

I. Review

Well, you will remember last week we finished up what I believe is probably the greatest chapter on spiritual growth found anywhere in the Bible. I showed you how that, doctrinally, Psalms 25 will be the Jew going through the tribulation period. We looked at how that all pulls together and how everything fits into that. I showed you how that within the context of it doctrinally, you will find an incredible inspirational (practical) application of truth that will really be the building blocks of a real relationship with the Lord. Psalms 25 will be David's prayer to God historically. Then we know that it is Israel's prayer to God doctrinally. It is also my prayer to God inspirationally as we, as believers, reach out to Him.

I said last week, if this Psalm was all that I had in the Bible, and I did not have anything else other than this Psalm, I could be everything God wanted me to be. It contains every aspect of how to build a relationship with the Lord. You will remember I finished this chapter by giving you eight final aspects, eight things to think about in building a sure house. We have been talking about that concept at Thursday night Bible study, and it has also been worked into our Sunday mornings, about how we are to build a sure house. That sure house is us building our relationship with the Lord, that God can be sure that we are going to accomplish what He wants us to do.

➤ Eight Aspects in Building a Sure House

1. **The Lord teaching us.** It has to be in His way. Too many times in life, as Christians, we get out of His way and start going our own way. That never works out, and it always leads to some real heartache and disaster.
2. **The meek being guided in judgment.** We define meek in the Bible, not as the world defines it, but a meekness in humility of the power of God in your life, which is under the control of the Holy Spirit of God.
3. **The pathway of mercy and truth.** Whatever God does in your life, wherever He takes you, whatever job He has for you, the two key ingredients will be mercy and truth. Mercy of understanding what God has done for you so you can understand what to do for others, and then truth, the word of God, which pulls us all together.
4. **The understanding who we really are in Christ.**
5. **Being taught the way God chooses for us.** God has something that He wants every one of you to accomplish in life. The will of God will be the same for all of us, and that is to be more like Christ every day. But God's plan will be different for each of us, and God has something that He wants you to accomplish, that He has chosen for you.
6. **Our soul dwelling at ease,** and how that represents the rest that we have in our relationship with the Lord, and how that we pass that on to our seed. Families resting and dwelling at ease within the promises of the word of God.
7. **The secret things that God gives us.** The personal time that you have in the Bible with God and what He reveals to you, the treasure chest of your heart, and how that in time it becomes an inheritance for your children that you pass those things on.

8. **Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord.** That will be my true focus in life, always keeping my eyes on the Lord.

➤ The Word of God is a Looking Glass Showing us who we Really are

If you remember, I built all of last week around a passage in James 1:22-25, and that is the looking glass, the mirror of the word of God, which will always show us, when we look into the word of God, our natural face, and then show us who we really are and how important that is. Many times we get prideful, many times we become self-righteous, many times we turn into a Pharisee, and we judge everything else around us, everybody else around us, but never really judge ourselves. That is what the word of God is, a looking glass. When you look into it, it does that for you. It shows us who we really are.

If you go to the state fair, most likely it will have a fun house. That's where you go in, nothing scary, but they will have mirrors in there that are manipulated by man. As you stand in front of the mirror, it distorts your image. My kids showed me an app on their phones where you can take somebody's picture and make their head real big or make their body real big, and you can do all that stuff. That is modern technology, I guess. That is what the world does. **The world distorts your true image, and it blows you up into something that you are really not. That is why it is important to use the mirror of the word of God because it will always show us our true image and our true likeness.**

It is like the difference between artificial light and sunlight. You can get up to go to church and get dressed or go to work in the morning, and you get a dark black or dark blue sweater or top, and in the light of the house, you cannot tell if it is blue or it is black because the artificial light does not ever give you the true picture of what color it really is. So you think you are putting on your black top, and you go to work, and it is your blue top. If you take that same top out into the SUNlight, it shows you the true colors.

Back in 1937, Walt Disney made a bunch of movies including Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. As I got into the word of God, I realized how much all of that they did back then is a hitchhike off what the word of God is. You had Snow White, and then you had a Wicked Witch. The Wicked Witch did not like Snow White, so she gave her a poisoned fruit, and she died, and then she is dead for a while until her Prince Charming comes. When Prince Charming comes and kisses her, she comes back to life. Now, if that isn't the Bible! Let me tell you something. Adam got the wrong fruit, and because of that, we all died, and we were dead in trespasses and sins because one man got a poisoned fruit. Then one day as Snow White lay there (the woman/the bride), her Prince Charming came and with one kiss brought her back to life. **Do you remember the day when you were dead in trespasses and sins, and our Prince Charming came and kissed your soul and brought you back to life?** You see, all those things fit into the Bible.

Now I have some real ideas on the seven dwarfs. I think they are the seven kinds of Christians you will find in churches, especially Dopey. I am waiting for somebody to sneeze, and that would be Sneezy. Anyway, the Wicked Witch would go in every morning—there was a mirror, remember? She would say, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" And the

mirror did not lie. The mirror said, "Not you, but Snow White." That is why the Wicked Witch wanted to get rid of Snow White, because the mirror said, "You are not the one." You see, when you look into the mirror in a natural state, you see that old witch. But thank God, *though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow (Isaiah 1:18)*. You are Snow White now today. You are the fairest in the land. All that comes through the Bible. *Mary had a little lamb*. You bet she did, and *its fleece was white as snow*. You betcha.

II. The End Result of Building a Sure House

Today we will move into Psalms chapter 26. After David's prayer in Psalms 25, you'll want to see how this thing builds. **Psalms 25 was building the right relationship**, and we went all through that—best place in the Bible. **Now in Psalms 26, we see the end result of building a sure house**. In this chapter, we will see how we should never stop growing spiritually, because that is the key to it all. That was the nation of Israel's problem.

You'll remember that in 606 BC, Israel goes into captivity under Babylon. The northern tribes go with Sennacherib a little bit earlier. Now they are in total captivity; however, when Christ comes, the Jew has to be back in the land. So 70 years after they go into Babylonian captivity, God puts it in the heart of a king, Cyrus, to send a remnant of the Jews back to the land. This will be found in the books of Nehemiah, Ezra, and Esther. You will find that Ezra and Nehemiah lead this minority back. After the 70 years captivity, they begin to rebuild the nation of Israel. They begin to build Jerusalem, and then they begin to build the temple.

What you have here historically actually took place. Doctrinally, that of course is the picture of the restoration of the nation of Israel. We do not have time to get into all that today. But inspirationally, it tells you in Ezra and Nehemiah, that they go down at nighttime, picture the church age, and they see Jerusalem, the city of God, lying in rubble. When Nebuchadnezzar came down, he destroyed Jerusalem. You know what that is a picture of? That is a picture of your life and my life before we ever trusted Jesus Christ as our own personal Savior. Our lives were in rubble. It was a disaster. It was an absolute mess.

➤ Our Bodies are the Temple of the Holy Ghost

Then what happened? They began to rebuild, and when you got saved, when God delivered you from that captivity, then you began to rebuild. You began to rebuild the temple, your body, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which you have in you. But I look back at the book of Haggai. Haggai was an Old Testament prophet to the nation of Israel. We see that what has happened to the nation of Israel is exactly what has happened to New Testament Christianity today. God sent them back. They were told to rebuild. They began to rebuild, which is a picture of after you get saved, you start building your temple, spiritual growth, discipleship, learning your Bible, getting into the word of God, the rebuilding of the desolation of your life before Christ came into it.

But you know what Israel did? They did the same thing a lot of God's people do. They quit building the temple. When Haggai shows up, they have stopped building now for 16 years. They never finished the temple. Oh, they started, just like a lot of God's people. They had the best intentions, just like a lot of God's people. But here it is, folks. Here it is, and why it is. For 16

years now, they stopped building the most important aspect in Israel's relationship with God, the temple. Israel has no relationship with God without the temple and building that temple was key. You and I will have no relationship with God without our temple being built because that is the key.

Yet when you study the passage in Haggai, if this is not God's people today then I don't know what is. They have all the material to build the temple. It has been sitting there for 16 years, and they have quit building the most important aspect of their lives. Now God's people, yes, God's people, not the world, God's people take the building material for the temple of God and are building their own homes with it. Wow! Hello! If that is not us, man, I don't know what is. I love this guy. Haggai is coming down and saying, "Hey, look, guys, you have to see this. You are not just building a temple. You are not just building a building. You missed the point. You are building your future with God." *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (I Corinthians 6:19-20).*

Once you get saved, once you endeavor to build that sure house, which many of you are, you can never stop growing. There can never be a day in your life when you take the things of God, and you do your own thing with it. There can never be a day in your life where you see your spiritual growth as just something like going to Sunday school and making everybody happy. **You are building your future with God Almighty.** In this story here, you will find the absolute importance of never stopping growing in the Lord. **Never stop building your temple.** Most pastors today, in the Laodicean church period that we live in, will build extravagant buildings while their people die spiritually, starving to death. If you ever pastor, maybe some of you will someday, rule number one is this: never have your church building in better shape than the people who are in it. In Psalms 26, we see how to keep growing after you begin to build the sure house, because the devil is going to try to stop you. Spiritual maintenance on the house of God.

III. Psalm 26 – How to Keep Growing After You Begin to Build the Sure House

Let us read Psalm 26, verses 1 through 12, and then as always, we will break it down into little understandable components. That is the best way for you to get it.

Psalms 26:1-12. Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; [therefore] I shall not slide.

- 2. Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.*
- 3. For thy lovingkindness [is] before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.*
- 4. I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.*
- 5. I have hated the congregation of evildoers; and will not sit with the wicked.*

6. *I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:*
7. *That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.*
8. *LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.*
9. *Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:*
10. *In whose hands [is] mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.*
11. *But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.*
12. *My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.*

IV. Nine Things to Consider for a Sure House

Here is David. After he has built this relationship, now he is asking God to use him and telling God why He now should use him. He is asking God in the process of this. He is explaining to God where he is at, what he has done, and what he knows he needs to do to be declaring God and staying faithful in what God has called him to do. He tells God as we come down through this chapter, *I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.* Then the end result of all of that, *that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.* You know, that is the end result for every one of us. It is the only reason we build a house, build a sure house. It is really the plan of God that is different for each of you, but the end result is the same. We take the word of God and publish it, talking about the wondrous works. The lesson today will be David getting to where God wants him to be, to be a sure house. Then what David has to do to keep that house sure and its foundation solid. Because a sure house will have to weather the storms of this old life.

You'll remember back several months ago, we talked about Matthew 7:24-27 and the two kinds of men: one built his house upon a rock, and one built his house upon the sand. The Bible says that the storms came upon those houses. The wind blew, and the house that was built on the sand was not sure, and the loss was great. But the house that was built on the rock withstood the storms. I am going to tell you right now, if you are going to take your stand for the Lord and you are going to do something for God, the storms of this life are going to come against your house. **A sure house will always weather the storms of life.** But that house is going to require maintenance.

That will be the historical account with David and God. The doctrinal account will be again, the tribulation—Israel in the last half of the tribulation getting right with God. Psalms 25 and Psalms 26 go together, and this will be after the prayer of chapter 25 of last week. Israel getting back to God and wanting to stay there. But for you and for me, we want to look at how this impacts us. The historical is important, no question. The doctrinal is important, no question. But that is not going to get you through life tomorrow. That is not going to suffice when the storms of this life beat upon your house. **You can never stop growing. You can never stop maintaining that house.**

Now this will be a great lesson for all of us because you will find nine things here that I want you to consider. I know I break things down like that. I want it to be easy so you can understand it. But in your Bible, nine is the number of fruit bearing. It's found in the book of Galatians, which is the ninth book in the New Testament. There are nine fruit of the Holy Spirit of God. So if you want to bear fruit with your sure house and never stop growing, that you ensure that your fruit continues, this is what you need.

➤ 1.) Allow God to Correct You

*Psalms 26:1. **Judge me, O LORD**; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; [therefore] I shall not slide.*

The first thing he says in verse 1 is, "Judge me, O LORD." For all of us, that will simply be you and me allowing God through the word of God to always have the freedom to correct us. It is just that simple. Most people do not understand the importance of going to church and being under the sound of preaching. There was a time when people did, but we are way past that point. Seeing and understanding the importance of being in church on Sunday and having somebody preach to you. **In any church there needs to be two aspects present when you are giving God's people the word of God. The first one will be teaching.** A pastor needs to know how to teach the Bible. Through teaching we get edification, and that is important. **But the second aspect will be preaching.** Preaching will correct us. Preaching will hold us accountable. Preaching will show us the things that we need to fix. Teaching will not do that. A good pastor must not only be able to do both, preach and teach, but he also should know how to use both at any given time when needed.

But we must be honest today. In the Laodicean church age, the time period that we live in, most of God's people do not want to be preached to. Most pastors, unfortunately, cannot preach. We find that the great preachers out on the radio and on the internet for the most part are great teachers, but nobody preaches anymore. They give out a lot of information. They edify. You can sit down there and fill your notes up with the Bible, but **we all need to have our hide taken off every once in a while, just to keep us honest.** They do not understand, unfortunately, that God designed the church (not the building) and preaching to get you and I, through the word of God being preached to us, to judge ourselves and get right with God so God then doesn't have to come down through chastisement and deal with us. So he says, "Judge me, O LORD," through thy Word.

I have always loved Proverbs 27:7. It is such a descriptive verse that says in one verse so much.

*Proverbs 27:7. The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but **to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.***

The honeycomb is the word of God. He says the full (filled up) soul loatheth the honeycomb. That is somebody who has their life filled up with everything outside the word of God, and now they look at the honeycomb, the word of God, and they loathe it. That means they hate it. Then he says, "but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." You see, when you want to build your sure house, when you love the Lord, when you realize what preaching does for you, what

God designed for it to do for you, when you realize that when it comes out of this pulpit, out of the word of God, and you have something in your life that is not right, it is God tapping you on the shoulder so He does not have to hit you over the head. It's getting to the point where even the bitter things that are preached that you do not like, because you understand God and your relationship, are sweet to you. Incredible concept.

➤ 2.) Examine Yourself, Prove Yourself, Know Yourself

Psalms 26:2. Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

Then he says, "Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart." Now you have heard me say this before that we, as a child of God, have something to prove. Romans 12, verses 1 and 2, who does not know that? But it says there that we are not to be conformed to this world, but we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may **prove** what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. I know people say everything. I mean, you can find the biggest drunk on the planet, the biggest dope addict on the planet, and you can ask them if they have ever been saved. **But the real proof, the real evidence of salvation in somebody that is truly saved, will be God's will being perfected in their life.** That you do not just get saved and stick with it for a while and then do whatever you want to do.

2 Corinthians 13:5. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Second Corinthians 13:5 is a great verse. It says that we are to examine ourselves whether we be in the faith. Once you examine yourself, you find out where you are at with the Lord, then the next step is prove your own selves. The third step is know your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates. Three things that are key to a sure house of you doing an inspection.

You know, unless you are one of our single guys here that live in a house with other single guys, most of you women who have families know that at least once a week you have to clean the house. These young guys do not get that. I know in our house we have two dogs. One of them does not shed, but the other one sheds enough for that dog and the neighbor's dog and two other dogs. Barb can take that duster and go around there. I tell her, "You keep those, and we will knit a sweater for you." I mean, they are everywhere. You have to clean house on a regular basis. If you do not, you know what happens. Your house gets filthy, it gets dirty, it begins to smell, and it is like a lot of God's people's lives that do not let the word of God do what God intended, and that is to clean your house on a regular basis. That is what preaching does. You say, "I do not like preaching." I do not either necessarily all the time, but I have learned that even the bitter things are sweet because it is still better with God coming down and tapping me on the shoulder than God coming down with a two by four and whacking me on the head. But life is choices, is it not? Yes, it is.

So, you have to examine yourself. You have to then prove yourself, and then you have to know your own self. Those are the three keys. So when you practice that in your life within your house, your spiritual body, you will wind up proving who you really are. I do not say this

much, but I watch everything with people because people are my job, people are my business. Give it long enough, including myself, and we will all prove who we really are. That is just a fact of life like the sun is going to come up in the morning. Give it enough time. I do not care where you say you are at, and I am glad you are where you say you are at. Praise the Lord. But I am telling you this, the jury is still out. Most of you have a long way to go in life. The real proof of where you are at with the Lord will prove itself out in time. It always does. I have known people who I thought had it all together, were the greatest people in the world, and here, you know, 10 years down the line, where are they? I have seen some that I thought were absolutely worthless that at some point God got a hold of them. They are doing the job today. You see, when nobody else tells, time will tell.

He says, "Try my reins and my heart." I have told you before, reins are what you guide a horse with. It's which way you are going to go in life. God will try you with that.

➤ 3.) Trust in the Lord

*Psalms 26:1. Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: **I have trusted also in the LORD; [therefore] I shall not slide.***

Then the third thing, also in verse 1, "I have trusted also in the LORD; [therefore] I shall not slide." Now here we find a word that we use a lot in Christianity today. You need to know it's okay to use it, but it is never used in a New Testament context. He says, "I shall not slide." That is backsliding or sliding backwards. It is found in Jeremiah 3:11, dealing with the nation of Israel. You never find that phrase given to the church, but we sure all do it enough. The key will be trust. I do not care what relationship you claim to have, want to have, hope to have, pray to have with the Lord or anybody else. **If you do not have trust, you do not have a relationship.** Especially when it comes to the Lord. In ministry, the people must trust the pastor. But the pastor must be able to trust his people because he is going to give them his life's ministry. That trust will always come back to our trusting in the word of God together and allowing it to prove who we really are.

A couple of Thursdays ago, we talked out of I Samuel chapter 3, and I talked about a sure house. Building a sure house when it comes to your relationship with God will produce a sure people. A sure pastor who will give you the sure truth, and then a sure people who will do what is right with that truth through a sure ministry. I guess you could say in any church you would find two kinds of Christians: those you are not too sure of and those that you are sure of. I will tell you right now, the job of the pastor is to build as many of the second ones as you can. Giving people the truth, letting that truth build a sure house, and then allowing them through God revealing Himself to them to prove all things. *That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

➤ 4.) Never Take your Eyes off the Lord or His Lovingkindness

Psalms 26:3. For thy lovingkindness [is] before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.

Then verse 3, the fourth thing. "For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth." Last week we talked about eyes upon the Lord forever. We talked about the singleness of the eye being focused on the Lord. Again, never taking your eyes off, but I want you to notice here. **Never taking your eyes off not just the Lord, but His lovingkindness that is before my eyes.**

I would like to ask a question. I am not looking for an answer, but it is a question that we need to think about. How do you get to the place in life, if you are truly saved, where you actually think the devil or the world will take care of you better than God will? If you are really saved, and I am not saying anybody is not, but what I am saying, if you are truly saved, how with all the lovingkindness, do you actually think the devil or the world is going to take care of you better than God will and His Word? How can you get to the point where you think being in a bar is better than being in church? I do not necessarily need an answer; I am pondering the question. If it is real and you are truly saved, how did you get to the mindset that a bar stool is better than a church pew?

I have had people in my church over the years with terrible problems with gambling. They will show up for church for two or three, four weeks, and then Sunday morning they are worshipping at the boats. They are gambling again. I look at that, and I know we are all flesh; I understand that. I am not arguing with any of it, I am just asking the question. If you have really tasted the lovingkindness of God, how in the world do you trade that? I do not have an answer for that. But it happens.

➤ People Rarely Forget How You Make Them Feel

You know in ministry, I think one of the great keys to people is one simple little thing. I have followed this all my ministry. This is not a criticism; this is just an observation of 50 plus years. People will forget what you do for them. People forget what you say to them. People will forget what you give them. They will forget what you teach them. They will forget what you preach to them. But what I have learned, they may forget all of those things, but very rarely will anybody ever forget how you make them feel. The importance of making somebody feel special, because they are. The importance of seeing a Christian the way God sees them; how special they are to Him. Why would they not be special to me? Why would you not want to do everything to help them be better? Making them feel special because they are.

I will tell you right now, you husbands, that is the biggest mistake you make with your wife. You do not make her feel special. There is no lovingkindness in that specialness. Most husbands never learn that through their life, and they wonder why they have problems in their marriages because they never understand. Oh, they will take God's lovingkindness, but they will never give it to their wife, or the wife to the husband. But it starts with the husband. Lovingkindness is the key to it all, man. I am just telling you. That is what God does for me. That is how He makes me feel—special. Not just special because it is Jesus, lover of my soul, but it is Jesus and His

lovingkindness toward me. If we can take that lovingkindness from Him, why can't we give it to each other?

Hey, and I am far from perfect. If I told you who I really was this morning, you would all get up and leave. But if you told me who you really were, I would be out of here, too. We are all a mess. But you know what? I am not stupid either. I know the world will never leave you any better than it finds you. I know that this world will try to destroy everything it can in your life. We can never trade His lovingkindness for something in the world. You think getting high on alcohol can beat getting high on winning somebody to Christ? You think getting high on drugs can supersede the feeling you have when God of this universe reaches down and picks you up and uses you? You do not know what high is, baby.

You see, time will prove who we are by the stupid things we say and the stupid mindset that we get on anything out there. There is no perfect church. There is no perfect pastor. But there is a perfect lovingkindness.

➤ 5.) Separate from Evil Company

Then the fifth thing. Separate from evil company. Verses 4 and 5, and then verses 9 and 10.

Psalms 26:4-5. I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. 5. I have hated the congregation of evildoers; and will not sit with the wicked.

Psalms 26:9-10. Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men: 10. In whose hands [is] mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.

Now, here we find one of the fundamental aspects of the Christian life. It deals with our survival. This one will dismantle your sure house piece by piece. It is simply the people you associate with after salvation. In the Bible, this is called **the doctrine of sanctification**. That means that when God saved you, He separated you from the world. That means that there are some people that you must put out of your life. You have heard me say this many, many times out of Psalms 1:1-2.

*Psalms 1:1-2. Blessed [is] the man that **walketh** not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor **standeth** in the way of sinners, nor **sitteth** in the seat of the scornful.*

2. But his delight [is] in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Notice the process. First, you start walking away from God. You are walking with the people now who are giving you bad counsel, the ungodly. You are listening to them now instead of the preaching of the word of God. It is a process—now you are not just walking with them. Notice it. "Standeth in the way of sinners." You are no longer in God's way. Now you are in the way of sinners. It is just a hop, skip, and a jump to the next one. Now you are "sitting in the seat of the scornful." You have completed the spiral downward. You started walking away from God, standing with the sinners, and now you are seated with the scornful. You are scornful about the things of God now just like they are. In the Bible, there is a process to be established in a church. It's in I Samuel; we looked at. But you also have a process for leaving God's church. That will be the people you associate with.

*2 Corinthians 6:14-17. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what **fellowship** hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what **communion** hath light with darkness?*

*15. And what **concord** (that's togetherness) hath Christ with Belial (that's the devil)? or what **part** hath he that believeth with an infidel?*

*16. And what **agreement** (can two walk together, except they be agreed?) hath the temple of God (that's your house; it should be a sure house) with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

17. Wherefore (because of what he just said) come out from them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you.

Notice the five things there. One—fellowship; fellowship hath righteousness. And then the second one—communion. And then the third one—concord. And then the fourth one—part. And then the fifth one—agreement.

In Psalms 26, your first key word is in verses 4-5—sat/sit. Your second key word is in verse 4. "Neither will I go in with dissemblers." Oh, I love that word. Those are the people in your life that you should not associate with, that while you are trying to build a sure house, they will disassemble everything you are trying to build. The real word is hitchhiked off the word dismember. Cutting your arms off, cutting your legs off, dismembering somebody. In the context here, it is getting you out of church. Dismembering you from the body of Christ, the meeting together for the preaching of the word of God. You get dismembered. As you try to grow, you will find they will take away everything that God will do in your life. This is why some people get excited, they get saved, they are on fire for a while, and then they quit growing. Something will come into their life. They usually blame it on the church or somebody else, but at the end of the day, come on. We all make our own choices.

I had a gal one time say, "Well, you said this, this, and this, and I am not coming back anymore, and I am just going to find another church." You know what the truth was? She never found another church. Today, as I speak, she doesn't go to any church. You know what the problem was? It was not me. It was the fact that she did not want to come to church anymore. Any church. I said, "That is good. I only hope you do more there than you did in this one." She did not like that either. I did. I thought it was quite snappy on my part. But these people will be found in Proverbs 6:16—the six things that God hates. You know what the seventh one is? It makes it an abomination: sowing discord among the brethren. You know what that does? That dismembers people. Most churches do not get destroyed by the outside world, but they get destroyed by the people in the church who dismember and tear apart everything that God is doing.

➤ 6.) Wash Yourself Daily in the Word

*Proverbs 26:6. I will **wash** mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:*

The sixth thing, verse 6. "I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD." Wash yourself daily. Martin Luther said, "Keep short accounts with God."

John 15:3 says, *now ye are **clean through the word** which I have spoken unto you.* God's Word will cleanse us from our sin, not only at the time of salvation, but 1 John 1:8 says, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.* **There is sin in our daily lives after we get saved.** It may be paid for, but it is the flesh that comes in that tries to stop us and dismember us, and that is why we have to stay clean. **Not only will it cleanse you from your sin at salvation, but it will cleanse you daily from your sin as a Christian to keep your fellowship.** First John chapter 1, verses 5 through 9 makes it absolutely clear that we have to cleanse ourselves daily to keep that fellowship.

➤ We Have to Cleanse Ourselves Daily to Keep Our Fellowship

*1 John 1:5-9. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that **God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.***

6. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

*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.***

8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

*9. **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***

Now that does a lot for people who say to me, I say, "How are you doing with the Lord?" "Well, I am not really in with the Lord. I am not really out. I am just kind of..." That does not exist. It says here in 1 John 1:5, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." You cannot have a little bit of God's light and a little bit of the world's darkness in your life. You cannot do that. You are in the funhouse, man, looking into the mirror, making your head look fat.

Most people do not see the connection between John's writings. In the Gospel of John, we are told in John chapter 20, verse 31 that the Gospel of John was written for men to be saved. Now, when we get into our Bible conference, and he is still deciding exactly what language we are going to do, but we are assembling 40,000 copies this year of John and Romans. You know why they do John and Romans? Because the book of John will show you how to be saved, and the book of Romans will show you what God did in your life after you are saved. So they pass out those two books. **You see, the Gospel of John was written to show you how to be saved. But the book of 1 John was written to keep us clean and in fellowship and growing after we get saved.** Kind of put the two of them together.

➤ 7.) Love the Habitation of God's House

*Psalms 26:8. LORD, I have loved the **habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.***

This one will be loving the assembly with the saints. This will be the love of going to church, being with people, fellowshiping with people, hearing the preaching of the word of God. Notice

it says, "the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." You know where that is? It is in the body of Christ.

➤ The Building is not the Church

Now, I have said this before, you understand that the church building here, this building we have, there is nothing special about it. I know we have stained glass windows, but if you think there is anything holy about this building... There is a guy who I have known for a long time. He is one of the biggest spiritual Pharisees that you have ever met in your life. He is always going to church or someplace, and then he picks apart how this is not spiritual or that is not spiritual. He came here a long time ago, at our other place. He saw the lines on the floor where the high school kids play four square. He thought that in God's house, you should not play four square. We had ping pong tables set up down there. In God's house, you should not have ping pong tables. We used to show movies down there, and God forbid, you should not show a movie in God's house. He went through this whole list of things, and he says, "What do you think?" I said, "I agree 100%." He said, "Well, you do?" I say, "Yeah, that is why we show all that stuff in this building. Because this building is not the church." He did not like movies. Boy! He'd die with the one we have downstairs. You know when the pastor of this church that we bought it from moved his church out of here, you know where he went to start a church? A movie theater. See that thing? Self-righteous people are unbelievable.

Now, before we were here, we were at the Apple Center. Remember that? Some of you were there. You know what that Apple Center was before we turned it into a place for us to meet? It was a warehouse. It was an old car collection. It was a flea market. Upstairs where we had our kids; they had weddings. They had beer kegs stashed back there. Before that, we were down at the Pavilion right down the road. They had all the beer kegs locked up there. We only had it on Sunday morning and Thursday night. They had all kinds of drunken parties there. So, do you see? This guy was absolutely stupid. You know what I found out later? I bumped into him one time, and he was having a cigarette. I said to him, "You know what? I am just going to say something to you, and then I am done. Do not come to my church anymore. Do not call me. If your dog dies, tell somebody else. I do not care. You came into my church, and you went on and on and on about how this building was the church when it is not. How we shouldn't do this and how we shouldn't do that because it is the house of God when it is not. But your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and you think it is okay to put cigarettes and unholy smoke in your temple. And you are okay with that?" Hey, look, folks. The only people who have smoke in their lungs are people in hell. Not God's people. But oh, we were wrong because we did all this.

➤ What Makes This Place Special is You

You know what makes this place special? You know what makes it holy? You know what the habitation and the praise is? It's you. Your temple. Your sure houses in this building, no matter where we meet. What makes this place special is the body of Christ. You. Not the building. It is the fact that every one of your bodies is the temple.

You know what Jesus said one time? He said a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. If you ever drove through the desert someplace coming into the city, and the city was higher up, you would

see all the lights on. That is what a church ought to be. This world is in darkness. People are on a dark highway, and they need to see a city on a hill. You know what this congregation is? Every one of you is a house of God. Every one of you is a building and a temple. We get 150, 200 of you, and you all have your lights turned on... You are a city on a hill with the lights on, and people see it. Not the building. You. It is you.

Hebrews 10:25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

That is what this is all about. You think this building exhorts you? Well, when the toilet backs up in the ladies' restroom, and they have AJ fix it, there is no exhortation in that. We had a critter up in the ceiling during Bible study a couple of months ago, and he was gnawing on something up there, and the ceiling was falling on people's heads. You think that is edification? We edify each other. It is us. It is you and me. We give this place warmth. We give this place light. This is where God's honor dwells. Not in this building, but in each one of you.

Now, when you let the dissemblers into your life, they will dismantle three key things in your life. Now you are sitting, Psalms 1, just like the scorners, and you are complaining about what you do not like in your church. Because they destroy in you:

- Your love for God.
- Your love for His Word.
- Your love for the assembling of yourself together.

That is why they are not in church this morning. They actually think that something else out there can take the place of being in a local assembly and hearing the preaching of the word of God. I do not mean this in any other way, but how I mean it. I love being with other believers. I not only love preaching to them, I love being with them. Your little kids have birthdays, unless I am out of town, I am there. Whatever you are doing, I want to be part of because you are special. It's just that simple. It is a thing where if I can make it, I am going to be there because that is where the love and the warmth is for the body of believers.

I am a people person. People are my life. People are the ministry. I am just telling you, I love being in church. I love listening to good preachers. I love being preached to. Now, once I preach it, I never listen to my sermons again. I do not go online to listen to myself. Believe me, putting it together once is enough. But I can tell you this, and my wife knows this is true and it is true of her too, unless I was sick or out of town, I never missed going to church. There was nothing that could take that place. Somebody would say, "Why don't you come and go to my church, and I will go to yours." No thanks. I do not care what is over there. If you want the truth, come here. I am not bargaining with you on church. I am not missing one time with the assembly of the saints together, where God's honor dwelleth.

Assembling yourselves together as a church body by God's design will do five things for you.

- It will give you and your family the salvation that God has for you.
- It will equip you and train you.
- Through that, God will reveal Himself to you.
- God's protection of you through the church that nobody can hurt you because this is a safe house.
- God uses you in ministry.

Now he says there, *and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching*. I wish I had time today to explain the end of Hebrews 10:25 for you. Wow! That thing is loaded for where we are at today, but I do not have the time to do it this morning.

➤ 8.) Witness Publicly

*Psalms 26:7. That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and **tell of all thy wondrous works.***

Then we should witness publicly. The end result of all God does for us will be a means to an end. Telling a lost world.

➤ A Tale that is Told

I do not know if you know it or not, but Psalms chapter 90, verse 9 says,

*Psalms 90:9. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years **as a tale [that is told].***

You are a book. You know what Paul said to the church at Corinth? He says in 2 Corinthians 3:2, *Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men*. Every one of you, if you are saved, every one of us, if we are saved, we are an autobiography of what God has done in our life. I mean, it is just that simple. Your life is a published book to a lost world through your changed life with the voice of thanksgiving. **Telling them not what God will do for them**. How easy that is but rather **telling them what God has done for you**. Us becoming a book of a living sacrifice that is published. Then he says, "and tell of all thy wondrous works."

You know, the Bible is filled with accounts of how God changed people's lives through His salvation and how they went on in their lives. Once their lives were changed, they published the great things that He did as a witness of His wondrous works. I think of Paul. Paul's early life before Acts 9 where he got saved, that he persecuted Christians. He delivered them up to the Roman Empire. He actually took saved people and put them into death camps to be killed by the Roman government. But there came a day that God met him on that road, and God changed his life. When you get farther on in Acts chapter 20, 21, and those places in there when he goes before the kings of Rome and Agrippa and all those, you know what he does? He tells them what he once was, but now because of God's wondrous works, what he is today.

I think we talked about this a couple of weeks ago on a Thursday night: the maniac of Gadara. Out of his mind and demon possessed, he met Jesus and in his right mind, he wants to go and tell everybody what he once was. He wants to publish what he now is. How about blind Bartimaeus? Sitting by the road with people dropping little coins in his cup. He hears a crowd coming. Somebody says, "Jesus is coming." Oh, he had heard about Jesus. He got close and he cries out, "Jesus, thou Son of David. Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Jesus stopped right in front of him. He says, "What do you want, son?" He says, "Oh, Lord, oh, Lord, that I might see." Jesus said, "Well, you can see, just open your eyes." He opened his eyes, and he saw birds fly, trees, little kids running. The rest of his life, he published those wondrous works of God that "I once was blind, but now I see."

How about the woman with an issue of blood? She is there, and the crowd is coming by, and she is so weak, she cannot get up. She just sees Him coming down there, and she reaches around a man's leg and just grabs the hem of His garment, and she is healed. Jesus says, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." I guarantee you that the rest of her life, she told them of what she once had and what she is now. A tale that is told. The epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men. People seeing the difference in our lives, and then us telling them of His wondrous work in our lives. A tale that is told. You know what? In our lives today, saved, born again, on your way to heaven, yet our lives are one or two things: a greatest love story ever told, or a horror story. Most of it is fiction. We go through our life. There is a tale that is told. What are we publishing to the lost world in our book?

➤ 9.) Stand on an Even Place

*Psalms 26:12. My foot **standeth in an even place**: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.*

This even place will be on solid rock. It is a sure place. It will be the balance of the Christian life. Staying even in a world that is uneven and upside down. *My foot*—your walk with God. You know, if you look through this thing in chapter 26, you find in verse 6, it says, "wash mine hands," and here in verse 12, "my foot standeth in an even place." You see, your hands are what you do things with, but your feet are where you go. Now the even place here is standing on the promises. The even thing here is your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. The even place here is the place that we take our stand. To be able to withstand and having done all to stand.

➤ Famous Last Stands in History

You have heard me say this before, but you cannot separate history from the Bible. Not only the history of what God has been doing, that is obviously there, but I look at men's lives down through history. Several years ago, I began to keep a notebook that all down through history, there have been some famous last stands. I love history. I learned so much. I probably have a hundred of them in there. But you know it was in 1836 that some Texans down on the border took a last stand at the Alamo. I have often thought, those were 200 men in that Alamo up against 3000 of Santa Anna's most prime troops. Yes, they held them off for a couple of days. But I have often thought that last night, that when Santa Anna raised the flag and blew the trumpet, that

tomorrow they would attack, and they would take no prisoners. I often thought about what went through those guys' minds. I often thought, did they second guess themselves? Was it really that important to hang that little adobe mission down there when they knew they were not going to be able to hold? It was their final stand.

I think of 1876, June the 25th. Custer's last stand with the Little Bighorn. He did some foolish things tactically. He split up his group into three groups and only had 211 of men. On the Little Bighorn there, he is attacked by 3000 Indians. It has become known as Custer's last stand. I think of the Battle of Gettysburg. A saved man, Colonel Jacob Chamberlain, at Little Round Top, as the Confederates were trying to break the flank of the Union Army and would have swept across and probably would have won the battle. Out of ammunition, tired after hours and hours of holding them off, he made a last stand: fixed bayonets. He held that Little Round Top. I think in 1942, the Battle of Stalingrad, most of you kids do not even know anything about Stalingrad. There was one of the most desperate battles, forget that it was Germans versus the Americans or the Russians, it was men. The German 6th Army trapped in Stalingrad. Cut off, completely surrounded. Lost over 200,000 men, and when they finally surrendered. In the middle of winter, no food, no ammunition, no medical. When they finally surrendered, 90,000 German soldiers of the 6th German Army marched into captivity. 10 years later, out of that 90,000, 5,000 came home. The rest died.

I think 1941. A movie I want to show you at some point. About the Marine Corps stand on Wake Island. You know the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7th. In the next several days, they attacked everything in the Pacific. They attacked Midway. They attacked Guadalcanal. They attacked Wake Island. Wake Island was just a little atoll about 1,600 miles from Hawaii. It was garrisoned with about 450 Marines. It was a way station for the Pan Am Clipper that was flying Trans-Pacific to land and refuel, people to rest and then go on. The Japanese attacked it. The Japanese had an attack naval force of over 5,000 Japanese soldiers. 450 Marines held them off in a last stand effort for 16 days. It was the greatest morale booster. I have seen newspapers, even owned it once. Across the New York Times. "Wake still holds." The Japanese wave after wave after wave. Finally, they fell. About 250 of them were prisoners, kept on the island. Now when the Japanese were going to lose the war, they marched all those American captains down to a little cove in the beach, and they executed every one of them. Their last stand.

I was in the Philippines a number of years ago, and I always wanted to go to Corregidor and Bataan. One of the last stands as the Japanese moved into the Philippine islands. The Americans kept retreating, and finally they were bottled up on the island of Corregidor in a little peninsula of Bataan in 1941. They held out, no food. They killed their own horses to eat. I remember walking back into those tunnels on Corregidor. Where back there all the wounded were, and those tunnels just went back in the dark. I could hear the cries and hear the footsteps of what must have taken place. Bataan and Corregidor fell. All of those men, most of them out of the 24th Infantry Division. Battered. Wounded. Starved. Were marched 60 some miles into captivity, what has become known as the Bataan death march. If you fell out, you got bayoneted. If you tried to run, they shot you. It was their last stand. I have learned a lot from that. The courage of men that faced incredible odds that did not survive.

V. Summary

I am here to tell you today, do not stop building that temple. Do not go in with the dissemblers; do not trade what God has given you for a bar stool, a seat at the boats or at the casino slot machine. Because my dear friend, you and I in this little church, along with a lot of other little guys out there in our churches, this is our last stand. This is our Wake Island. This is our Stalingrad. This is our Bataan. This is our Alamo. It is our last stand to hold the ground and stay solid on even ground and take our stand to publish the truth of God.

Now here is the difference. In all those last stands I gave you, there was no hope. There was no hope for the Alamo. There was no hope for the Little Bighorn. There was no hope for the Battle of Gettysburg. There was no hope for Stalingrad. There was no hope for Wake Island. There was no hope for Bataan and Corregidor. **But we have the hope that is coming for us.** We just have to stand fast in our final stand. I do not care what anybody else believes, what they think about the Bible or do not think about the Bible. Whether they like us or they do not like us. God has called us to stand. In His lovingkindness to me, I cannot speak for you, I am not trading what He has given me for anything the world wants to give me. We as a church body, not a building. We in our time, we will make our final stand in a world without God and without truth. Some of God's people will make it. Some will not. But we will stand and having done all to stand by building a sure house that will be a sure church that will establish a sure ministry.