And you know what happens? It goes out. Now, it does not take much of a spiritual IQ to see the parallel of that because in Revelation chapter 2:5, when you get into the Laodicean church period, you know what happens? It loses its light. The candle goes out.

In verse 1, it starts out that there is no open vision. Yet in the Old Testament, that is one of the ways that God revealed to men, but in this period, God shut it down. The only revelation in this time by God's design came from the word of God, just like the Church Age. Verse 7 says, *Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.* Well, come on. You are telling me that Samuel did not know about God? He was raised in a family. His mother taught him and trained him. She brought him over to Eli...He knew who God was, just like you do, but the Lord had not revealed Himself to him yet. So young Samuel ministered before Eli in God's established system within the Old Testament, in the midst of the corruption. It is through this system (Old Testament priesthood or New Testament church for us), that in time God revealed Himself to Samuel, and he is shown God's ways. Let me read to you I Samuel 3:19-21.

*1 Samuel 3:19-21. And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and **did let none of his words fall to the ground.***

20. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.

*21. And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: **for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.***

You see, Samuel knew who God was. They took him down to the minister, his structure in the Old Testament, New Testament church in the New Testament. It was there that God gave him the second revelation. Now, everybody knows who Samuel is. Now everybody knows that God is with him. Now everybody knows Samuel has been called of God to do what God wants...that is what God wants for every one of you. It is what He wants for your kids.

Friday night, we had our *Iron Sharpeneth Iron* for our young singles. I wish you moms and dads who had kids there could have been here to see that. It was exactly what we have here in 1 Samuel 3. We are taking those kids on a monthly basis. They are already part of our ministry here. They do many, many, many things. But now we want to give them that ability to get them on the pathway of growth that in time... You see, they are all great kids. They all are under the revelation of God's salvation. But none of them have the second revelation of God revealing the word of God to them, but they will in time.

I was so proud of them; I watched them. We were dealing with them on different things. We broke them into groups. Throughout this church, I just walked around and watched some of the older kids who have been around for a while and have a handle on things. They were helping the younger kids. They were off in their little groups working on the growth process. Just like Samuel. We probably had 40 plus kids here. I was so proud of them because those kids are going to be the lifeblood of this church and the leadership and future of this church. I know we will not get them all. I know there are some that want nothing to do with that. I get it. I understand that. I am okay with that. I have told you before, my job as pastor is to save as many of them as I can. I am not under the illusion I am going to get them all. But I will get what I can. As my grandmother used to say, "Get all you can and can all you get." She did not say that. I read that someplace. It always gives you a little credibility when you say your grandmother said it. I can tell you stories about my grandmother, but I will not do it. I do not want to ruin the sermon this morning.

2. Understanding the Way of God will be a Pathway

*Psalms 25:4. Shew me thy ways, O LORD; **teach me thy paths.***

God is going to, in time, in your growth, reveal Himself to you, not just through salvation, but like He did Samuel. Then the second thing, once He reveals Himself to you, "teach me thy paths." The next thing to understand the way of God will be a pathway. We call our church Old Paths Baptist Church. That is based on Jeremiah 6:16.

*Jeremiah 6:16. Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and **ask for the old paths, where [is] the good way,** and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk [therein].*

➤ There is Only One Path and That is the Old Path

The old path for the nation of Israel, and the old path for the Church today, are lost. They are gone, so they must be taught to the people. When I started this church, I decided to call it Old Paths Baptist Church, not for your benefit, but for mine, because I never wanted to forget that I needed to stay on the old path. Christianity has gotten off the old path. Just like 1 Samuel chapter 3 with Eli, the priesthood in the Church today has corrupted itself and forsaken the old pathways of God. The old path will only be walked through a King James 1611 Authorized Version.

The key to this passage will be doctrine. It will be the principles. You are going to find a lot of God's people today who are truly saved. A lot of young kids are this way. They think their way is better than God's way. They think the path that they are walking on is better than the path of the New Testament local church. And it is not. That path will lead to destruction. It will lead to divorce. It will lead to pregnancy. It will lead to heartbreak. It will lead to drinking. It will lead to drugs. It will lead you in a disastrous format. There is only one path, and that is the old path. You're to ask for it because it is a good way. Then you walk therein, and in that path, you find rest for your souls.

*1 John 1:7. But if we **walk in the light, as he [is] in the light,** we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

*Psalms 119:105. Thy word [is] a lamp unto my feet, and **a light unto my path.***

The new modern-day neo-evangelical churches and Baptist churches will contain big crowds, rock bands, halftime shows for the entertainment, watered-down teaching. They have coffee shops, restaurants, and gymnasiums. But there is no light for the pathway. I am going to tell you right now, a church without doctrine will be a flashlight without batteries.

The ways of verse 4 will start in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning." You go to Proverbs 8:22, and you will find that beginning is the beginning of His way. That is the way, the old path.

3. The Leading of God

*Psalms 25:5. **Lead me in thy truth, and teach me:** for thou [art] the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.*

Then the third thing, verse 5: "Lead me in thy truth and teach me." Once you have the pathway down and once God has revealed Himself to you or is in the process, then the leading of God's will comes automatically. **Here is a great principle for your spiritual growth process: God will be teaching you as He leads you.**

➤ The Greatest Form of Teaching & Learning is On-the-Job Training

Without a doubt, the greatest form of teaching and learning will be on-the-job training. And in 1 Samuel 3, that is how Samuel learned the ministry. That model and pattern is carried all the way over into the New Testament because you find that Paul and Timothy did the same thing. Paul took Timothy with him. He did not send him off to a college someplace. He did not give him a bunch of books. He took him with him in his ministry that he was established in and trained him through that ministry.

It is the same way here with us. Bible colleges are like driver education classes in high school. They are all books and films and theory. But there is no practical experience, no hands-on. It all comes to reality, my dear friend, when you get behind the wheel of that car. Growth is simple. You follow as Paul laid out in I Corinthians 11:1, *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ*. You find a pastor. You follow the leading of that pastor. God, through that pastor, through that church, will lead you. God will train you in ministry as He leads you. Here is the key: it has to be in His truth. You must have your teaching tool, the word of God. God will lead you in truth as He leads me in truth. He will put you into my ministry like He did Samuel in 1 Samuel chapter 3. You get hands-on experience in the ministry, and God will teach you. Hey, it does not do you any good to grow if you do not grow straight.

Paul talks about running lawfully. God will lead you in truth as He leads the pastor in truth, whoever, and get hands-on experience, and God will teach you. In time, He will develop you into His plan, and He will reveal Himself to you. This is exactly what we are doing with our Timothy ministry. Again, I wish Friday night you parents who had kids here could have been here to see it. Unbelievable. I sat back in the back there just in awe because this is the process. You take young men and young ladies; they buy into the ministry. They want to submit themselves to the structure and the authority of the church. Then you train them. You give them hands-on experience.

➤ The Process of Growth is a Structure

I have at our mission conference a couple coming who some of you know: Kevin and Kathy Bond. The Lord has worked just a lot of things out, and I have tried to pick everybody who is coming that represents what my ministry stands for. I don't know anybody that represents what I try to do with your kids and you, better than Kevin and Kathy Bond. Kevin came up from Ohio way back when. Kathy came into our church from whatever. They both got trained in our ministries, got discipled, worked with me separately. They met each other within the ministry, got married, and then as a couple, began to work in my athletic ministry, my counseling ministry, marriage counseling, they did everything. They are a textbook of what I am trying to do with your kids. They both had the revelation of salvation, but as they worked in the ministry, and they took on more responsibility and got more involved and God gave them more, you know what God did? God, like Samuel, revealed Himself to them, and they wound up being missionaries to Australia for 25 years.

See, this is how it is done. This is what I am doing with *Iron Sharpeneth Iron*. This is what I want to do with your kids. If they are ever going to get to the place where God needs them to be, it is

going to be through this process. They cannot be a free spirit and just do it on their own. It must go through the structure, because the process of growth is a structure.

4. Waiting on God's Timing

*Psalms 25:5. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: **for thou [art] the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.***

The fourth thing, "for thou art the God of my salvation", verse 5, "on thee do I wait all the day." I am going to tell you right now, for all of us, the hardest part of our spiritual growth and our learning, and just about everything in our Christian life, will be our ability to wait on God's timing.

This generation today, you and your kids, is totally different from the generation I grew up in. Now, I am not saying that it is a bad thing, I am just saying that it is just the way it is. I am old school. I grew up in a time when things were much slower in this world. I grew up in a time when families ate supper together. They talked. This is not a criticism. I am trying to show you why I am the way I am. I am trying to get you to see it. There is a difference between how I grew up and how you grew up, and my growing up was much slower, calmer, and easier paced than the rat race you are growing up in. Back in my family, when we went out to eat, it was probably once a month, and it was a real treat. We did not have a lot, but Mom could always cook up a storm. We did not have any fast-food restaurants back then. I know that it is hard for you to believe. I had to be 10 or 11, maybe 12, when they put in the first McDonald's in Canton, Ohio. Hamburgers were 15 cents apiece. That was the introduction of a society moving to fast food. Then you know what happened? The fast food was not fast enough, so they put in the drive-thru to make it faster. It gave me a perspective to understand where people are at today.

Everybody is in a hurry today. We did not have cell phones. We did not have a computer. Back in my day, if you had a computer, it had to fill a whole room. Now, you get a phone call, you can answer it on your watch. How demonic is that? We did not have laptops. We talked. We had telephones. Back then we had party lines. You know what a party line is? You have got four or five families that shared the same phone line. I remember when the first calculator came out. See, you have everything on your phone. Right now, if you have an iPhone, you have everything on your phone that a guy in the 9th or 12th century never accumulated in a lifetime of information. You can get the weather, you can get your stocks, price of gold. You get the next nine-day forecast. You get the sports. You get the weather. You get to find out who killed somebody in Washington. You get all of that on a little hand thing like that. You know what? We did not have that back then. We had to think.

I got my first car when I was 17 years old when I got a job to pay for it. It was a '58 Ford, four-door. The generation we live in now, and I am not saying there is anything wrong with it, but when your kid turns 16 or 17 and graduates, "Where is my car?" I would say, "It is over there waiting for you to go get a job to pay for it." That is not the generation we are in today. See? In my day, there were no credit cards. My mom and dad, after they got married, never bought a house for 20 some years because they saved to buy that house. There were no credit cards back

then. You waited, saved money to buy what you needed to buy. If you did not have the money to buy it, then you just went without it. Boy, not in this generation. Got to have it all right now.

➤ Prove All Things

Times have changed, and you know what the biggest problem is? We cannot wait on God for anything. It permeates our society. It permeates our lives. We go to the mall. "What did you go to the mall for?" "Oh, I just wanted to see what I did not have." In life and in Christianity today, impatience will be the rule of the day. Learning to wait on God will be our biggest challenge. **The principle, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, "Prove all things," will be a great aid and tool in teaching you to wait on God.** God's timing in our lives is everything.

Our mission conference is coming up. We started it last year. It is even bigger and better this year, but we were not ready to do it before then because it had to be in God's timing, and now God is bringing everything together. Over the years, I have seen so many people get in a hurry, not wait on God, decide for themselves that this is the right thing to do when it is not, never prove anything out. They get their emotions involved instead of the principles. **Not taking the time to prove anything out, and they wind up trading what God had for them for something or somebody else who will end God's plan for their life.** They sit around today with their lives a disaster, their kids a disaster, their grandkids a disaster, and they wonder why.

5. Remember Me, O Lord

Psalms 25:6. Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they [have been] ever of old.

The fifth thing, verse 6, "Remember, O LORD." So far, we have seen "show me," "teach me," "lead me," "I need to wait on Thee," and now "remember me, O LORD." These will build the building blocks of a working relationship with God. There is no fast track. I tell you that I try to expedite your learning of the Bible. A pastor who knows what he is doing can do that. It is not because I have any magical formula, but I have spent 50 plus years of my life in the word of God, and God has taught me a few things. If I can teach you those few things and help you get it faster, that is going to be to your benefit. But there is no fast track. It is all blood, sweat, and tears, and study to show thyself approved.

➤ Three Things Learned in Building a Brand-New House that you are Going to Have to Face When you Build your Spiritual House

Someplace down the road you may decide to build a brand-new house. We did 30 some years ago. I learned three things about building a house, and I will tell you that they're the same three things that you are going to have to face when you build your spiritual house.

- One, it took us longer than we thought it would to build it.
- Two, it wound up costing us more than we thought it was going to cost to build it.
- And three, with the builder, it did not always go the way that we thought it would go.

When you build your spiritual body, your house for the Lord, you are going to face the same things.

➤ Remember Me Has Two Aspects to it

The "Remember Me," when we get to this part, has two aspects to it. Two requests in this prayer, once you were shown, taught, led, waited—two aspects in this prayer of God to remember.

Now, the first one is, *Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old.* Now we see that God's tender mercies and lovingkindness will be manifest not only throughout the Scriptures, but throughout our lives, the lives of God's people for centuries. It is simply God giving us His mercy and showing us not just kindness, but lovingkindness. **There is a difference between kindness and lovingkindness, and the quicker you find the difference out, the better off you are going to be.**

Then God's tender mercy and lovingkindness will be the reason for the second request, where He says, "Remember me, O LORD," God loving me and showing me His lovingkindness, when never one time I deserved it.

➤ God's Incredible Ability to Forgive and Not Remember My Sins Anymore

Psalms 25:7. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.

Now, here we find one of the most powerful teachings in all the Bible. He is asking, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions." Now what we come up against is one of the, if not the greatest attribute of God, for me, anyhow, I cannot speak for you. But the greatest aspect of God in my mind, in my life, is right here. God's ability to not remember my sins anymore. God's ability to forgive and then forget.

➤ No Sins Mentioned in Hebrews 11 – God's Hall of Fame

Did you ever notice in Hebrews chapter 11, oh, I do not know, 16 or so guys and ladies in there, He lists men and women in the Old Testament who were examples of faith. It is such a popular chapter, we call it God's Hall of Fame. You've got Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, Samson, David, and then Samuel. When you read what He says about those people, He does not list one sin that they did. And brother, you go back and look in the Bible, they committed plenty. Noah got drunk, Abraham had a lack of faith, he lied to Abimelech and said, "She is my sister." Sarah laughed at the promises of God. Jacob, the greatest schemer that ever lived that schemed his whole life. Rahab, a hooker, Gideon.

Everybody thinks Gideon is such a great guy. Gideon is the greatest example of the lack of faith. He is going to go out and fight this battle. God says, "I am going to give you the victory." He has to lay a fleece down two or three times and make it almost impossible to happen, and for God to do it. "And then I will know what you really told me is true." He put the fleece out because he could not believe what God told him. A lot of people are like that. Yet, you get over to Hebrews 11, not one word about it. All good. Jephthah, Judges 11. Are you kidding me? How in the world

did he get in God's Hall of Fame? He is the biggest spiritual Pharisee on the planet who has so much pride he could not back down from shooting off his mouth and he killed his own daughter. God's Hall of Fame. Not one word about it. Samson. The he-man with the she-weakness. The first words out of his mouth: "I saw a woman. Get her for me." In Hebrews 11, God's Hall of Fame, there is not one word about any transgression or sin in his life. David committed two sins for which there was no sacrifice for—adultery and murder. God said he is a man after my own heart. Never mentioned one transgression or sin that he committed. Not one sin listed for any of these people.

➤ As You Put These Things in Your Life, You Grow up Into Him

Now this will be the greatest aspect of God in my humble opinion. A God who knows everything about everybody but chooses to forget the bad things in our lives and only sees the good when it comes to His children. Did you ever see the contrast with unsaved people? God only remembers the bad and never the good because all their righteousness is filthy rags in the sight of God.

I have heard preachers, pastors, teachers, other Christians tell me all my life that only God can do that. Only God has the ability to forgive and forget. I am telling you right now, I do not believe that. They are dead wrong. As you grow, as you put these things in your life, the Bible says in Ephesians 4, you grow up into Him. **Every ability He has in your growth process, in time, as He reveals Himself to you, every growth process He has will be in your life.** It is called being Christ-like, which means, like Christ, in the issues of life. Listen to me. **Forgiving without forgetting is not true Biblical forgiveness. It is a worldly forgiveness cloaked in Christianity.** It is a pretense. If you can Biblically forgive, then you can Biblically forget. But if you cannot Biblically forgive, you can forget it. God's people will take grace from God, mercy from God, God's forgiveness. "Oh, God, do not remember my transgressions, but I will remember yours."

➤ God Gave us Grace and Mercy Which We Should Also Give to Others

Listen, in life, particularly in the ministry, people are going to try to hurt you. People are going to do stupid, dumb things. They are going to make mistakes. They are going to do things against you, say things about you, undermine you, stab you in the back, assassinate your character, lie about you, try to discredit you. If you are not careful, you will take that personal. I read Hebrews Chapter 11, and with all the things those people did to God. Hey, forget them. In every one of our lives, we can put ourselves right there. There were times that we took God's name as a cuss word. There is a time that we violated every principle that God had. We may not agree on everything, but I think we could all agree on this: every one of us deserved to burn in hell this morning. But He gave us grace. He gave us mercy. He gave us His lovingkindness. But we cannot give that to anybody else.

Through growth, building those things in your life—God showing you His ways, revealing Himself, teaching you His pathway, being led by His truth, and learning to wait on Him: All these areas make you like Christ. How can you like Him learn not only to forgive but to forget?

VI. The Key to Forgiving and Forgetting

➤ God Understands My Weakness

Now, the key to all this forgiving and forgetting stuff is found simply in three things that I want you to understand in the time that I have left. God's ability not to remember the sins of my youth. God's ability not to remember my transgressions. There are a couple of things here. **The first thing: according to thy mercy. God understands my weakness. He understands that on my best day I am a vessel of clay.** He does not take it personally—all the things that I have done and said about Him before and after my salvation. He loves me in spite of who I am. He knows I do those things ignorantly because I am as worthless and wicked as they come.

➤ God's Lovingkindness and Mercy to Israel as Well as to Us

Psalms 78 is one of the greatest places in all the Bible that will show us God's mercy and lovingkindness toward us as He is dealing with the nation of Israel. There are 72 verses in this chapter on God's lovingkindness and mercy to a people who continually use and abuse Him. That would be you and me, inspirationally. He says in Psalms 78:5 that God established a testimony for Israel and a law to be taught and kept for their children; showing the children, the generation to come, the greatness of the Lord in His strength and the marvelous works that He had done.

Psalms 78:5. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:

6. That the generation to come might know [them], [even] the children [which] should be born; [who] should arise and declare [them] to their children:

But the Bible says in Psalms 78:10-11, *They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.* He said, "Oh, but when I brought you out of Egypt, I showed you the mighty miracles, the Red Sea, the plagues." But the Bible says in verse 17, *And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness.*

➤ The Fundamental Problem

You see, Israel is just like us. It did not matter what God did for them. They just wanted more. There was a fundamental problem in their relationship with God just like we have a fundamental problem. **They were willing to take the miracles and the blessings of God, but then they turned on God.** They were in the wilderness. He gave them water out of the rock and manna from heaven. It sustained them through the supernatural picture of the word of God. You know what the Bible says? This is you and me. God gave you that King James Bible. He gave you the greatest book the world has ever seen. He brought it supernaturally to you like He brought down manna supernaturally from heaven.

Do you know what the Bible says they did in verse 30? *They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat [was] yet in their mouths, ...* They continued in their lust while the very

manna was in their mouth. God judges them. They come back to God—a come to Jesus meeting if you will. The Bible says in verses 35- 36 that they may have come back and remembered God, but when they did, *Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.* They totally and completely forgot all God did for them and gave them to sustain them. Then He says they tempted and provoked Him and kept not His testimonies.

Do you see yourself in any of that? I do not see any of you in it, but I see me from top to bottom. Oh, but here it comes. The only reason I will not give an altar call this morning is because the altar is not big enough to hold all of us, so you had better get down on the altar of your heart this morning. But here it comes. If this does not change you, you are unchangeable. If your kids are here this morning and they are listening to this, if this does not change them, they are unchangeable. Oh, this is why we should love Him today. All the things they did, all the lies, all the abuse, all the turning their backs, all the provoking Him over and over and over for years and years and years and years. Then in verses 38-39:

*Psalms 78:38-39. **But he, [being] full of compassion, forgave [their] iniquity, and destroyed [them] not:** yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.*

*39. For **he remembered** that they [were but] flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.*

You see, He remembered. We do not remember. Oh, we got, "Do not remember my sins, but remember all the good things." For He remembered who I am. Then He remembers who He is. He never took my abuse personally.

We pretend to be so spiritual, so holy. Yet we forget the time we cursed God and used His holy name as a cuss word. The times that we did not do what is right, the times that the thoughts and the mindset and the attitude that we had, the times that we turned against the very Word of God and His principles that He gave us, lived our lives to ourselves, rejected His church, His message, His structure, the preaching of the pastor. Yet God, through His mercy and lovingkindness and His compassion, will always remind us of who we are. We are flesh. He will not destroy us. But we will always forget who He is and not give others the same compassion, the same mercy, the same lovingkindness, the same grace that He gave us.

➤ We Limit the Holy One of Israel

Their attitude of indifference, Israel's, and our attitude of indifference in the church, will do one main piece of damage to what God's program is, and it is found in verse 41. You know what Israel did? They did the same thing that we do in the church when we do not do what is right with the word of God and people.

*Psalms 78:41. Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and **limited the Holy One of Israel.***

You want to know something that limits a church, the mission, the pastor, and everything that goes on? It is how God's people look at other people. "Well, I do not like so and so. I do not like the way they look. I do not like the way they dress. I do not like this. I do not like the way they talk." You know what? You did not look too hot the first time God laid eyes on you.

But He had compassion, had lovingkindness, through His mercy. If this message does not change you, you are unchangeable.

➤ God's Goodness to us is Jesus Christ

Then the second thing: remember thou me for thy goodness' sake. Now that goodness is Jesus Christ. You need to understand this. This is God's Son. Jesus Christ is God's goodness to us. You see, this is it. God sees me and my wickedness and my sins and my transgressions through the cross that He paid for my sins on.

Somebody said one time, "If unsaved man is God's enemy and He hates him, how can God love him?" Because He looks at them through Christ's death on the cross. That's the only way He can love me. He had to forgive my sins. Did you ever notice in Hebrews 11, all those saints with all the damnable things they did, He never brought one bad thing up. You know why? He wrote that after the cross. It was all under the blood.

You see, we love the fact that He puts my sins under the blood, but we cannot put somebody else's sins under the blood. Our understanding of why people are the way they are. Loving them with the same mercy God gave me and through Christ, through His blood, you forgive them. You let it go. You do not hang on to it. You forgive them and you forget it and you move on, through Christ. It doesn't matter what they do. I am not saying you've got to be best buddies and best friends with them. I am saying God's people carry things around for 20, 30, 40 years. All they do is limit the Holy One of Israel.

You'd think a chapter like this would make a difference in God's people's lives, their attitude toward others. Bottom line? God, through His grace and mercy and lovingkindness, forgave us and then forgot our transgressions and moved on. We will take that grace, that mercy, that lovingkindness from God, but will not display it to others. Anything other than that, and your Christianity is a pretense. You know what the definition of pretense is? It is something that pretends to be real, but it is not. I am not saying you do not have to deal with things. Paul lays out the different categories of people who do things that you've got to deal with them on. But carrying a grudge around in our lives because somebody said something or did something we did not like? The key to God will be His ability to forgive and forget, and the key to the Christian life will be our ability to forgive and forget and to move on.

➤ What People will Do to You Should Never Compare with the Full Cup of what God Does for You

Then there is a third thing I want to just throw in here. This is my own personal approach to it. I told you before, what people will do to you should never compare with the full cup of what God does for you. You will go through life with your focus on what people do to you, or you are going to go through life with your focus on what God has done for you. It is just that simple. The real reason we cannot let it go and forget it and forgive and then move on, I do not care what we say, we have no grace and we have no mercy. Oh, we want it from God to us, but we will not give it to somebody else. We have to be smarter than the problem. We have to not be able to take

it personally. That is what God did. He did not take all my transgressions and sin personally. He understood who I was and loved me in spite of it.

When in the ministry or just in life, when people attack you, hey, 99% of it will not be a personality conflict that they have with you, but it is what you stand for. When people leave a good church, and good people do not leave good churches, whatever the reason, I teach this to young pastors on a weekly basis. They are always calling me because they are struggling with things. The church has not suddenly compromised. The guy is probably still preaching the Bible just like he always has. He has not quit preaching the truth. That person has changed. The guy is still preaching what he preached for how many years? That guy once loved it. Now he does not. Something happened to him, and now he does not like the accountability that comes through the preaching of truth.

I have seen people get into a new relationship, and that relationship just completely takes them away. Some gal or some guy will fall in love with somebody, and they are more spiritual than the other person, and they actually think that it is going to work. I've had people leave this church and any church I was associated with because they lost their kids. They will not come to church anymore, they will not do anything anymore, and you cannot control it. Sometimes you just fall into sin. When you stand fast for God's truth and do not waver, do not change, you never let these things affect you. You do not take it personal.

➤ They Have not Rejected You. They Have Rejected Me.

The model for this, if you want one, is over there in 1 Samuel chapter 8. Saul was chosen by the people to be the king. Samuel was very upset about that because he knew Saul was their own choice. He tried to tell the people, "This is not the king that you want." Their answer is, "We want a king like all the other nations." His answer is, "You are not to be like all the other nations." Then he tells them all the wicked rotten things Saul is going to do to them, and they say, "We do not care." And then, here it comes, famous words, "I want what I want."

So, Samuel is moping. God comes down and says, "Hey buddy, what is going on?" Samuel says, "Oh, I do not want to talk about it." "Samuel, what is going on?" "Lord, I told them about Saul. I told them that he was not the king. They rejected me. They do not want to hear it. Lord, I am really upset. I am really mad." The Lord says, "What in the world are you upset about? Here it comes. Here it comes, Samuel. **They have not rejected you. They have rejected Me.** Quit taking it personal. Do your job. Hold the line. Stand for the truth. Preach the truth. They will either get in, or they will get out. You stay where I put you. Do not take it personal because some are going to come to your church and bring joy. Some are going to bring joy when they leave your church."

I told a young pastor a couple of weeks ago, dealing with God's people, if you are not careful, they will absolutely drive you crazy. He says, "Well, Bob, how in the world do you deal with that?" I say, "I do not give them the keys, and I do not let them drive." You keep control. **But you understand them like God understands us.** Oh yes. Oh yes. I can hear it now, all of us. "Oh Lord, remember not my sins. Oh Lord, remember not my transgressions against You. But remember Your grace, Your mercy, Your lovingkindness. Oh Lord, remember not my sins. But I

will never forget what so and so did to me." There you are. Welcome to 21st century Christianity. Pretense. Pretense.

VII. Summary

Now again, the full cup; all that God has given you. If you have a full cup, you have your family ministering with you, God is using you, you are touching people's lives. God has filled your cup to the brim. God has given you your heart's desire. Why would you let anybody take that from you? You look at it, you understand it, you love them through Christ, you show them the same grace and mercy God showed you, and you move on.

At the end of the day, Matthew 6:14-15.

Matthew 6:14-15. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

You do not forgive them; He is not going to forgive you. **There is the answer why some of God's people's lives are in such a turmoil.** The real reason we need to get this down, to forgive and forget, is so that we never allow ourselves in this church to limit the Holy One of Israel.

God's process of spiritual growth, simple: *Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me.* Teach me to learn to wait on You, God, and God, remember me in two ways. "O LORD, remember thy lovingkindness to me, because I am a mess." And "O LORD, do not remember my sins and my transgressions anymore." But the key is taking those things to somebody else. As Ephesians 4:15 says, growth is a process. Not growing up to be like the Lord, not growing up unto the Lord. It clearly says, "grow up **into** Him,"—you having and being everything that He is, and having the ability to forgive and to forget and move on and never limit the Holy One of Israel in your life.