

*"No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid,
which is Jesus Christ" – 1 Corinthians 3:11*



Christian **FOUNDATIONS** **Dr. Lester Sumrall**

CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS

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Dr. Lester Sumrall

All Scriptures are taken from the
King James Version of the Holy Bible.

Audio and videotapes are available
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First Printing: September 2006

Christian Foundations
ISBN No. 1-58568-437-6

Sumrall Publishing
P. O. Box 12
South Bend, Indiana 46624
www.sumrallpublishing.com

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Chapter 1

Why We Believe The Bible is the Word of God

We believe that the Bible is not just another book, especially a book of errors. Instead, we believe it is *the* Book--the Book of God, the Word of God. Beginning in Second Timothy 3:14 it says, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God."

Every writing in this Bible is given by the inspiration of God. Look at it closely. This Scripture, this Book, is profitable for doctrine (explaining to you what you should believe), for reproof (showing you how to handle problems with people and with yourself), and for reproof (correcting mistakes in your life). People say, "I have a revelation, I have a revelation!" But if it isn't according to the Word of God, you'd better correct it. And there are a lot of specialists going around today prophesying over people. Most of it is nonsense. God is a gentleman, and if He's got something for you, He'll tell you. He won't tell your neighbor.

The text continues by stating that the Bible is “good for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (verse 16). Paul’s speaking about the preacher, the man that’s out front, the man that’s leading the people. Preachers ought to read that, shouldn’t they?

We read in Psalm 119:97, “O how I love Thy law [that’s the Word]; it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies.” Brother, if you’ll study the Word of God, you’ll be the wisest man in town. Then the Psalmist said, “For they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth” (verses 98, 99, 103). To some of us the Word of God is kind of bitter, and that fact shows us where we live. You have to keep eating it until it gets sweet!

When I was a boy, most of the great pulpits of America had men in them that did not believe the Bible was the inspired Word of God. They said the Bible was fragmented, that it had been translated so many times that only God knew what was actually true. They said it was even lost at times. Then God brought to light the Dead Sea scrolls! These scrolls went back 200 years before the days of Jesus. They were hidden in a cave so dry they hadn’t even gotten damp. And the one book of the Old Testament that was intact completely was the one that ever critic tried to knock to pieces--Isaiah. These old scrolls confirmed everything we already had in our possession. Actually, the scholars discovered that the King James version of the Bible was 98 percent like the ancient texts they pulled out of the jar. Those infidels have now died and gone to their own place, like Judas did, and the people today know the Bible is true. Everybody knows it’s true. We believe in the wonderful Word of God.

How We Got Our Bible

The Christian reads directly from the Word of God, and here he finds a seeking of God desiring to share with him that he may find the way of truth and salvation. This is because God gave The Holy Bible to us for the purpose of leading people to heaven. The Bible is what God wants you to look at as a map to go to heaven by. You say, "How did we get the Bible?" The answer is found in Second Timothy 3:16. "All Scripture is given by inspiration from God." As every man wrote a part of the Bible, the Holy Ghost was surging through him at that moment.

How do they keep errors out of this book? In John 16:13 it says, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." The Spirit of Truth guided those prophets of old so they did not write erroneously, but they wrote as they were moved on by God. Peter said this in Second Peter 1:21. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Don't you love your Bible?!

When we were living in the Philippines a number of years ago, we had just started broadcasting into Russia from the Philippines and we were getting a few letters back. We had to study the letters because they didn't mean much in their initial reading. You see, the writers had to get these letters past the Communist spies who were reading all the letters going out of the country. So, they'd say things like this: "The poem that you just read on the radio is wonderful. I have written it all down." Naturally, the Communists thought the people were hearing poems on the radio. But what they would actually do is write down the whole Bible. They were telling us to keep reading those "poems."

Those poor people of Siberia didn't have a Bible, but they did have a shortwave radio. They picked up our signal coming in from the Philippines in Russian. They heard the Bible read to them, and as it was read, they would write it down. You cannot keep the Word of God out of a nation! Can you say "Amen?"

History of the Writing of the Bible

The Bible covers a period of 1,600 years, and it was written by forty different authors who came from all walks of life: some were kings, some were statesmen, prophets, and priests; some were fishermen, some were shepherds, some were laborers. Even though forty different personalities are evidenced in the writings, there are no contradictions from start to finish. Isaiah did not see Moses until he got to heaven, but their words flowed together.

Bible Inspiration Defined

First, let's consider what Bible inspiration is not. It is not human inspiration or ecstasy of the human mind. It is not human genius or ability. It is not a verbal dictation. Second, let's examine what Bible inspiration is. It's what we have already said in this lesson: it is a book that's from God. It is profitable for doctrine, for rebuke, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. The Bible is filled with the breath of God.

I can't tell you how the Bible got into my life. The day that I started out to preach, I had been in bed for five or six months with tuberculosis. I was so ill that I only weighed 63 pounds. I was just a little heap of bones with some skin on them. You could count my ribs. I spit up blood everyday, coughing it up into a pan. I was dying. But God healed me in one night! I went to bed, saw a vision from the Lord, and got healed. At that moment, I promised the Lord I'd

preach. Three weeks later, He said, “You promised you would preach. Do it!” I said “Yes, Lord.”

Being seventeen years of age, I thought I had to ask my father for permission. My father was a sinner. He cursed me violently. He was so angry at me, he would rather I be dead than be a preacher. I went to my room and fell on my face trembling like a kid. While lying there trembling, God said “Read Isaiah 41:10.” I didn’t know what this passage said, but I knew that God wanted to speak to me out of His Word. This is what it says: “Fear thou not; for I am with thee. Be not dismayed; for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” Do you want to know something? Over fifty years have passed since I got that word, and I haven’t had any fear. I’ve lived in perfect ease, perfect peace, and perfect joy. The Lord just went down inside of me and pulled that mess of fear out of me, and suddenly I wasn’t afraid of anybody. I laughed out loud.

From that moment on, God ruled my life through the Word. When he wanted me to be a missionary, He just opened the Word again. One verse is all I needed, then away I went. When I got to California and had only \$12 to go around the world on, He said John 15:16 is for you: “Ye have not chosen Me; I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit, fruit that will remain!” Woo! That’s the Word! I hope the Word has been like that to you.

Six or seven or eight times, in every emergency of my life, it wasn’t an angel that got my attention, it was the Word! When I had a gun to the back of my head for three hours in Tibet by a Chinese bandit walking along behind me, I thought every moment I’d die, I asked the Lord, “Have I come to Tibet to die?” And God said “No!” Then I said, “Tell that to the Chinese man, please!” He didn’t tell him

anything. Instead, He said, “You read Revelation 19:6.” I reached into my pocket, pulled out my New Testament, and read it. It says, “I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of mighty peals of thunder, saying, ‘Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.’” “Oh, You reigneth,” I said to the Lord. “If you reign, then the man behind me doesn’t reign over me.” I turned around, laughed in his face so hard he dropped his rifle. I put my finger to his nose and said, “Now, you tell me what you want.” He said, “We want money.” Well, we used to carry it in a big box because one American dollar is 2500 in Chinese dollars. I said to him, “Take an arm load of it; take all you want. Take the box if you want it.” Then he said, “We’re hungry.” We had another mule that carried food, so I told him to take all he wanted. Then I told him to stand aside! “We’re leaving,” I said. I got on my mule (we had seventeen mules in our caravan), and we rode away without a shot.

When we got to the village, the people asked us how we escaped. They told us that these bandits were killing everybody that passed by! “Well,” I said, “I had a Word from the Lord. He said He was reigning and if He’s reigning, then everything’s going to be all right.” That’s what I’m trying to show you about the Word of God. God’s Word is so forceful, so powerful, so glorious!

Proof that the Bible is the Word of God

Bible prophecies have been fulfilled in perfect and amazing detail, which prove the Bible’s inspiration. Some examples include the birth of Christ (which goes back to Genesis 3:15), the death of Christ (Isaiah 53:1-12) and the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 2:19). Another fulfilled prophecy is the giving of the Holy Spirit. This was prophesied in Joel 2:28 and fulfilled in Acts 2.

The Power of the Bible Breaks the Power of Sin

Romans 1:16 says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” The Word of God is a destroyer of sin. It’s a power. It’s a hammer. This Word is the power of God.

The Bible Cannot be Destroyed

In Matthew 5:18 Jesus said, “I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” This Word is so true that not one bit of it can ever pass away. A “jot” or “tittle” means a crossing of the “t,” the comma and the apostrophe. It is all going to come to pass, no matter how small it is! Everything the Word of God speaks about is going to come to pass. Therefore, we *must* know that we can depend on the Word of God. When I’m in trouble, brother, I just dig in the Word. It feeds my soul; it directs my life.

What the Bible Means to Lost Humanity

The Bible reveals the origin, the state, and the destiny of man. That’s thorough! Genesis 1:26 says, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” That’s the origin of man, the state of man, and the destiny of man—he is to have dominion.

The Bible reveals God’s provision for all men who come to repentance. John 3:16, the golden text of the Bible, says this: God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Second Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count

slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” That’s God’s provision for man. You can read that to any sinner in the world, and it works.

The Bible reveals the privileges of sonship in the Word. John 1:12 states, “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” So, you have power to become the sons of God.

The Bible also reveals that believers will share the glories in heaven. John 14:1-3 says, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Here is the destiny of the Christian.

Romans 8:17 says, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” It would be impossible for us to ever state the fullness of what the Bible means and what the Bible can do!

The Conversion of a Brazilian

There’s a preacher in Brazil that I visited when I was there. I asked him, “How did you get saved?” “Well,” he said, “I lived in a certain town, and in that town they had no Bible store. In fact, I had never seen a Bible my whole life. There was a big book in the Catholic church, but I didn’t think it was a Bible. Then, one day a salesman came to town. This salesman made a living selling Bibles. He would go from town to town selling Bibles. He’d buy them for forty cents, sell them for sixty, and make a living that way.”

“When he came to my town, he couldn’t sell a single Bible. Nobody would buy one. So, he gave a man a Bible. The man thanked him, but he didn’t know what it meant to have a Bible. When a priest noticed that the poor man had a Bible, he said, “So, this is something the Protestants left you; you can’t read that.” And he took the book, tore it in two, and threw it in the gutter. The man ran away, and the priest walked down the street.”

“Inside a little store nearby you could buy five cents worth of peas or five cents worth of beans or five cents worth of rice or you could buy just one tomato or just one onion for five cents. When the store owner saw all those pages from the Bible on the ground, he went out, picked it up and brought it inside. He thought he could use these pages to wrap some of his groceries. When you bought five cents of beans, he would wrap them in one of these sheets. He never read a word of it. And if you came back, then he would wrap your order in another sheet from the Bible.”

“The people began to read the stories on the pages. They thought it was very interesting. Soon, the grocery store owner had more business than usual. People actually stood in line to get another sheet from the Bible. Then, one day, he ran out of sheets, and his business stopped. Shortly after that, the people with the pages circulated a notice around town, asking, ‘What pages do you have from the Bible?’ Eventually, the people met, bringing their pages together. One person would read his page, while another would read from his page. That’s how I got saved, by hearing the reading of these pages from the Bible.”

Later, when the next missionary went through that town, there were over 300 of them still reading the pages. He had the trunk of his car loaded with Bibles, and he gave every family there a free Bible. They thought they had just gone to heaven! I personally was there for the water baptismal

service and saw those people immersed in water. They had stopped all of their idolatry. They had stopped all of their adultery, as well. They had read it in the Book, and had ceased to sin by reading the Book. The Bible is mighty! It is strong. It is a living Word! You don't have to protect the Bible. The Bible is a lion. Turn it loose. It will take care of itself!

Chapter 2

Triune Nature of the Universe

Part 1

If you're going to build a garage, you don't need much for a foundation. I've seen them just scratch a little dirt and pour a small amount of cement there to hold it up. But if you're going to build a skyscraper, you'd better be a great deal more careful than that. And if you're going to build a tower of knowledge about God, you will also need to dig deep and prepare a solid foundation.

Engraved with a Three

We're beginning by studying the triune nature of the universe. I presume there have been others who have taken an interest in such a study, but I have not heard of them or seen any material like this put together. But I think you will find that it is good to study how God put his universe together, then study the One that put it together.

In the book of Romans, chapter 1 verse 20, it says, "the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." God declares to us that the marvelous creation He has brought into existence conveys to us a message, and that

message is that only God's power could make the world. Therefore, we're without excuse if we deny God's existence or power.

Everything in the universe bears the marks of perfection. More than that, everything in the world is divinely engraved with a three, the number of divine perfection. They're stamped.

When you're dealing with God, you're dealing always with a three (the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit). You and I are positioned in a total universe of tripods. Wherever you look, you will not find units of two or four, but three. It is a world of triads, where three things make up ideas and make up truth and make up knowledge. You live in a world that is a triune world, and these three become one. That means we live in a tripartite world where three parties are always functioning together.

Time

Let us begin by saying time is something that's perfect. Notice that time is marked off by units of three, not four. We count time by past time, that means old time, time that's behind us, time that is toward eternity in the rear of us. Then we count future time. Future time is new time--not born as yet, time to look forward to. And in a further instance, you have present time. Present time is the uniting time because present time holds hands with yesterday and tomorrow. And so all of time is relevant to three positions--that which is past, that which is coming, and that which is.

Space

Now, this is also true with space. You and I occupy an area of space as a human person. The total calculations of space are three. There is longitude--when you reach out. There is latitude--when you reach for breadth. And there is

altitude--when you reach for height. And whether you're talking about one mile or a trillion miles, you still have the longitude, the latitude, and the altitude, because all space can be incorporated into three--not four, and not two.

We wish to present this truth so strongly, until you will never be able to doubt that when God created the total of the universe, not just our world that we live in, that He indelibly printed upon it the number three.

Matter

We look at matter. For example water is composed of three elements: H_2O . There are two units of hydrogen and one unit of oxygen--that threefold combination makes water. Water is also three in another way. Water is a liquid that you drink. And water is a solid that you call ice. And water is a vapor that you call steam. There are three ways that water can function. And in these three ways, it becomes the total perfection of the Most High God.

Trees

Consider the common tree. In the tree you have a bark on the outside as the covering, as a cloak. Then, you have a pulp which is the inside of the tree. Finally, you have a sap on the inside. These three become one. The tree cannot be healthy, it cannot live, if you remove one of these aspects. If you take all the bark off of it, it will die. If you take all the pulp out of it, it will fall down. If you remove the precious fluid from it called sap, it will perish. But when these three come together, we see a beautiful trinity of perfection.

Atoms

The atom that you hear so much about in science is also made up of three. You have the proton which is your positive charge. You have the electron which is your negative charge.

And you have your neutron which is the uncommitted one. And in the combining of these three items you have the atom. This is so important that there can be no universe without all three flowing in relationship with one another.

Now, as I said, we are laying down a foundation for some tremendous truth, and I can't think of any greater truth than the one that we're going to explain about the nature of the spirit, the soul, and the body of a man in relation to travel.

Travel

Man first traveled in his lowest form in his body. He traveled on foot, he traveled by animal. It was a body travel.

Later, man traveled by the invention of his soul. A man can travel on foot without very much intelligence. But when a man begins to travel through the invention of his soul, then he needs a boat, he needs a wagon, he needs a car. Because in his soulful parts he has the masterpiece of his mind functioning with him. But he is still earthbound in his soulful parts.

Today, modern man has contrived and been a success in causing man to travel by his spirit in the air where he has no effort on his part in moving. So he moves into outer space. He moves farther than he can even comprehend because he has moved now to the spirit, and the spirit of man has no end. The spirit of man is this least developed part of humanity, and we must get to that one day. We must bore into it one day. But until we begin to develop the spirit of man, we can never know the true potential of man.

The primitive people of Africa, of India, of South America, and elsewhere all know there's something beyond the foot of traveling, of the making of an automobile and running it on rubber. They know that somewhere there's a world that they haven't moved into yet, and you and I know the same because God has put that knowledge within us.

The devil's group, called spiritists and demon worshippers, have developed in their spirit world quicker than the people in our generation, including the people that know God! I was talking to a person just the other day who had just been to the mission and I said, "Isn't it amazing that the people out there that we think are ignorant actually know so much more about the spirit world than we do, and we think we're educated!" That's because they have spent more time developing that area. The time has come for us to know man in his spirit world! There's potential there! It's like contrasting a Boeing 747 up in the sky at 600 miles an hour with riding a donkey at two miles an hour. There's a huge difference there. And if man ever learns to move by his spirit, he will move into an area far beyond what he and his father and his grandfather or anyone else has ever moved in.

Satan Tempts Eve

Now Satan, when he appealed to Eve to tempt her and to destroy her relationship with the Most High, he used the three factors of her total being in order to destroy her. In Genesis 3:1 it says, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, 'Yea, hath God said, "Ye shall not eat of every tree . . .'"

He knew exactly what God had said. He was always a deceiver. This was Satan's first appeal, and it was to eat of the tree of the garden. It was her appetite. He did not appeal to her spirit life first. He did not say curse God and die. No, no, no. If he had done that, she would have run. But he didn't say that. He said, "Now, if you will look upon this tree, if you will taste of the fruit of this tree . . ." He is telling Eve to look at this tree! He got her appetite moving.

We have discovered in movie theaters that the subliminal mind can be reached without showing an advertisement about

popcorn. Instead, in far less than a second a mere image of popcorn can be presented while a movie is being shown, and your subliminal mind actually captures this image. Then, when there is a break for about ten minutes, you rush out to buy popcorn.

There is something on the inside of you that can be appealed to which the ear and the eye does not detect. You are more than ears and eyes. But when the devil seeks to hurt you and me or Eve or anyone else, he begins with your weakest point, and your weakest point happens to be your body. It is everybody's body. And so the devil appealed to Eve first through the desires of her body. He says, "Look at this fruit. Doesn't it look good?" He appealed to her appetite.

In Genesis 3:4, the serpent said unto the woman, "Ye shall not surely die!" This is an appeal to the soul of this woman, not to her appetite. He was now appealing to her reason. He was appealing to her thinking qualities-- "Come on, think it through. It's not going happen to you." He was appealing to her willpower and breaking it down.

In Genesis 3:5 it says, "For God doth know [he's accusing God now] that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." In this appeal he was shooting straight for her spirit. The Bible says in Isaiah that Satan says, "I will exalt my throne. I will exalt it above the stars of God. I will be like the Most High." And that's the reason he was dismissed from heaven. That was the reason God threw him out of heaven. It was the rebellion that he caused. Now, he was appealing to Eve in the same way. He's was telling her God knows in the day that you will be eating this that your eyes are going be opened and you'll be a god.

It was this very thing that caused him his own problem . . . this desire to be a god. The devil has always had one

problem--the desire to sit on a throne. Even when he possesses a person, he sits on the throne of the mind to direct and rule this individual. That is his point of strength--the human mind. He appealed to this woman through her spirit, her soul, and her body. But her body was first.

Eve Responds to Satan

In Genesis 3:6 it says, “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food . . .” Her physical part surrendered first. She surrendered because of her appetite. She wanted the fruit so badly; she couldn’t stand it.

Ladies, have you ever seen a man walk through the kitchen when you have just finished putting the topping on the cake? Where does his finger go? It goes right into the pan of frosting. And he gets about 400 calories the first lick. You see? That’s appetite. As long as he was cutting wood, he wasn’t bothered. It was passing through that kitchen that was his problem. And that’s the way she was caught, you see. The devil said, “Look and see this thing! It is good for food.” And she surrendered right there to her appetite.

In Genesis 3:6 it says that this fruit was present to the eyes. The eyes are the windows of your soul. Eve’s mind had reasoned out the matter, her emotions had accepted it, and her willpower had determined to do it. So it took all three portions of her total personality to bring a rebellion against God.

You’re the same. In order to rebel against God, it has to be a body, a soul, and a spirit deal. You have to come against him three ways in order to backslide successfully. It takes the three parts of your human nature in order to backslide.

In order to show you that the whole universe is related to threes, you’ve seen humans, you’ve seen trees, you’ve seen water, you’ve seen time, and so. Now, let’s look at it in the Word of God.

Three Lights in the Temple

There were three kinds of light in the tabernacle. Worship of God is the same from Genesis through Revelation. It's only manifested in different ways. For example, when the people of Israel became God's own dear little ones, He taught them that there were three kinds of light. This is seen in the tabernacle. The sun that we see in the sky everyday lit the outer court. This was like the body, open to the elements of rain and snow and sunshine. The sun lit the outer court.

In the holy place this room was lit by the lampstand. This refers to the soul; it is lit by the mind and emotions and the will. And so the holy place was lit by a man-made lampstand, not the sun. There was no outer light there. It was an inside light, and so that speaks to us of a light that comes forth from our inner person, from our mind and from our emotions and from our will.

Then, there is the holy of holies. It was lit by the Shekinah—the glory of God himself. The tabernacle was constructed in three parts, as was the subsequent Temple. There was an outer court, an inner court, and the holy of holies. So, when you came into the holy of holies, it was not lit by a lampstand. It was not lit by the sun in the heavens. Instead, it was lit by a peculiar and strange phenomenon called Shekinah--the presence of the Most High. There was a light there that could not be defined. There was a fire there that would not consume anything. It was so particular! It was so amazing! Only one human was permitted to see it, and he could only see it one time a year.

If you let any blessing of God get too familiar with you, you will lose the strength of it. For instance, you can let the gifts of the Spirit become so familiar to you that you don't want to go to church to see them operate, you know, you already saw them in operation last night. Listen, you must have an eternal fascination for the things of God!

In your worship you can move from the outer court to the inner court to the holy of holies. In your prayer life you can move from the outer court to the inner court to the holy of holies.

Everything God does is in a three! And He doesn't do anything without a three! And when the people of Israel had their first place of worship, it had three units. It had a light from the outside--the sun. It had a light from the inside--the oil that was in the lamp stand. And it had another light--the Shekinah presence of God.

Peter and the Fish with a Coin

We can also take this study of the number three into some very mundane places. For example, there's Peter who found a fish that had a coin in its mouth. We read in Matthew 17:27 that Jesus had a special revelation that a certain fish in the water (there might have been a million fish in the water) had a coin in its mouth! And it was not a counterfeit, it was a good coin. It was a Caesar coin, and that was the kind they used in the marketplace. So, in this story we see the three parts of spirit, soul and body.

In the area of the spirit you have a revelation coming from Jesus. Then, you have the soulical part when Peter accepted his instructions. He went to the water with a line, with a hook, and with the bait. That means thinking. That means someone that has ability to say things, to do things, to look for things. And so here we find his mind and his emotions and his will are all involved. Then, Peter's body took over. He lumbered over to the water, and the Lord told him just where to sit down for a minute, and he caught the physical fish with a material coin in his mouth and went and paid the taxes for the two of them. Now you can see the three operations. Whenever there is a miracle, there has to be three parts in order for it to be a bonafide miracle: spirit, soul and body.

The Trinity of Salvation

Let's look at our salvation. All salvation, from the beginning of mankind until this day, is always in three parts. In First John 5:8 it says, "And there are three that bear witness on earth--the Spirit, the water, and the blood --and these three are one." All of your salvation is in that statement.

For example, Israel was in Egypt, and she had to be saved from Egypt. How could she be saved? The same way you're saved: by blood. If the blood was not upon the doorpost, the firstborn would die! But if the blood was there, the judgment would pass over the house. Then, in order to leave Egypt, the Jews had to pass through the Red Sea--this is the water part of their salvation. However, they still weren't in the Promised Land. There had to be the cloud of God's glory which overshadowed them, guiding them and leading them, or they still would not get to their destination.

And so you have the blood, the water, and the Spirit. Therefore, in order for God to get the children of Israel out of bondage and into the place of promise, He had to do three things--blood, water, and spirit. Not four things, and not two things, but three things.

I wish to show all of us that we are indelibly stamped with the three.

Chapter 3

Triune Nature of the Universe

Part 2

We are studying Christian foundations. And I believe that when our foundations are strong, our spiritual life can be strong. There must be no weakness in our knowledge of God, in our knowledge of the Word, in our knowledge of how to use the Word of God to live victoriously. God wants every one of us to live victoriously.

We are asking God in these studies to reveal to us the triune nature of the universe that He created. We believe that the universe in which we live is made up of tripods and triads and tripartites and trinities. The more you look at it, the more amazed you are by the fact that everything God does is designed with a three within it. Therefore, if you want to know God, you'd better start looking for threes. And if you want to know truth, you must start looking for threes. You don't look for ones, you don't look for fours, but you look for threes.

We have revealed to you that in salvation there are three elements: the blood, the water, and the Spirit. We could go a little further than that if you like. On the day of Pentecost, after Peter had preached that masterful message in Jerusalem to the multitude that had come from all over the known

world, the audience asked, “What must we do to be saved?” And Peter said, “Repent.” That’s the blood, you see. These were the most religious people in the world! But Peter told them they must repent.

What was his next word to them? “Be baptized.” This is the water.

Then Peter said, “You shall receive the Holy Ghost.” This is the Spirit. Do you see it?

The three-factor does not deviate. God does not deal one way in the first part of the Bible and another way in the latter part of the Bible. What was three for them is three for us. How are you saved? Through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ applied to your life, and you are cleansed of your sins, and given a born again spirit experience so that your spirit comes alive within you. Then you go into the waters of baptism and you are immersed. In Romans chapter 6 it says they that are buried with Christ in baptism shall rise with him in resurrection. This reveals that on the inside of you, there has been a transformation. There has been a change. There’s been a revolution. And now, that which was dead is resurrected. And so we live the new life in Christ which is the resurrected life! And some people stop there, but you know, if you’re going study the whole thing you have to go the third step--spirit. And so you should say, “Hey, there is another step in God, and that is to move under the breath of His mighty Spirit.”

The Gifts of the Spirit

And that brings us to the gifts of the Spirit. Now if the gifts of the Spirit are perfect, they have to be celebrated by this thing that we call the trinity of the universe. The very heart of the church is made up of three plus three plus three, which means perfection plus perfection plus perfection. Therefore, there are nine gifts of the Spirit.

In first Corinthians chapter 12 verses 8 through 10, it says, “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another diverse kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.”

There are nine gifts, not three. But they’re in three categories. There are three gifts of revelation--the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, and the discerning of spirits. Then there are three gifts of power--the working of miracles, and the gift of faith, and the gifts of healing. Finally, there are three gifts of inspiration--the gift of prophecy, the gift of speaking in tongues in public, and the gift of the interpretation of tongues.

You see, they’re not four, they’re never four, and they’re never two! They’re always three. That puts the big stamp of God’s approval and blessing on the gifts of the Spirit. It means that they are absolutely full, complete and divine.

The Fruit of the Spirit

Next, you come to the fruit of the Spirit. And if you don’t mind, you can knock off that little “s” where it says fruits. It’s all the same fruit. All of these aspects are fruit of the Spirit and not fruits. The nine fruit of the Spirit reveal the perfection of three plus three plus three: love, joy, peace; long-suffering, gentleness, goodness; faith, meekness, and temperance. Again you have nine, and again you have them in three equal categories--three of them reaching up to God, three of them reaching out to your fellow man, and three of them coming inside to you. And so you have perfection inward, and perfection outward, and perfection upward.

The Ministries of the Church

You also have nine ministers of the church. Isn't that amazing? Here they are: apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, elders (which are bishops), deacons, helps, and governments. They are men and women who are given by Christ to the Church as a gift to the Church to minister in the Church. They are gifts of God.

In Ephesians 4:12 Paul says that these gifts are for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. So these ministries (three plus three plus three), are for the perfecting of the saints! They're not to hold their shoulders up and say, "Hey, I'm a big shot here. See me?" They're supposed to be working on the saints! They're for the perfecting of the saints, they are for the work of the ministry, they are for the edifying of the body of Christ. And when they function in that, then you've got a good, strong church. You see? If the total church functions properly in the Divine Trinity of God, then it functions properly and beautifully. To me this is a remarkable record of the number three.

The Day of Pentecost

Here's another example. On the Day of Pentecost we find the church assembled together in one accord in one place--that's the body. They were obedient to the will of the Lord who had told them to wait in Jerusalem--that's the soul. Their body and soul were in the city of Jerusalem for several days before they received the Holy Spirit. Then, suddenly, they had a visitation from the Holy Ghost who gave them strength and and power. None of them were the same again. I just wanted you to see that even in the receiving in the birth of the Church you have the functioning of three operations, dealing with three different things. That shows you that the birth of the Church was divinely perfect.

The Three Feasts of Israel

Now, let's look at the three feasts of Israel. What we're determined to show is that you can't find anything else in the Bible except this pattern of the number three. No matter where you look, you're not going to find anything else. And so whenever you're looking for something perfect, search for three.

The first of the three major spiritual events in a year for Israel was the Feast of Unleavened Bread (or the Passover). In Exodus 23:15 we read this: "Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread; thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty." What a glorious event this was, celebrating the period when God passed over homes and did not judge them if they had followed His directions of putting the blood of a lamb on their door frames. Through this act they were saved.

Then they have the Feast of First Fruits about fifty days later. In Exodus 23:16 we read, "And you must celebrate the feast of harvest, the first fruits of thy labors, which thou hast sown in the field." They were commanded to bring the first fruits of their crops to the Lord and to worship Him at a very joyful time of the year. We call it the feast of Pentecost; they call it the feast of the first fruits of their harvest.

Last, they had the great ingathering or what is called the Feast of Tabernacles. In Exodus 23:16 it says, "Celebrate the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field."

Israel was to come together three times a year to the holy city of Jerusalem to worship God. And these were the three feasts that kept Israel close to the heart of God. They would come and thank Him for their salvation, they would come and thank Him that they had begun a harvest, and they would

come back and thank Him that they had a great harvest. The following year they'd start over again. That practice will keep anybody saved. If you'll just come before God and thank Him for your salvation all the time, thank Him for the first fruits that you have planted that are coming up, and thank Him for the total big harvest at the end of the year, you're going to be a happy person.

The Three Desires of God

Now, let's consider the three desires of God. Third John has one little chapter, and verse 2 says, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospers." There is no prosperity in this world without a relationship with God. I was reading in our newspaper where Karl Marx, the father of Communism, presented his initial propaganda speech to a crowd of only three or four hundred people. By the time of his funeral there were just twenty-three people present. Worse yet, he only had two children, daughters, and they both committed suicide. What's wrong here? It's simple. The devil took hold of communism and he forced it down the hearts of people, and it's the biggest lie ever hatched out of hell. I want to tell you that every human ever born on the face of this earth is selfish; he is not a socialist by birth.

God has three desires concerning you. First, He desires that you prosper. That has to be spirit. He says, "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper." He was looking right straight through the spirit of the man. Second, He said, "be in health," which is the physical aspect of our being. And, thirdly He says He wants "your soul" to prosper.

God wishes that for every one of you! I believe in the prosperity of the human being, and I have studied poverty all over the world. And I have discovered that almost all poverty is related to sin. If you want to bless people, don't

start with bread. Start with Jesus. He'll get his own bread if he gets enough of Jesus inside of him.

We have seen now that the three desires of God for you is your spirit--that it be wholly great--and that your body will be healthy, and that your soul--your mind, your emotions, your will--shall be prospered. And that's not for one person or two people, or for one race and not another race. When God speaks, He talks for all of us. Can you say "Amen?"

The Ministry of Jesus

Here's the ministry of Christ: to preach the gospel to the poor (Lk. 4:18). This is not talking about economics. Anyone that hasn't heard of Jesus is poor. Any nation that hasn't heard of salvation is poor. Anyone who hasn't been born again is poor. The beginning of the riches of this earth and of the riches of the universe is the knowledge of God. That is, the beginning of all good things is the knowledge of God! Jesus proclaimed the truth to those who didn't know it --the poor. Additionally, Jesus was to heal the brokenhearted and bring deliverance to those captives in the soulical parts. He was to bring a recovery of sight to the blind and set at liberty them that are bruised in their bodily parts. And so the ministry of Jesus was a complete perfection because it appealed and blessed the spirit, and the soul, and the body of human beings.

The Temptations of Jesus

Maybe one of the most significant places in the entire Bible to locate this stamp of divine perfection would be in the temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4:13). When the tempter came to him, he said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Imagine, Satan says "if." "If you're the Son of God, then you can take this stone and make it bread." Jesus replied to him very simply, that you

don't live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. If Jesus overcame with the Word, you'd better not rely on an argument. Go to the Word. The word means what it says and says what it means.

Satan left for a moment then came back in Matthew 4:6 and said, "If thou be the Son of . . ." He's still got that "if" in there! "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written . . ." Here we see that Satan knows a little Bible, but it's always backwards, never right. "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." Jesus only replied with the Word, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." And that took care of that.

But Satan came back a third time. It's recorded in Matthew 4:9. "Satan said, 'All these things will I give thee if thou wilt . . .'" Put a little circle around this word. Satan was trying to tempt Jesus' soul parts. I want to tell you something real strong. God will never steal your will from you, and the devil can't either. You'll have it until you die. I have delivered people from demon power that were so submerged in it that nobody ever thought they would ever come out. And when I talked to them later, every one of them had a will and did as they pleased. So, if you're in demon power, you have willed yourself to be there. The Lord Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." And he had to go, immediately.

And so there were three strikes--first, at His body, then at his soul parts and then at his spirit. The devil's still offering the world to those that'll worship him. But we're not about to do it. Instead, someday we're going to rule over this world. At that time it's going to be ours, not his. In the beginning, the devil didn't own this world, Adam owned it. But he forfeited it through transgression. And you and I are going to win it back by loving the Lord Jesus and serving Him from the depths of our hearts.

Chapter 4

Triune Nature of God the Father

We are studying a group of lessons called “Christian Foundations.” The strength of any building will be discovered in the depth of its foundations. If your foundations are not strong, no matter how high you want to build, you won’t be able to do it because your foundations tell you how high you can go. Make your foundations strong!

As I look back into my younger ministry, I can see how the strength of God came. I spent almost my total time either in prayer or the study of the Word. Almost totally. I mean, day and night. And in doing so, I was laying a foundation for a future expression of what God wanted me to do. And when you get a good foundation in God, in the Word, in prayer, in anointing, in vision, then you’ll also be ready to share something.

The Spirit of God the Father

In this chapter we are going to examine the triune nature of God the Father. In the first book of the Bible, in the first chapter, in verse 26, it says this: “And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, fowl of the air, over the cattle, over all the earth, over every creeping thing that

creepeth upon the earth. And so God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them.”

Here we see that God has made man in His image and in His likeness. I like that twofold picture. Man is a true image of the Most High God. In his inner man, or spirit, is the image of God. In the outer man, the body, is the image of God, too. I believe that. I accept that.

In John 1:18 it says, “No man has seen God at anytime.” This means that no one, at any time, has ever fully understood God. However, Christ, by interpreting the Word of God, has declared God to mankind. In other words, if you want to know the Father, look at the words of Jesus; he will identify the Father for you.

I realize when we’re dealing with the Creator of the universe we must walk softly, and I want to say very expressly at this moment I don’t believe any human being that has ever accepted Christ has ever understood the fullness of God (including myself). I believe there are going to be a few surprises in heaven. I’ll be ready for just a few surprises. And I think the Godhead will be one of them. I think we’re going to be overcome with ecstasy when we see the brilliance of His majesty.

According to the Bible, God is Spirit (John 4:24). He is a personal Spirit. He is not a fleshly Being; you are the only fleshly beings He has made in the universe, and that means you are related to the earth. That’s the reason the earthly part of you returns to the earth when you die. Your soulical parts and your spiritual parts are not related to this earth; therefore, they do not go back to the earth at death. They have no relation to this earth; their relation is with eternity.

The Bible says, “God is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” Now this simply means that your soulical parts do not worship God. You

don't know God through your thinking abilities; instead, you know God through your believing abilities. When you say, "Lord, I believe," something happens inside you that's unexplainable. There's no dictionary in the world that has a definition for it. It is the creation of a unique relationship between divinity and humanity. When this takes place, it changes the very nature of a human being and makes him something that he wasn't before this experience.

God is Spirit. We see this revealed in His creative powers. In Genesis in chapter 1 and verse 2 it says, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." It was not His hands, it was not His soulful parts, but His innermost Spirit Being. His Spirit moved, and it moved upon the face of the waters.

Not only do we see God's Spirit functioning in creation, we see God's Spirit in the process of redemption. In Romans 8:15 it says, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption." The Spirit of God is related to our becoming a part of the household of God, the family of God. When you are born again, your name is God, you belong to the God family. The Bible says, "We are the sons of God. And we do not yet understand what we shall be, but we shall be like Him." So, we find in redemption that God has given us a spirit of adoption. We don't say He is God, or He is a great Creator. Rather, we say "Abba, Father." We have become part of the family. So we see that God's Spirit works not only in creational powers, making the mighty universe, but in redemptive powers, redeeming your soul.

Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit." In other words, the Spirit that's within God bears witness with the spirit that is within us and makes us to know that we are the children of God. Isn't that great? Doesn't that make you feel good inside? The Spirit that is within

God and the spirit that is within you are identical types of spirits. You are part of His Spirit, and His Spirit within you is the Spirit Himself.

God's Spirit is also revealed in what we call revelation. In Ezekiel chapter 11 verse 5 we read this: "The Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said unto me, 'Speak; thus saith the LORD; thus have ye said, O house of Israel: for I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them.'" God's Spirit is one of revelation. He knows things even before you do them.

The Spirit of revelation reveals hidden things, it reveals the future. It all began in Genesis when Adam and Eve fell in sin. In Genesis 3:15, God said to Eve that her seed would someday bruise the serpent's head and that the serpent would someday bruise the heel of Eve's offspring. All of this has to do with the coming of the Messiah, and this conversation took place more than 6,000 years ago! So, we know that God has the Spirit of revelation.

God's Spirit also functions in what we call communication. In Revelation 2:7 we read, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." And so we witness here that the Spirit of the living God functions in communicating to people—with you. And if you were to start making notes every time you feel that God is saying something to you, you'd soon have a notebook full.

The Soul of God the Father

Next, we discover the soul of God the Father. In the soulical parts of God the Father you see a perfection that has never been tainted with sin or clouded by doubt. Here you have a mind, will and emotions that are greater than all human comprehension. God thinks, has tremendous emotional powers (gladness, anger, pleasure and so on), and the ability to make decisions. All of God's soulical parts

function far beyond their human counterpart. They operate perfectly all of the time.

The Body of God the Father

In addition to a spirit and a soul, God the Father also has a body. Now, one can run into a lot of controversy with this point, but let's just read the Bible and leave it with God. The body of God, if you will permit me to say so, in size would be very similar to the size of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the body of Jesus Christ is very similar in size to an average man living today. You say, you don't mean it, do you? Yeah, I mean that. When you meet God the Father, you're not going to find a monstrosity that you're scared of. You're not going to find a dwarf that you'll laugh at, either. But you're going to find somebody that you were created in the image and the likeness of.

In Acts 7:55-57, speaking here of Stephen when he was being martyred, it says this: "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God." He "saw" the glory of God. No one reading this book, I'm sure, has ever seen the glory of God. And maybe you're glad you haven't seen it. It will be enough to wait until you're immortal before you see it. But Stephen looked and he saw the glory.

Then Stephen saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God. It looked to be to him the most normal situation that you could ever imagine. He saw God, and he saw Jesus, His Son, standing at His right hand. It made the people so angry that they cried out with a loud voice and stopped up their ears! And they ran upon him with one accord! They were ready to murder him for this revelation. But we are grateful, and we discover here that God has a body.

Notice that God has hands. Many, many places in the Bible it tells you this. For instance, in Genesis 2:7 the Lord

God formed man of the dust of the earth. He took His hands and formed what we call a human person today, and He named him Adam.

God also has a face. Genesis 32:30 says, “And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face.” Elsewhere, in Exodus 33:11 we read this: “And the Lord spaketh unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto a friend.” Moses saw Him face to face, as a man speaketh to a friend.

God has fingers. In Daniel 5:5 we read, “In the same hour came four fingers of a man’s hand and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace, and the king saw part of the hand that wrote.” Here we witness the fingers of God writing the destiny of the first world empire in Babylon. Its demise was written that night.

In Exodus 31:18 it says, “He [God] gave unto Moses when he had made an end of communion with him upon Mount Sinai two tables of testimony, tables of stone written with the finger of God.” Now if you want to take the Bible and spiritualize it, you go ahead. I have no feelings for doing that at all. Remember, it’s all real.

God has feet. In Genesis 3:8 it says, “And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.” Adam and Eve heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the cool of the day. They could hear His footsteps. So, God has feet.

In Genesis 5:22-24 it says that Enoch walked with God: “He walked with God, after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.”

God has a voice. He spoke at the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:17, “And lo, a voice from heaven saying, ‘This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.’” He talked to Isaiah in Isaiah 1:2, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken. The Lord hath spoken.”

God has hinder parts. In Exodus 33:23 it says, “I will take away mine hand and thou shalt see My back parts but My face shall not be seen.” So, He has a face that He wasn’t showing him at that time, and He has back parts that he could look and see.

God has a mouth. He ate with Abraham in Genesis chapter 18 verse 3: “And said, My LORD, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, ‘So do, as thou hast said.’ And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, ‘Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.’ And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hastened to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.”

You say, “Why in the world would you want to teach a thing like that, Brother Sumrall?” Well, we set out to show you that this universe is stamped with a three, and I’m not going to limit it to anything. I am going to show you how the Most High God is also just like us--He has a spirit, He has a soul, and He has the bodily parts. Now, the only difference is you are a fleshly person made of the clay and dust; He is not like that. Someday, in your eternal being, in your resurrected body, you’re going to be just like Him. You will have those

parts. If you listen to the people who have come back from the dead, you'll notice they all testify that they have bodily parts, they have soulical parts, and they have spiritual parts.

In Exodus 3:7 the Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people. You can make a little circle around that word "seen." God says, "I have seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and I have heard . . ." It takes eyes and ears to do that. You can find another Scripture in Isaiah chapter 59, verse 1: "His ear is not heavy that he cannot hear." We are in no way trying to exhaust Scriptures in this matter; we're only laying the foundation for you to study.

Then, finally, God has eyes. In Psalm 11:4 we read, "The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men." Psalm 18:24 says, "Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight." Do you believe God's watching us? Psalm 33:18 says, "Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy." We trust that these are sufficient Scriptures to give us an insight into God the Father.

Our purpose in laying this foundation is to reveal to us in the most remarkable and amazing way that our universe is stamped with a three. This is divine perfection. When you've got the three, you've got what God intended for you to understand about the whole universe, Himself, and about yourself, and your salvation, and everything that is around us.

Chapter 5

The Triune Nature of Christ

There are some things that are for today only, and there are some things that are forever. God's Word is forever. When you're studying the Word, you're not wasting your time. I'm glad that we're students of the Word. There are so many kinds of students on the face of this earth; I'm glad that you and I are students of the Word of God.

In the book of Romans chapter 5 verses 18-19 it says, "Therefore as by the offence of one [that was Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [the Lord Jesus Christ] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Death, which came to this earth because of sin, permeated man's spirit, soul, and body--it got him everywhere. Because of this, man must receive God's power in three areas--his spirit, his soul, and his body.

The Perfection of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, our Savior, was without sin. He was without sin in His spirit, he was without sin in his soul, and He was without sin in His body. But when he died, he suffered the

penalty of sin for you, for me, for all generations, to redeem man to God. This means that our spirit, our soul, and our body have been judged in the sinless sacrifice of Jesus Christ. His death was accepted by the Father as our death, and we have already died in the Lord, and all of our sins are gone in the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation." I would put a little circle around the word "now." Bless God, I believe in "now" things. I'd put another little circle around the word "no"--no condemnation. There isn't any to those that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.

Now in Christ, we see an example of absolute perfection. Nowhere else in the universe can we find the divine perfection of the human personality, except in the Lord Jesus Christ. You say, "Why would God become man?" For only one reason: otherwise God would never understand you. How can God understand you when He has never been a human yet? How could an angel understand you when he hasn't been a human yet. The reason that God let His Son become a human was for human comprehension and understanding. Jesus knows what sorrow is. He can feel with you. Jesus knows what disappointment is. He can feel with you. Jesus knows what love is. He can feel with you. The devil does not know how you feel about anything! He has never been a human. He has no idea how you feel. Only Jesus Christ knows how you feel. And so the Lord Jesus Christ had a perfect relationship with God the Father, but He also had a perfect human relationship in the triune nature of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's look first at his spirit. In Matthew 1:18 it says that Jesus was overshadowed by the power of the Holy Ghost and born of the Holy Ghost. So, he came into this world through the functioning of the Spirit. He originated by the Spirit, so he understood the Spirit.

When Christ was twelve years of age, he was guided by the Spirit. He was asking questions and he was answering questions in Jerusalem before the religious doctors. Men who had spent fifty years in training, He was asking them questions they couldn't answer. And He was answering the difficult questions that they wanted for many years to ask somebody. He did not learn these truths, they were revealed unto Him. So, we know he had a spirit within him, and that spirit was anointed. In Acts 10:38 it says, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him."

We know that the Holy Spirit rested upon him in his moment of water baptism. In Matthew 3:16 we read, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him."

Christ lived and ministered by the spirit. In Matthew 4:23 it says, "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, healing all men of diseases and all men of sickness and all men of disease among the people." He went because He was a person anointed of the Spirit to set people free and to cause joy to come into their hearts. And so in the Lord Jesus Christ we find a spirit like your spirit, like my spirit. It's our born again nature. He was born with it. You and I must be born again to get it.

Then he had soulical parts like you have. Consider his mind. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). Jesus had a mind. He used it; he thought; he made decisions. Jesus also had emotions. He wept over Jerusalem. He wept at the tomb of Lazarus. Tears flowed down His face. He had emotions. He was not hard. He had

emotions. He had will power, too. In Luke 22:42 he said, “Not my will but thy will be done.”

Now, those are the three things that you have, too. You have a spirit, a soul, and a body. But the Lord Jesus Christ had a spirit that was motivated by God. He had a soul that was motivated by God. And He had a body that was also motivated by God.

You know, the devil would like to steal your body as much as your soul. Did you know that? Or as much as your spirit. He’d like for your body to be out from under control. We say things like, “I can’t help eating too much!” “I can’t help looking at this.” Yes, you can, too. Our whole inner being and outer being should be in subjection to God. And if it isn’t, you’re not in the proper relationship with God. Then you can pray and nothing will happen. You can ask for things and you don’t get them. If we want God to use us and to bless us, then we must have our total spirit, soul, and body under the divine leadership of the Holy Ghost. Jesus had that.

Jesus Worshipped with His Spirit

Next, we see that Jesus Christ worshipped the Father by his spirit. How did he worship the Father God with His spirit? Many ways. I would say by his vigils of prayer. He kept a communication line between his Father and himself. They say that there is a hotline between capital cities like Moscow and Washington DC, and that hotline stays open 24 hours a day. On each end of the line there is a person there at the hotline. And it’s open for communication any moment, day or night, winter or summer, storm or not. The hotline is always open. Likewise, through our prayers we have an open line, we have a hotline. And if you speak to God through your spirit the devil can’t even interpret it. He doesn’t even know what it’s all about. We have a hotline

right to the throne of God where we can say, “Do it, Lord!”, and the Lord does it for us. And we can say, “We love You, Lord,” and He responds.

Christ also worshipped the Father by his spirit through fastings. Fasting is only a denial of the thing that ruled you--your body, your bodily desires--and subjecting it in order that your spiritual man might rise up and be stronger. It's putting the wrong power down and the right power up. Fasting is the denial of that which is earthly and carnal and temporary, and reaching in to elevate the part that's immortal, and eternal, and glorious, that it might be raised up within you. That's all what fasting is about.

Christ worshipped the Father by His spirit through the written Word as well. He often quoted the Word. More than that, Christ was the Word (John 1:1-3, 14)! When you're reading the Word, you're getting close to God. I feel it when I'm reading the Word how I'm getting close to God. Have you felt that?

Jesus also worshipped the Father by witnessing--that is, by telling people about the gospel. I believe, besides salvation, the biggest excitement in the world is to win the first soul to Jesus. Can you remember the first one you ever led to Jesus? Isn't that amazing? To win a soul to Jesus will bring you more joy than anything you ever had outside of your own salvation. It'll just make you flip-flop inside. Do it real soon. Win someone to Jesus.

When I was in Indonesia, I woke up one morning. I thought it was early. I got up at about 7:00 and shaved, washed my body and put on some clothes. Then I went to the living room, and there was nobody there. Next, I went to the dining room, there was plenty of food there, but nobody was present. Do you want to know what I did? I sat down and ate by myself. Now if there's food on the table, I've got enough sense to eat it. So, I sat down and ate without being

asked to. About the time I got through, the head of the house came walking in. I said, "Good morning; where were you; and who are you?" He said, "I'm the head of the house." I told him, "I'm glad to see you. I'm going to be with you for a few days." Then he said this, "Praise God, I've just won two people to Jesus." And I said, "I beg your pardon?" I had just finished breakfast, you see. He responded, "I promised God several years ago I would never eat until I'd won two souls to Jesus." He said at 4:00 o'clock this morning he went to prayer, and that I'd be there with him tomorrow morning.

The following morning we got up early and went to town. That place was packed with people. You say, "How did he win two souls to Jesus?" Very simple. He would go to the main street and stand there for a moment. Then he'd walk up and say, "Good morning, sir," to a stranger. He didn't want to waste all day; he had to open his shop, and he had to have breakfast, too. So, he had to get the job done. He'd ask, "Do you know Jesus? Are you born again?" Then, he'd flip open his little New Testament, read from it, ask the stranger to pray the sinner's prayer with him, then give him the Testament and say, "Keep learning more; the address of my church is on the inside." Then he would do it again. When he was finished, he would go home for breakfast.

That man flowed with joy. You could feel it all over the house. I tell you, you can't beat witnessing for Jesus, for sheer joy.

Jesus Rejected Soul-Controlled Religion

Next, we see that Jesus rejected the kind of religion which was dictated by the soul. For example, he ignored the traditional washing of hands by the Pharisees. You know, that didn't get anybody saved. And so there were traditions he would refuse.

In Jesus' day, some people believed you shouldn't be healed on the Sabbath. That was regarded as "work." But Jesus rejected this worship of days and the man-made laws that surrounded the Sabbath. He would not conform to the wearing of special clothes that were religious clothes. The Pharisees made their garments extra long, clear to their ankles; they wore their phylacteries around their arms and around their forehead. Christ rejected religion dictated by the soulical parts. He worshipped God by spirit and not by His soulical parts, and the same must be done by you and me.

Christ Knew People by His Spirit

Christ knew people in a special way; he knew them by their spirit. For instance, the woman who dropped two little coins in the offering, touched his spirit. He said to the rich man, "You've given a little out of your abundance, but she's given all." He knew her through His spirit, not through mathematics, not knowing the difference between a gold coin and a half penny.

Here's another example: the woman who washed his feet with her tears. Simon said to Jesus, "Throw her out! She's a harlot, anyway. If you understood anything you'd know what kind of woman this is!" But Jesus said, "No. Let's give her whatever she wants." He understood the tears of the woman who was washing His feet. So, he extended forgiveness to her.

Elsewhere, Jesus changed Peter's name so he could have a new name with a new spirit and a new heart. He could see something inside of Peter that others missed. He knew Nathaniel as a man without any guile. He said, "Behold, an Israelite in whom there's no guile." Jesus knew people by spirit, and not only by soul or body.

The Three Sufferings of Christ

In the hours of Jesus' death, he suffered sin's most bitter pain in three dimensions. He suffered in his spirit, in His soul, and in His body. His physical suffering came through the stripes on his back, by the thorns, by the cross, by the nails, by the spear, by the slaps in his face and the pulling out of his hair. His soulful (self-conscious) suffering came as he endured the shame of the cross (Heb. 12:2). In John 17:27, Jesus said: "Now is My soul troubled." Why? Because he was stripped of his outer clothing while he was on the cross, because the laughing mob made sport of him, because Judas betrayed him, because Peter cursed then denied him, and because the rest of his disciples ran away when he was arrested.

In his spiritual part, Jesus craved for fellowship with his Father, but He had to turn His back upon Jesus because of the sin of the world that was placed on him. He craved for fellowship with those that he loved, but most of them ran away from him, leaving him alone. He desired companionship, but he didn't get any. He died alone on that cross. He suffered spiritual separation. That's why he said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

So the Lord Jesus Christ bore all the elements that we enjoy studying about when they're related to the triune nature of Christ. His nature and your nature are identical--spirit, soul, and body.

Chapter 6

The Holy Spirit

Part 1

There's never been a time in all the world's history when so many people have sought to know the truth as they do at this hour. There are more students of God's Word living at this moment than ever before. I believe that is because of the great revival God is going to give this world--is giving the world right now--and is going to give the world. He needs teachers. We're glad that you're preparing for that job.

If a person asks you a question, you need to be in a position where you don't have to say, "See my pastor." He may not know, and so you'd better go ahead and answer the problem. And you can answer it if you study the Word of God.

In these studies we hope to awaken within you the desire for truth. To waken the desire for truth in you is possibly more important than just giving you fact upon fact. If that is the total of what you're going to know, then that would be like going to a Bible school and on the day you graduate you close the book and say, "Hey, that's over." No, it isn't over, it's just born. That's the day you start, like a seed springing forth and becoming fruitful. Can you say "Amen?"

One thing you must always know--whether it's at midnight, whether it's traveling down the highway in a car--if God gives you truth, stop and write it down. If you don't, you've likely lost it forever. Now, I've lost a little truth, but not much. If God gives you truth, don't lose it.

The Holy Spirit is a Comforter and Teacher

Now, we are going to begin by looking at John 14:16. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." These are the words of the Master shortly before his return to be seated beside his Father in glory by the throne surrounded by a glorious rainbow in the heavens. Jesus was saying, "I will not leave you alone." God the Father has been with you from the Book of Genesis through the book of Malachi, and I have picked it up and I am with you through Matthew, Mark and Luke and John. And now a new chapter in world history is being written--"And I will pray the Father that He shall give you another comforter." He will abide with you forever.

Do you see how we've gotten to the number three again? We've witnessed the dispensation of the Father, the dispensation of the Son, and now the dispensation of the moving of the Holy Spirit upon the face of the earth until the end of time. There will be no fourth one. They will be completed in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

In verse 17 the Spirit is called "the Spirit of truth." He is the giver of truth; He is the artesian well from which we get truth. If you want truth, it'll pour forth from Him. If you get your so-called truth from another source, you'd better watch it. It may be wrong.

He is the giver of truth . . . "whom the world cannot receive." You see, the world that's been taught by the devil will not receive God's truth. The world cannot receive Him,

it says. Notice the word “cannot,” not “will not.” If you’re blind, you don’t see, no matter how much you’re squinting your eyes. And if you expect sinners to understand why you’re a believer, it won’t happen. You can tell them why you’re a Christian, but they won’t understand how you would give up a beautiful life to follow Christ and to study the Word of God. They can’t understand! You say, “Why can’t they understand?” For the simple reason you must receive Christ first, then when you do, you’re not of the world anymore. Isn’t that beautiful?

The Blessed Holy Spirit, called the Comforter by the Lord Jesus, is the third member of the God family, the triune Godhead (Father, Son and Spirit). He has a personality and will, and even though He is intimately associated with the Father and the Son, He is distinct.

The Holy Spirit is a Person

When we speak of the Holy Spirit He is continually referred to in the Scriptures as the Spirit of the Lord or the Spirit of God, and this is only denoting His divinity. In Luke 4:18 the Lord Jesus said these words: “The Spirit of Jehovah is upon Me. He hath anointed Me.” Do you see it? It doesn’t say, “It” has anointed Me, but “He” hath anointed Me! We clearly see the trinity here (the Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ and Jehovah).

The Holy Spirit Works to Save Sinners

In First Corinthians 6:11 it says, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Here we see the Spirit functioning in your salvation, in your sanctification, and in your justification. In second Corinthians 3:17 it says, “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” That word

“liberty” doesn’t just mean free to jump about. It means that you are in bondage to nothing. Brother, when God sets you free, there is no bondage on your life. When you think of the hundred million or more Americans today that are in bondage, bound by alcohol, by the desire for nicotine, by sexual perversion, by mysticisms from the Orient, then you can say, “Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty!” We are free from bondage. We walk free, we breathe free, we shout free because we are free!

The Holy Spirit is Divine

Next, we see that the Holy Spirit is divine. Therefore, He has divine attributes. For example, He is omnipresent--“Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, whither shall I flee from Thy presence?” You cannot get out of His presence. I used to feel very sorry for people like those in Alaska. When I was up above the Arctic Circle, I sat with an old man and I asked him, “How long have you been up here?” He’d tell me the number of years--much longer than I was old. And then I said, “Why did you come? Just for gold?” And he’d replied, “No, I had a quarrel with the family, my wife or my father, and I came to escape.” Then I leaned over close to him and said, “What did you escape?” And he’d start shaking his head. He didn’t escape from himself and that was the worst problem right there. That thing went tagging along with him wherever he went.

You can’t escape from your conscience, and you can’t escape from that which you’ve done wrong to somebody. It’ll nag you until you take it to Calvary and get it closed by the blood of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is everywhere--He is omnipresent. And He is also omniscient--you don’t have to tell Him anything, He already knows all about it. In First Corinthians 2:10 we read this: “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit:

for the Spirit searcheth all things.” The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God, things that you and I cannot penetrate, things that you and I have no abilities to reach into. He understands them. And so that’s the reason we live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, function in the Spirit, because in so doing, we have a very close relationship with the Trinity in heaven and with the throne of God and with the things that are being spoken at the throne of God.

The Holy Spirit also has power. He is omnipotent. In Luke 1:35 it says, “The angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also, that holy thing that is born of thee shall be called the Son of God.’” In the remarkable birth of Jesus Christ we see the all powerful Holy Spirit at work.

Romans 15:19 says, “Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit . . .” The early church was born, motivated, and propelled by this Holy Ghost. The early church knew so much about that. The whole of the book of Acts is a reflection of what Paul is talking about here. The church moved on the stage of world action full-grown! Mighty in conquest! Glorious in determination! People screamed out in fear against them, saying, “They that have turned the world upside down have come here!” I wish we had some reports like that today, don’t you?

The Spirit of the living God is not only omnipresent and omniscient and omnipotent, but eternal as well. He is ever-living, eternal. Hebrews 9:14 says, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” It would be interesting to know one day how the Holy Spirit assisted Christ in the time of his crisis. Isn’t that something? And, you know, you might be amazed how many times you’ve been helped by the

Holy Spirit and you didn't recognize who was blessing you and helping you. He is a big helper!

The Holy Spirit is Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a spirit being, not fleshly like humans. His Name reveals this truth: Holy and Spirit. He functions in the area of spirit. A spirit can have all the operations of soul-like parts--like a mind, emotions, and will--and yet not be manifest in a corporal way. Therefore, though He is not seen with the natural eye, that doesn't remove anything from His reality to you and me.

The Holy Spirit has a Soul-like Nature

In addition to a spirit function, the Holy Spirit also has a soul-like nature. For instance, He has a will. In the giving of the gifts in First Corinthians chapter 12 verse 11 it says, "He gives severally as He wills." The Holy Spirit is very wise in that He doesn't give someone gifts that he or she can't handle.

The Spirit also has emotions because He can be grieved. Ephesians 4:30 says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." When you say, "He doesn't exist," He certainly is grieved. And when you say, "He cannot function in your midst," He is especially grieved. I grew up in the full Gospel tradition that oftentimes in a district or a national meeting the leader of the convention would stand up and say, "Now, the governor will be here in a moment to speak a few words for us. Don't let anybody make the mistake of speaking in tongues while he's here." And so when the governor walked in we were all a bunch of zombies. When he finished with his five minute speech, we clapped a little bit. And when he left, two things happened. First, the governor thought we were the queerest people he'd ever seen; we acted like we were stoned. And second, when he left we all said, "Thank God, he's gone."

We can act natural again.” That’ll grieve the Spirit if we pay more attention to the governor than we do to the Lord.

I can never forget what happened one night in a full Gospel meeting out in Portland, Oregon. Oral Roberts was asked to speak, and the governor of Oregon was present on the platform. I was sitting right in front of Oral as he ministered. He preached on the gifts of the Spirit, all nine of them in one night. When he got through, the governor said, “May I speak?” And the leader said, “Yes.” He got up and said, “I just want to tell everybody, that was the greatest sermon I ever heard in my life!” He didn’t know what he was talking about. I mean, what does a governor know about the gifts of the Spirit? He just knew that there was such a good feeling there that he had never felt so good in his life; that’s what he meant.

If the Lord ever tells you to do something through the Spirit and you say no, then He’s grieved. This means that we must obey the moving of the Spirit. I can never forget that right over here on Ewing avenue, about 3:00 to 3:30 in the afternoon, I was saying, “Lord, send out missionaries to the field. Send out the young people. I’ll support them.” Then the Lord said, “Knock knock.” And I said, “Yes?” And He said, “I want *you* to go.” “Well,” I said, “I just finished building the church here and I’ll send out the young people.” The Lord said, “They’re not capable. You go.” I protested: “I’ve done my share. I’ve already been all over the world preaching.” Once again I heard it: “Knock knock. You go!” So, I went, and God gave us the greatest revival we’ve ever known in our total life in Manila when in one crusade, a hundred and fifty thousand people came to Jesus! When I went to baptize them, it took a whole week from 7:00 p.m. to midnight every night for a week. It almost killed me to work so hard. And it took a whole month to take in the membership which stretched them clear around the whole

building every Sunday for a month. That's what God can do if the Spirit is permitted to move in our lives.

When the Spirit says, do something, and you say, "Oh, no, I won't do it." He's grieved! God wants us to obey the movement of the Spirit. I wish for all of us to become alert in our whole world that there is a Holy Spirit!

Chapter 7

The Holy Spirit

Part 2

He Can be Grieved

A knowledge of God is the beginning of wisdom. And maybe it's the Holy Spirit part of God we haven't learned as much about as we have about the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father. We wish to correct that imbalance. In our last study we concluded that we must not grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. 4:30). And the reason for it is that He is to be with us all the way, every day, because by His work we have been sealed unto the day of redemption.

Whenever you start to do something, be certain not to grieve the Spirit. This can be done as a class action or it can be done as a solitary situation. We can grieve Him as a body by not letting Him function and move in a group. And you can also grieve Him individually.

Also remember this: anything that can be grieved can be happy. Do you know that? Any creature that can be grieved can be happy. And so you can reverse this negative action of grieving the Spirit by making Him happy. I like to keep Him happy; how about you?

He Can Impart Power, Love and a Sound Mind

In Second Timothy chapter 1 verse 7 it says, “God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but He has given us the spirit of power, the spirit of love, and the spirit of a sound mind.” Initially, let’s notice that God has no relationship with fear. Perfect love casts out fear. God is perfect love, and so where He is, there is no fear. But the text goes on, and it says God gives you something. He gives you not the spirit of fear, which is torment, but He gives you, in the first place, the spirit of power.

Now, power is two things: authority and energy. Let me explain. If the president of this nation walked up to you, do you know what would happen? You’d get thunderstruck! He wouldn’t have to say a word. You wouldn’t be able to say anything! You say, “Why?” Because He is the walking authority of this nation as its leader. I used to read in the papers years ago that when John Kennedy became the president, he had been in Congress so long and they had called him “Jack.” But when he became president, that changed. For months around Washington people didn’t know how to address the one that had changed their stature in life from a fellow Congressman to the president of the world’s largest and greatest nation on earth.

Now, the Bible says that God gives you the spirit of authority. I think you have to turn on the tap to get water out of it. You gotta turn on your authority! You know what you oughta do? When you walk into a place you oughta very quietly say, “I take authority over this place.” Why not!? God says He gave us the spirit of power, and the spirit of power is authority! I’ve been in the presence of some very wonderful people. They always carry an aura of something that makes you say, “Hey, he’s been with God.” He just brings it in with him, you know? That’s the gift of the Holy Spirit. It’s for every one of us. It’s for all born-againers. I’m

not gonna preach a religion of the select. I don't believe in it. I believe God loved the whole world, and I believe the Holy Ghost will baptize anybody, and I think anybody can have the gifts, and that God loves every one of you, and God will fill you with anything He's filled anybody else with. God has given us a spirit, the spirit of power, which is authority and energy.

I've heard Oral Roberts say many times: "I was a stammering, backward, bashful boy." But he isn't anything like that now. With the thrust of the Holy Ghost upon him, he has changed dramatically. Years ago, Earl said this to me: "You know, Lester, God told me you can have anything that you will think through solidly all the way and then claim it. You can have anything that you conceive and think through. Once you understand it, you can have it." And then he said to me, "Boy, I've been thinking ever since!"

God wants to enable every one of us. He has not given any one of us the spirit of fear. Can you say "Amen" to that? But He has given us three things: He's given us the spirit of power (energy and authority) and a spirit of love. Love is a spirit. When that spirit comes within you, you just love. And that's a little tap you oughta turn on a little more.

God has given us a spirit of love, and He's also given us a spirit of a sound mind. How does He bring this to us? Through the Holy Ghost. That's one of the functions of the Holy Ghost--to bring these things into our total being to use us.

He Can Help Our Infirmities

In Romans 8:26 it says, "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." How many of us realize that the Holy Ghost helps our infirmities? I know we rely on the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, to clean us all from sin. We come up against evil and we say, "The blood of Jesus Christ is against

you.” But the Bible says here that the Holy Spirit helps our infirmities: “For we know not what we should pray for as we ought.” In our mundane world we may not be able to penetrate that unknown, so we say, “God, I don’t know just how to pray.” But the Bible says, “For the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us!” How many of us really feel that, that the Holy Spirit is actually praying through us? And then it says the Spirit prays “with groanings.” Groanings have to do with intercession, of course, enabling us to move down deeper. I’m afraid some of us in our prayer lives haven’t gotten to the groaning part, the travail part, the part that creates that which is not and brings into being that which never was. Through the help of the Holy Spirit, He can get so deep down inside of us that the human mind can’t reach it. This is a prayer life that was known more in a former generation than it is now. There were those men and women that moved cities and nations that knew about this verse. When we can’t keep our minds on one thing for more than five minutes, we miss that penetration that God wishes to do.

In Romans 8:27 it says, “He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit.” This means that the Spirit has a mind. God has given us several great revivals. It’s been remarkable to me that when the Lutheran revival came in the 1500’s, the Catholics couldn’t get onto the thing. They were so tied into tradition, they couldn’t get aboard. There was awesome blessing there, tremendous power, but they were so traditionalized to where they couldn’t make the move. But when God gave the mighty Presbyterian revival, the Lutherans couldn’t climb the fence, they were so traditionalized now to where they couldn’t get over the fence to become a Presbyterian under John Knox. Then it’s amazing to me that when God sent the glory and the majesty of heaven through John Wesley, the Presbyterians couldn’t

get over the fence. They had become so traditionalized. And then when God sent the Salvation Army revival under General Booth, the Wesleyans couldn't get over the fence. And it's our problem that we can't get over fences.

I tell you, it is traditional with humans that you die in what you start in. You don't have the guts to get out of it. In my lifetime God has sent four or five breaths of the Holy Ghost and every one of the Full Gospel denominations missed it. They criticized it. Made fun of it. I mean, I was in it, I oughta know. And the next great breath of God which is going to shake the whole universe is this: "Your sons and daughters shall prophesy!" And the miracles of God will take place until all the gifts of healing will be spread before us, not once a year but every day! "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what the mind of the Spirit is, making intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Let's move with the mind of the Spirit every time.

He Can Manifest Himself

In Matthew 3:16 we learn that the Holy Spirit can manifest Himself in a form that can be seen by the eye, heard by the ear, and touched by the hand. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." At that moment He was like a dove. Later, on the Day of Pentecost, He was like a fire. So, we see He can make Himself known in ways other than in the spirit world.

This means that we must get ready in two areas. First, we must prepare for Him to move in the inner parts of us that cannot be seen. Second, we must also be ready for Him to do outer things as well. I wouldn't mind receiving some of those things. How about you?

He is a Teacher

What are some of the works of the Holy Spirit in the world that you and I live in today? What can we expect the Holy Spirit to do for us? The first thing we should look for is teaching. The Lord Jesus was the one who called the Spirit a teacher: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

I started preaching at the age of seventeen. You would be amazed at the number of people who wanted to divert my doctrines, and also pervert them, too. They said, “He is a young man, let’s go get him.” And they would come and sit and distress me for hours! But I never moved. I am teaching the same truths right now that I taught when I was seventeen years old. And what makes people around America appreciate me so much, I’m old “Ironsides.” You can throw all the darts you want, I won’t turn around. I don’t ever get out of the middle of the road. I’m just pounding down the middle of the road all of the time.

I had a very good friend of mine that was teaching baptismal regeneration. He offered to come here several times in a private plane and pick me up and take me to another city in order to hear the truth. I laughed at him and said, “I’m not going anywhere.”

These kinds of errors have come by the dozens. I have never gone for one of them. Why? I think the Holy Spirit was so nice that He taught me the things that I needed to know, so I wouldn’t be carried away with the wind of phony doctrines. I hope that you will never be carried away with the wind of false doctrines. Stick with the Bible. It will tell you what to do.

So remember, the Holy Spirit is a teacher. Not that He takes my place, but He teaches me what to tell you, you see.

And then when you get into an emergency where someone presents you error or something, you say, “No, no, no, no, no.” It’s the Holy Ghost saying “No” for you. And when you follow that, you just don’t get into the wrong thing.

He is a Comforter

In John 14:16 it says, “I pray the Father and He shall send you another comforter.” Now we often, I think, expect Jesus to do all the comforting there is. Maybe we should study the functioning of the Godhead more closely. If the Spirit is supposed to comfort us, we should say, “Holy Spirit, comfort me!”

You know the devil would like for you to be sad? Well, you don’t have to be sad. Call on the Holy Spirit. Now, if we hadn’t have needed comfort, the Bible wouldn’t have said that. And so we creatures of earth, that sleep eight hours and wake eight hours and work eight hours, we need comfort! And He is the Comforter. We should use Him!

He is an Empowerer

In Acts 1:8 it says this: “Ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost has come upon you.” This means He gives you energy and strength to do things you couldn’t do otherwise. Everything that I have ever done in my life I could not do, so I went ahead and did it by the power of the Holy Ghost, and that’s honesty. Everything that I have ever done I could not do, so I did it by the power of the Holy Ghost.

He Gives Spiritual Gifts

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to men. First Corinthians 12:8-10 says, “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working

of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.” So, He gives us gifts of the Spirit.

He Gives Spiritual Fruit

He also gives us fruit, fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5:22 it says, “But the fruit of the Spirit . . .” This is the fruit of the Holy Ghost living and functioning within us. And the fruit that He brings forth in our lives is love. He does it. Joy. He does it. Peace. He does it. Longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. He does it. He gives fruit to men.

He Keeps Us from Sin

Not only does the Spirit cause fruit to grow on the limbs of our lives, but He also keeps men from sin. In Galatians 5:16 it says, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” The Holy Spirit functioning in you will keep you in the ways of God. He will correct you (Jn. 16:8). He will also help you pray (Rom. 8:26). In First Corinthians 14:15 it says, “I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with my understanding.” Let the Holy Spirit pray through you, and pray with your own mind as well! More than that, Paul says, “I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.” So we are to function in our spirit naturally and in our spirit supernaturally. They flow together in God, you don’t have to be afraid of them. You don’t have to be afraid of your mind. If it’s a consecrated mind, God gave it to you, use it. And so we flow in His Spirit, and we flow through our spirit, and they both flow together. And how glad we are to be full of the Holy Spirit until we shall see Him face to face, who is the Lord Jesus Christ. Can you say “Amen?”

Chapter 8

Triune Nature of Man

It is never difficult to teach where there is appreciation. And how glad we are to give out that which the Lord has put in. We never want to be the Dead Sea, because that's the end of all good things. We want to be a river of life, so that whatever flows in to us becomes enriched and then flows out of us to love and to bless others. You must never just take in. Life increases itself by the giving of it, and so give the truth of God.

Man is a Trinity

We come now to the triune nature of man. In First Thessalonians 5:23 the Word of God says, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul prays that God will sanctify your entire spirit, your whole soul, and your total body.

We know that man was created a triune person because he was made in the image and the likeness of the Most High, and the Most High God is a triune person, not only in the division of Him being Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but also in His total personality where he possesses a spiritual nature,

a soulical nature, and a physical nature. Therefore, in man we find also a triunity.

In Hebrews 4:12 it says that the Word of God is “living.” That old English word there means it’s still shaking. There’s still something there, it’s not dead. It is living. It is forceful. More than that, “It is sharper than a two-edged sword. It pierces to the dividing asunder spirit and soul.” Now, there’s an embodiment of truth there that you must never lose. This means that the sole source of information related to the dividing of the spirit and the soul of a human personality is the Bible. Human philosophy has never come up with it, cannot identify it, and does not know how to measure it at all. So, if you are to find who you are, the psychologist, the psychiatrist and the philosopher will not be of assistance to you because they do not know. All modern psychology today says that you are dualistic, that you are two--inside and outside--but God says that you are more than dualistic. You are a trinity; you are a three.

Your Body

In your three persons (spirit, soul and body), it is your bodily person that you can identify with easily because you’re still living here on the face of this earth, which is your abode until you become a spirit-made person and live with your soul and your spirit forever with God in heaven. So, for the time being, the Almighty God fashioned a body of clay. Now, that clay can’t go to heaven because nothing on this earth has any right up there. The Bible has destined that everything on this earth shall be burned. Sin has touched your body so many times. Uncleanliness has touched it so many times. It is not worthy of a celestial abode. And so the earthly part of you, the body, must go back to the earth from which it came and be burned when God makes a new heaven and a new earth.

In chapter 2 verse 7 of the first book of the Bible it says, “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground,” but then He did something more. He breathed. That’s His Spirit coming out of Him. “He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.”

The body is easy to identify, to classify. Your five senses which relate to the world are seeing and feeling and smelling and so forth. We shall see that this earthly part of a man was created to be a slave to the immortal part of the inner man of the spirit. If the inner man is evil, the carnal clay man will manifest evil. But if the inner man is spiritual, the outer man of his physical being will demonstrate the fruit of the spirit. And so the outer man is a slave.

Your Soul

The second portion of you, moving from the outward to the inward, is your soulical parts. This is made up of three amazing, tremendous, glorious areas almost indefinable in completeness as to the scope of their abilities. We call them the intellect, the emotions and the will. Science is just learning today of the capacities of the intellectual portions of a man. And for certain, science has never fathomed the depths of man’s emotions. Then you have within you the human will. This is a very strange thing in that God gave it to you and will not withdraw it. With your will you can determine to do wrong and God will stand and watch you do it. He will not violate the will that He’s given you. And you want to know something? He won’t let the devil have it. The people that I have met in my travels throughout the world that were mostly tormented by demon power told me to my face that they don’t obey this devil all the time. Even though they’re possessed, they won’t even obey the devil, much less obey God. I asked a little girl in the Philippines named Clarita, “Did you always obey the spirit in you?”

She said “No.” I said, “Well, why didn’t you obey him? You were full of him.” “I didn’t have to,” she said. Well, she was giving me doctrine, you see. She was conveying to me something insightful. The average person thinks that a demon-possessed person is under the complete control of the devil, but they are not! Their own will continues functioning. And if they are ever going to escape the devil’s power, they will have to use their own will to get out!

The Spirit

God joined the body and soul together with His breath. God created these first two areas to be subservient to the third area. Now that’s very important, and if you don’t get that, you will be living in your carnality and call it spirituality. Many people do just that. Inside that clay house and behind that soul, God placed man’s spirit. This spirit is as distinct from the other two areas of man as darkness is from light. God gave man’s spirit the propensity of communion with Deity. (Underline that, please, with your pencil.) You cannot know God with your brain. You know God through your spirit only.

God gave man the propensity of communion with Deity through the Spirit of God. In this area, he would be able to communicate with the divine world. Your communication with the divine world is not through your mind, your emotions, or your will, but through your spirit that dwells within you.

God gave man in his spirit the structure of intuition and the power of conscience so he would feel what was right, what was wrong, what was good, what was bad, what was spiritually and morally correct to live before God. And so there was a perfect blending, a perfect harmonizing, of three distinct elements called spirit, soul, and body. This is what we mean when we say that man is made up of three

parts which should function as a whole. Man was created a triunity.

King, Servant, Slave

With his spirit, man walked with God. His bodily parts, being a slave, only obeyed the spiritual parts. With his spirit he walked with God in the evening time and conversed with God. With his spirit he understood his limitations, such as the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And so you have to identify your three human parts as a king, a servant, and a slave.

God made man's spirit to be the king of this triunity. God made man's soul to be the servant and to serve and obey the spirit. Tragically, in so many Christians today, their soul is their king. They live by their mind, they live by their emotions, they live by their will, and they tell the Holy Ghost they'll serve Him on Sunday morning when they sing Amazing Grace. And God says, "It's amazing alright."

God made the body to be a slave. Your body is to carry out the wishes of your spirit, which it communicates to your soul. If you have a good spirit within you and the spirit says "Give," your hand reaches out to give. But if your body listens solely to your soul, that same hand will form a fist and strike someone. It's the same hand, but it is under a different control. And many of us were under the control of the devil at one time, and our hand went the wrong way again. So, the body is a slave to somebody--either to God or the soul or to the devil. It's a slave to somebody. It's made to be a slave. It'll always be a slave, and a slave does not have a free will. You don't give your taste all it wants. You don't give your hearing all it asks for. You don't give your eyes everything it wants to glare at. You tame them! You say, "You five senses, you're a bunch of slaves. Sit down, shut up. I've got something to say to you."

As long as Adam lived by his spirit, he had perfect fellowship with God. He also had perfect fellowship with his environment, and he had perfect fellowship with himself. He was a whole person, well-adjusted, supremely happy, and so will you be when your spirit is a king of your life, and your soul is a servant of your life, and your body's a slave obeying what your spirit demands.

Your Soul and Spirit

Man is made in the image and likeness of God, tripartite: spirit, soul, and body. His soul is also tripartite--that is, it is divisible into three parts. His will is the part of his mind that makes decisions. His mind is the part of his intellect that thinks. His emotions are the part of him that feels. It's complete. It is the stamp of God upon him.

The spirit also can be divided into three components of intuition, of communion, and of conscience. Through these three operations you would see how the spirit functions and moves through your actions and through your soulical parts and your physical parts.

How Your Whole Personality Functions

The body and the soul are subject to death because of sin. The body will disintegrate and go back to the earth from which it came, and the soul will separate itself from God forever. Sometimes we think death always means annihilation, but that is not true. If you go outside tonight and try to start your car and the battery won't work, you know what you'll come back in and say? "My battery's dead!" Well, it's still out there, it just won't work. It's just not working right. And so, there are things that are dead that are not annihilated. The prodigal son, when he returned back home, his father said, "My son was dead and is now alive." Well, it didn't mean

he was extinct. His death was his separation from the father. And for every sinner, you're dead as far as God's concerned, you're dead in sin and trespasses. And you're alive under God when your spirit comes alive and you are born again.

The spirit is the substance of God. God is the Father of spirits. Your spirit is a substance that comes from the Most High because the Bible says He is the Father of spirits. Hebrews 12:9 says, "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be subject under the Father of spirits and live." So He is the Father of our spirit, the Progenitor of our spirit. The spirit in the unregenerated human is dead, alienated from God, inactive, nonrelated, but not extinct.

Not many people are going to understand anything about spirit and soul. You'll have to teach them everything because they don't know anything about it. The spirit, once renewed, is become alive, it is clothed with a soulical part or it could not function--it needs a mind, emotions, and a will to function through. It also needs a body for its expression. That's what they're for. The human spirit enters reality through the soul and through the body.

Your Conscience

Conscience is a function of your spirit. We know the laws of God by our conscience. Then it dictates the law to the soul which enforces it. The modern world is void of a pure conscience, but lives by its soulish, mental resources or by its methods. The soul looks for numbers to count, the spirit seeks for the fruit of holiness and of peace and of joy. They live in two different worlds.

Your Spirit Calls Out to God

There's something in man that cries out for God. There is not a human being on the face of this earth, not one, who

inside of him doesn't cry out for the One that made him. He may never admit it 'til he meets death, but it cries out to God nevertheless.

There are three main words that describe the nature of man--his spirit, his soul, and his body. God needs all of us. Man, through his body, can contact the outer world. Through his bodily senses he is world conscious or earth conscious. Man, through his soul, is conscious of himself, But man, through his spirit, has the capacity to know God. He possesses the capacity of God consciousness where he can receive revelation from God.

In Psalm 34:18 it says, "The Lord is nigh unto them who are of a broken heart; and saveth such as have a contrite spirit." When we come to God, if we come with the right attitude through our spirit, we will always be ready and able to reach God. In Proverbs 4:23 it says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Your spirit life must move through your soulful being, making that soulful being of your mind think right, your emotions feel right, and your will make the proper decisions. The word spirit does not necessarily indicate the ruling disposition, rather the spiritual capacity that every man has for God. Every man can reach all of God that he wants. The spirit ought to be the ruling center of all of us. However, even when God does not rule in man's spirit, the spiritual capacity is there, it remains, and it's ready for any of us or all of us to give ourselves to it.

Chapter 9

The Ministry of The Laying on of Hands

We have come to a lesson that I am so excited about; I've been wanting to teach it. I even wanted to make it lesson number one in these series, but you couldn't put the laying on of hands before you discuss God. So we studied God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit first. But now we can teach this important lesson.

I believe this is the hour of the laying on of hands. This is the hour of imparting something that's in us, giving it to another person. Just as you give them bread with it this way, so you can give them heaven's bread in this same manner.

In Hebrews 1:10 it says, "And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands." These are the creative hands of God. What all did those hands do? And what can those hands laid upon us cause us to do?

The remarkable human hand consists of twenty-seven bones. We have medical doctors in our church, and they know that so very well. The human hand is made up of a carpus which is the wrist area. It consists of the metacarpus, which is the palm of the hand. It also has the four digits--the

fingers, plus the thumb. We understand that the human hand has thirty-five muscles and tendons. Amazing!

Beyond mechanical achievement, the human hand is fearfully and wonderfully made. You couldn't believe in evolution if you studied your hand. The human hand is the end of the arm. The human hand is adept at making delicate motions and vibrations. The human hand is the center of touch and feeling. There are four types of nerve endings making the digit fingers and the thumb very sensitive. Blind people rely heavily upon that sense of touch. They read with it when they read the braille; they find their way with it; and they can even touch human lips with their fingers and understand what is being spoken.

The lift of your hand is surrender if you're at war, but the raise of your hands is praise to God. Our hands have a lot to do with telling people who we are and what we are. It goes a little too far when palm analysts claim to be capable of reading your fortune and your future by the lines created in the palm of your hand.

The human hand is used in so many very remarkable and wonderful ways. In a nonreligious way, I have seen hands laid on as a greeting, placed on the shoulder or the arm of another person. Grown-ups show their love by placing their hand on a child's head. Have you ever noticed that if you've got a pretty little kinky-headed boy at your side every guy who comes by him in the mall wants to put his hands on his hair? There's something so amazing about the hand and its relationship to touching.

When we think of a pianist, we think of his (or her) long and elegant hands and fingers, which makes them adept at doing their artistry. When we think of the boxer, we think of a man who has a large muscled hand that he works with diligently to make it strong and tough. Think of the long time farmer with his gnarled hands that show you the winter and

summer and harvest in those hands. They speak volumes to us. One could study hands for a long time. They tell tremendous stories.

God's hands tell us a lot. God has hands, by the way. In Exodus 31:18 it says, "And God gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." In Exodus 33:22 we read, "And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand as I pass by."

Christianity has several very important rituals. We have the Holy Communion, called the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, so beautifully told in First Corinthians chapter 11. Water baptism is also an ordinance of the church. And then Christianity has what we call the laying on of hands, an ordinance of physical contact.

Hebrews 6:1 lists the laying on of hands as one of the six fundamental truths of the church: the foundation of repentance from dead works, our faith toward God, the doctrine of baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. So, the laying on of hands was listed here with doctrines as strong as eternal judgment and the resurrection of the dead. I'm not sure that we have ever put enough strength and importance to this ministry of the laying on of hands.

Man was created by God. He made Adam with His hands. He didn't make him with any wings or feet. He didn't speak with just a voice as He did with much of His creation, but the Bible says that God made Adam with His hands. And then He gave Adam hands as well. And when we look at hands and think of mother's hands, no child has ever been as supremely happy as when mother's hands are placed upon him--soft, tender, comforting and healing.

And then we think of the baby's hands. I walk around our church auditorium feeling little baby's hands, and every little baby I come to I grab the hand, and give a little kiss too. They're so sweet and so lovely. A baby's hand is perfect in beauty.

Then there are the hands of a craftsman. I get a hold of some of these big hands in our congregation and my poor little hand gets all lost up in there. When they squeeze I want to say "Ouch" so badly; I don't know what to do. I'm afraid they won't think I'm strong enough if I don't take it, and they just squeeze down on me. The hands of craftsmen, hands that are calloused because they are builders of our world.

And then you think of a physician's hands that are disciplined hands, a surgeon's hands that move so carefully where just a little to one side or the other and you would not live any longer.

Then we consider God's power in our own hands. I have stood near William Branham who's gone to be with the Lord now. I have stood right by him, and he'd suddenly look at me with his eyes just jumping. He would say, "Did you see my hands?" And I would say, "Yes." Then he would ask me, "What did you see?" And I'd say, "I saw red spots jump out all over your hands." Then he would tell me, "That's the way God demonstrates His power. It's His way of telling me to get the sick to Me quickly. They all get healed who get to Me right away". And so in his hands, he had an anointing that was most unusual.

I've heard Oral Roberts many times say, "The anointing of God is in my hand. It burns like fire in my hand." And so I am of the opinion that you have a right to say, "God, put Your power in my hand." You say, "Why your hand?" Well, that is the part of us we use to communicate with another. You don't want God to put His power in your foot,

that's what you walk on. That's not your communication instrument. But your hand is what you clasp with. And so, the power of God in the hand can do so much.

I remember a funeral I preached at, and it was a sad one. A small boy, seven or eight years old, had been run over by an automobile and killed instantly. The family was rather poor. After I preached and they had closed the casket, the family sat there by the casket and all the neighbors. Several hundred of them came by the family. And I'm telling you the truth. I don't think that one of them spoke to them. I was standing right there and I never heard a word. But every one of them came by and touched them with their hands. And I couldn't get over it, that people came by and touched the husband, and the ladies would touch the mother. And as they would touch them, I could see their burdens being lifted. They had a friendship conveyed by hands. They had a love conveyed by hands.

We believe in many areas of the church that we need to come to the hands in a more forceful way than we have ever known before. I believe that maybe every two or three months, if you're a pastor, that on a given night you should have all the families bring all their little children and have the minister to lay hands upon them. Naughtiness would go out of them, frustration would go out of them, fear would go out of them.

The little children we have in our homes are sometimes tormented. Children need to have their burdens lifted. And it's good in a church service to have a general laying on of hands. But as we will be teaching you, there are so many areas of this that we going to just go into it exceedingly deep and ask God that He will reveal to us how in this moment of history, that we should move into the laying on of hands. Anything that's done wrong won't work, and anything that's done foolishly is foolish. So, we must have wisdom in this

just as we have with the gifts of the Spirit. And we must use this in a significant way as the Lord would have us to use it, and we must not use it carelessly. If you agree with that, say “Amen.”

We believe there’s a power in human touch that identifies us as what we are, that identifies us as what we can be, and that we need to reach out--to reach out with our hands--to love and to bless and to strengthen and to do anything and everything for our fellow human being that our hands can do. I remember an instance when I was a boy. My mother one time laid her hands on our cow that was sick, and the cow was healed by the laying on of hands. I’ve heard of so many people that pray for their cats and dogs and little creatures around the house. We couldn’t afford to lose our cow. We only had one, and that was for our milk for the table. So, my mother prayed, and God answered her prayer.

I think there’s power in the hands . . . that’s what I really want to convey to us. We need to recognize that there is a strength here and that there is a ministry here and that we can use it for the sake of God’s Kingdom. I’ve had three or four people in my lifetime that very likely changed my course of destiny through the laying on of hands, and that’s one reason I tremendously believe in it, and I greatly thank the Lord for it in His Name.

You can tell a lot about the personality of a person by how hands shake. And you can tell more about what a person has within them through the laying on of hands. Hands were laid upon people to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. In Acts chapter 8 and verse 14 it says, “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.” They laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Now it would have been, it

seems to me, just as easy to have said, I speak unto you to receive the Holy Ghost. But it didn't happen that way. It says they laid their hands on them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

Now I believe the Acts of the Apostles is our guide to the modern church or to the Christian church from the beginning. I don't think you can go down to the corner and pick up the discipline of a local church and know how you should guide the church of the Lord Jesus. The book of the Acts of the Apostles is our discipline. It's our teaching, it's our guide. Whatever God did in the Acts of the Apostles, that's what He's going to do all the way through the church age. And we don't look for man to tell us how to operate a church; we look to the book of the Acts of the Apostles to tell us how to operate a church.

So they came and they laid their hands upon them and they received the Holy Spirit. And not only did they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, but in Acts chapter 19 and verse 11 it says, "God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul." Isn't that something? God wrought special gifts of the Holy Spirit by the hands of the apostle Paul. So, we can see how amazingly God can use the physical hands of a person.

I think every part of your being can be used for God--your eyes can convey love and tenderness and kindness and have healing in them. I know your lips can, and I know your hands can. But when God gets within you, He can bring that spirit that is within you down through your hands. Imagine, a person did not have the Holy Spirit, and they laid hands upon him, and then they did! Isn't that amazing? Remember, all that God did in that world, in that generation, He is doing today.

I believe one of the greatest things you'll have to learn is who not to lay hands on because then it won't be working

and you'll get disappointed. Be sure that the Lord wants you to do it before you do it. Be sure that the person is ready for it. Be sure that they're capable of handling it. And then when you do it in the Spirit, it works. I'm asking God that our hands will have more strength, more power, more love, more blessing, more anointing than we have ever known in our lives, and that God will convey it to others through our hands, like spigots. In Jesus' Name! Can you say "Amen?"

Chapter 10

The Ministry of the Laying on of Hands for Labor

Laying on Hands for Ministry of Apostleship

In Acts Chapter 13 and verse 3 it says, “And when they had fasted and prayed . . .” Now, it is most interesting to observe here and in other instances that the laying on of hands was not a thing that was done on the spur of the moment. It wasn’t a thing that they just did for anybody that happened to come by. It says when they had fasted and prayed. It was a deep spiritual operation. Then, after they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them and sent them away to minister for the Lord Jesus.

The laying on of hands is not what we would call an isolated truth. There are some doctrines that are in one little particular area of the Word but not clear through the Word. On the other hand, there are truths that run from Genesis to Revelation, broad principles of divine truth. The laying on of hands is such a truth. It is not one that you find only in the Epistles or only in the Gospels or only among the prophets. It is a truth that relates itself to the total body of truth, and it certainly has a lot to do with us today.

Now that brings it into focus for its importance. It can influence a life and a destiny. As we were reading in Acts chapter 13, the church of the Lord Jesus fasted and prayed before they laid hands on Saul and Barnabas for missionary labors. They were to go forth from the body, and they were to go change nations by God's power. But first the total church fasted and prayed before hands were laid upon them and they were sent forth. So we see here that the laying on of hands has a strong application to sending forth a missionary. This is not the ordination into the ministry, it's a sending forth upon a mission of labor.

Do you know of any church, before they send someone out to do a missionary project, they fast and pray together? I don't. No wonder they turned the world upside down! They had the force and the backing of a great multitude of people that were not only just saying "Goodbye; God bless you; Have a good time;" they were fasting and praying that the World Changer would help them to change the world! And that was the purpose of it.

I am fully convinced that in the matter of the laying on of hands in our time, we haven't placed it in the body with the right strength, the right power, the right anointing. With all our hearts we should say, "Lord, when we send these people forth, we want a witness when they come back that our laying on of hands sent with them all the blessing, all the prayers of the whole body." That's a good burden to carry along with you, isn't it? All the prayers and all the fasting of an entire body.

Laying on of Hands for the Layman's Labor

The laying on of hands is not only for important persons like apostleship, but it is also for a layman's labor unto the Lord. In the Book of Acts, chapter 6, we read this: "In those days, when the number of disciples was multiplied, there arose

a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, 'It is not fitting that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to the ministry of the word.' [Then the church chose seven men] whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them."

Imagine. The apostles called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said, "It is not fitting that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables." I think that line should be tacked onto every preacher's door. You want him to serve tables; but the Lord wants him to stay with the Word of God. Can you say, "Amen?"

They said, "We just cannot leave the Word of God in order to serve biscuits. Therefore, brethren, among you for seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, who we may appoint over this business." Right there are your qualifications for deaconship in a church--honest in their report, full of the Holy Ghost, and full of wisdom. Notice that line: "that *we* might appoint them." They were not divinely called into the five ministries of apostles and prophets and pastors and evangelists and teachers. The fivefold ministry is to give itself continually to prayer and to the minister of the Word. That's where the minister today should be. "This saying pleased the whole multitude."

Seven men were chosen by the church. Then the apostles prayed for them and laid their hands on them. They weren't just saying, "Okay, you and you and you, get up now and go take care of the work." There is more here than that. When man lays his hand on you it's one thing. When God

lays His hand on you, it's something else. The apostles laid their hands on Stephen and basically said, "We appoint you a deacon." I don't want to go too strongly into the vernacular, but when that happened, God must have said, "Shucks. I had just laid My hand on Him to be an apostle! You boys have it!" Why do I say that? Because the next thing we see Stephen doing are all kinds of miracles in Jerusalem and refuting all the men who were coming against the gospel there. Additionally, Stephen became the first Christian martyr. You don't find him waiting on a table anywhere. So, just because man sets you apart and lays hands on you, that's no signal that God doesn't have larger plans for you.

Therefore, the laying on of hands became not only a function of sending out missionaries, but it became a function of the local body when they appointed men like elders and deacons.

Laying on Hands for Ministry Gifts

In First Timothy 4:14 the great apostle Paul says to Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Here we have a very composite situation.

First, Paul says to Timothy that he should not neglect the gift that is in him. He had a gift. It was in him. But this statement shows you that you can have a gift of God and not use it. Therefore, Paul was rebuking him just a little, saying, "Now, come on, use it! You have a gift from God, use it!"

He was not speaking about a natural ability. He was speaking about one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit, and he was urging Timothy to stir it up. Let it function! Let it move! Let me teach you another great truth: God's not going to stir you up; you got to stir yourself up! You are always waiting for God to give you a shockwave of some kind. He says, "Stir yourself up!"

In First Timothy 5:22 we are warned, “Lay hands suddenly on no person, neither be partaker of any man’s sins: keep yourself pure.” Anytime that the laying on of hands becomes a money situation--ten dollars to lay hands on you, twenty dollars to lay hands on you--or anytime it becomes a thing where, you superficially say, “Lay hands on me!”--you’re not worthy of it. You have missed the significance of it. If you’re gonna lay hands on somebody, prepare yourself for it like the Word of God teaches by prayer and by fasting and by seeking God. Do it properly, or don’t do it at all.

Many times people walk up to me and say, “Lay your hands on me, and give me your power.” When I hear that, I hurt all through my whole being. I hurt because it’s an impossibility. I don’t even know them. I don’t know their relationship with God. You shouldn’t lay your hands suddenly upon somebody you don’t know and say, “I bless you with the blessing that I have from God.” God might take the blessing from you. You wouldn’t have anything to give anybody.

In Second Timothy 1:6 it says, “Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God.” First, he said, “neglect it not,” then he said “stir it up.” If you’re listening, you’ll receive something other than just words here. For you to receive words is not enough! If we don’t receive direction, then we are not living worthy of the hour in which we live today. Can you say, “Amen?”

Laying on of Hands for Position

Next, we see the laying on of hands in the Word of God is employed in situations when someone receives a new position. In Numbers 27:18 it says, “Jehovah said unto Moses, ‘Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him.’” God commanded Moses, as he was coming to the conclusion of his own ministry, to lay his

hands upon Joshua. So Moses laid his hands upon Joshua, and it symbolized the transfer of ministry and of authority and of leadership from the one to the other.

In Deuteronomy 34:9 it says, “Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him.” Do you see it? God said this young man was full of the spirit of wisdom *because* Moses had laid his hands upon him, and the children of Israel listened to this man as Jehovah commanded.

Laying on Hands to Receive the Baptism of the Spirit

Now, we can come back to the New Testament for a moment. In Acts chapter 8 we read this: “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost . . . Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost” (8:14-15, 17).

Here we have the impartation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. In the next chapter of Acts, chapter 9, you see this: “Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.’” Ananias didn’t stand in the corner and talk. Instead, he laid his hands upon him. And when he had laid his hands upon him, he said, “Receive your sight and receive the filling of the Holy Ghost.” And so here we have a double receiving of a healing and a baptism through the laying on of hands. We are not sure whether Ananias was a layman or a pastor or exactly what he was. He was one that God could talk to, and that’s pretty good, isn’t it?

In Acts chapter 19 it says this: “And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples . . . And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” Notice, they spake with tongues and they prophesied. Here were some men who had been baptized by John’s baptism twenty years before (in Acts 19 you’re already twenty years away from Pentecost). And here were twelve holder-outers. They were continuing in the old path, and they had not even heard that there was any Holy Ghost. That’s pretty dull when something happens and twenty years later you don’t know anything about it.

There was a man named Steven Jeffreys who saw a vision of a lamb on the wall. He was a coal miner in Wales. And he received the mighty anointing of God to pray for the sick. Howard Carter believed that this man had more amazing miracles than anyone in modern times. Howard Carter said he had seen a person’s leg grow 18 inches before three or four thousand people! He said that he saw people who were so crooked with rheumatoid arthritis until you’d have to get on the floor to look up and see their face, and this man would touch them and instantly they would be completely and wonderfully and gloriously healed! His brother, George Jeffreys, received that power in a lesser degree, and God used him to stir all of England. His son, George, received it in a lesser degree. Great blessing can come, like an Elijah blessing, and it can go to someone like Elisha, but can you find it anywhere after that?

Take any denomination you want. In their first generation they are all fireworks! Just study any of them. They are full of the fire of God and the zeal of God. The next generation is much less. And the third generation denies the power of the first generation. You’d better believe it.

Let's return our focus to the tremendous power of the laying on of hands. If you just run around and lay your hands on people, it will not do anything to anybody. But if it is performed by the strength of the church, and the power of the church, and the anointing of the church, and it goes forth through the proper channels, it will bless.

When You Study the World

When we study the world that is around us, we find the devil has a lot of counterfeits for God's program. You'd be interested to know witch doctors use their hands to carry out witchcraft all over the world. And when we see the negative manner in which the devil seeks to imitate God, it just makes you and me know that there's a real where there's a counterfeit.

I want to urge you to pray about the laying on of hands. There are very few people living that I want to touch me. Did you hear what I said? When people come up to me and say, "Let me lay hands on you," I hate to embarrass people and say just don't do it. Sometimes I say, "Let's just hold hands." You may have something in you I don't want. So, don't just run around to everybody you see and have them lay hands on you. And if somebody runs up and says "I'm going to lay hands on you, say, "Just a minute. Let me hear you pray and see how it sounds first."

There is real power that can be communicated through the hands. Let's be sure when hands are laid upon us it's holy hands unto the Lord, and blessed hands unto the Lord, and powerful hands unto the Lord.

Chapter 11

Jesus and the Laying on of Hands

We're studying truths regarding the laying on of hands. We've come to the thought of the laying on of hands of Jesus. In Mark chapter 16, Jesus said, "Go into all the world [that's planet earth] and preach the gospel [that's the good news] to every creature. He that believeth [that is, totally receives the truth] shall be saved [he will have no divine condemnation], but he that believeth not [the person who volitionally discredits God and refuses Him] shall be damned [that means being forever removed from the divine favor of God]. These signs shall follow them that believe [faith is the greatest untapped reservoir of energy and strength known to the total of mankind], in my name shall they cast out devils [man's greatest enemy is defeated by the use of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ]. And they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

It is very remarkable that in the greatest command that we have in the whole Bible, the Lord said lay hands on the sick. There are two or three sections of this commission that people don't like. They don't like the line about believers casting out devils. They want to tame that down to something other than evil spirits. Then, they don't like to be bothered with laying hands on the sick. They just assume that doctors will do that in the hospitals, rather than them doing it as the

body of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's all right to do it in the hospitals; we thank God for wonderful, spiritual Christian men who are physicians of our time. But it says *we* should lay hands on the sick and that they shall recover. Do you believe Bible?

Jesus Laid Hands on People to Bless Them

In Matthew chapter 9 verse 18 it says, "While Jesus spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, 'My daughter is even now dead. Come, lay Your hand upon her and she shall live.'" Why didn't he say, "Come and speak the word? Come wave your hand?" Instead, he said, "Come and lay your hand upon her." In some way he understood that authority was related to the hand. "Lay your hand," he said, "and she shall live!" And what did Jesus do? He took his hand, he clasped it in her hand, and he lifted her up. Life instantly came into her total being. And so Jesus raised the dead with a hand.

In Matthew 8:15 it says, "Jesus touched her hand and the fever left her and she arose and ministered unto them." This woman is Peter's mother-in-law. She was sick from a fever and in bed. Then Jesus came and touched her hand, and instantly the fever left her. She got right up out of bed and began to cook beans, or something. She began to serve those that had come to their house. And so Jesus raised the dead with the touch of a hand. He healed a fever by the touch of a hand.

In Mark chapter 1 and verse 40 we read, "There came a leper to him, beseeching him and kneeling down, saying unto him, 'If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.' Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him." Did you know that response was against the law? That gesture of kindness to a leper was enough to make Jesus an outcast. You were not permitted to touch lepers. Nevertheless, he put forth his hand, touched him and said, "I will. Be thou clean." And

as soon as he had spoken, the leprosy departed from him and he was cleansed.

In Matthew's Gospel, chapter 19 and beginning in verse 1 it says, "And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan; And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there."

And in Matthew 19:13, it says this: "And there were brought unto him little children that he should put His hands on them." So here we find the blessing of little children. Jesus put his hands on them and prayed, and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Suffer the little children, forbid them not to come unto me for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

And Mark 10:16 says, "He took them up in His arms, he put his hands on them, and he blessed them." So here we find him blessing groups of children and loving children and laying his hands upon them. We have laid our hands in prayer on the children in our church. We wish to perform it more. We think there should be times when all the little children in the whole congregation should be brought to the front together in a group, with no adults, and have the minister lay hands upon them and bless them. It would take anger out of their hearts; it would take rebellion out of their hearts, and it would take lying out of their hearts. You would see a difference.

In Luke chapter 4 verse 40 are these words: "When the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with diverse diseases brought them unto him and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them." Here we see a large group of people with diverse diseases. Diverse diseases--that means they had everything! Yet Jesus laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.

It's very significant to me that, in spite of the size of the crowd, the Lord would so patiently lay his hand upon each one of them.

Next, we find in Luke chapter 13 and verse 13 a person with a spirit of infirmity. When Jesus laid hands on her, immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God. People write me questions from all over America asking, how to do this and how to do that. You know, if they'd read the New Testament, they would know how to do it. Do it like the Bible! You're never wrong when you do it like the Bible!

In Mark 6:2 we read this: "When the Sabbath was come he began to teach in the synagogue. Many hearing him were astonished, saying, 'From whence has this man these things? [You're neighbors will never know how you got the power of God. Don't try to tell them. You just got it, that's all.] 'And what wisdom is this which is given to Him.' [They won't know how you got so clever, either.] 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Judas, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?' And they were offended!" You know, some people think that unless you are from a distant city with a big name, there isn't much to you. And if you were born in the vicinity, they're just sure you will never amount to anything.

Jesus, said to them, "'A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.' And he could do no mighty work there, save that he laid his hands upon a few." That's amazing. Though he could do no mighty works, he could still lay hands on a few people. So, when you can't do anything mighty, lay hands on somebody!

In Mark chapter 7 verse 32 it says, "And they brought unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseeched him to put his hand upon him." Here are people begging Jesus to lay his hands on someone. They believed in this doctrine back in those days. Notice, they didn't request that a prayer be offered over them. Instead, they wanted Jesus to lay hands on this person. They had faith in the laying on of hands 2,000 years ago. Would you?

Also, in Mark 8:22 we read this: “And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he could see. The man looked up and said, ‘I see men like trees walking.’ And after that he put his hands upon his eyes and made him look up and he was restored and saw every man clearly.”

Jesus laid hands twice on this man. Well, that answers another one of your problems. Should we be prayed for twice if we don’t get healed the first time? Follow Jesus; it’s all right. If Jesus had to take two times to get some people healed, it may take me four.

An Experiment with Prisoners

We have told you before about prisoners in Vietnam. There would be a prisoner here that was wounded, and a prisoner there that was wounded. Both men received the same medical attention, but one man got more. He received special loving care, including touch. The person who got nothing but food and medication didn’t improve. But the other man recovered quickly. It was the touch of a human being to that person that did something for him, that caused something to rise up inside of him to throw off the poison, to throw off whatever it was holding him back. And so for that reason we know that to lay hands upon people can be a great blessing. If it’s that way in the natural, how much more in the supernatural?

The Devil and Laying on of Hands

I knew a famous witch doctor from Brazil. About a week before he was born a witch doctor laid hands on the naked belly of his mother. First, he cut a chicken’s head off. Then, he took the hot blood and made a big sign of the cross upon her stomach. Next, he placed his hands upon her abdomen

and dedicated the child to a specific demon. And that was the spirit that controlled his life until God broke the power of witchcraft over him. If the devil and if witchcraft knows that there's something to the laying on of hands, it's about time we start laying on hands. It's about time we penetrated this great truth. It's about time we went after the authority of it and said, "God, anoint me to lay hands on people! Anoint me to lay hands on people!"

My Personal Experience

In my own personal life I have had hands laid on me. The first one that I can remember of anyone of any significance laying hands upon me was at the moment of my ordination in North Little Rock, Arkansas. Reverend Ernest Williams was the person officiating. He laid his hands upon my head and commanded me to be a faithful minister of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that all the fulfilling of the Christian ministry be performed in my life. I can tell you in great sincerity that I felt different, that I felt blessed, that I felt that I had received something at that moment from God that would cause me not to waver, that would cause me to be persistent. I accepted that experience as being more than just a service to where you go to get a piece of paper saying that you were now ordained to the ministry. I accepted it as an anointing for my life!

The next time that I had someone lay hands upon me in a very unusual manner was when I met Howard Carter in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. When I shook hands with him for the first time, I told him, "I will go with you wherever you go. I'll climb the highest mountains with you, I'll cross the best deserts with you, I'll cross the tempestuous seas with you . . ." And I paused and said, "No, I won't." My spirit was talking and my brain was confused about it. I backed off for a moment, and he smiled at me. Then I said, "When you're old, I will succor you and I will strengthen you and I will

stand with you and be with you in the time of your old age.” Again I said, “No, no. Excuse me.” I was embarrassed.

Mr. Carter said, “Come with me to my room.” I went up to his hotel room about a block away and he began to look at notes he had written in a little book. The exact words I spoke to him were the words that God had told him in London eighteen months earlier. God explained to him that He was going to send him a companion who would come from afar who would be a stranger when he came and that these would be the exact words that the stranger would say. He knew that no human being on the face of the earth would ever say these sentences. They were too strange to be said. And yet I said them! Mr. Carter said, “You have fulfilled a prophecy that God gave me; it has been fulfilled with you today.”

Then he asked me questions. He said, “How do you feel about missionary work?” I said, “I am a missionary.” I hadn’t gotten started yet, so he said, “When are you going to go to the field?” I replied, “I’m on my way. He wanted to know what part of the world I felt called to? I said, “The whole world.” Finally, he said, “Evidently, God wants us to travel together.” He and Stanley Frochum laid hands on me in that room, and when I walked out of there I was almost drunk. And that’s how I got started in missions.

The ultimate time that I had hands laid upon me of consequence was by Smith Wigglesworth. I had heard of him beginning in 1934, when I was in San Francisco. And then in Australia I heard of him. In Singapore and Hong Kong I heard of him again. Then, when I got to England in ‘36, in the first week that I was there, I went to a convention. I was the evening speaker, he was the afternoon speaker. When he heard me speak once, he tapped me on the shoulder and said, “You need to come see me.”

I went to see him once, and then twice, and then three times, and then four times, and then a dozen times. For two

years I went to see him. You wanna know something? I never found anybody there one time. There was nobody crowding to get in. I had never found anybody there except him and his daughter who prepared the food for him and took care of him. The last time I saw him I said, "I must go back home to America. The American government has told me I have to leave, and the British government has told me the same thing. Hitler's armies are coming through France and Belgium, and I must go home." And with tears running down his face, he laid his hands on me and put everything on the inside of him inside of me, asking God to grant the faith that was in his life and his heart to be poured inside of me.

You say, "Did God do it?" I couldn't tell you that. I can only tell you Wigglesworth knew that he would never see me again. He was 87 years old, and we had grown to love each other like a father and a son. He poured out his total spirit to me, like Moses in the last moments of his life laying his hands upon Joshua who had served him as a servant for forty years. I was blessed.

Somewhere in your life if you walk close to God, you'll meet someone that will lay hands upon you. Do not rush it; do not demand it. I never demanded anyone to touch me. Never. I have laid hands upon other people, but I have never asked anybody to touch me. Never. It doesn't matter who they are. I have never asked for the laying on of hands upon me. It has come to me as a gift of the Lord from the servant of His who felt that God wanted him to impart something into my spirit.

I believe we're beginning to see the awfulness and the greatness and the majesty of this ministry called the laying on of hands.

Chapter 12

Why We Believe in Salvation

We have come in these Christian Foundations studies to why we believe in salvation. In John chapter 3 it says, “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.” Here was a man of the strictest sect in Israel. He was one of the fundamentalists of that time. His name was Nicodemus and he was also a ruler. That meant he had a high position, and it was not with Rome, but it was with the Jewish people as a leader in their religion.

John writes, “He came to Jesus by night and said unto him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God: for no man can do the miracles that you do except God be with him.’ Jesus answered and said, ‘Verily, I say to you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” It is very amazing to observe the fact that the Lord Jesus did not respond to the comments made by Nicodemus. Do you see how Jesus changed the subject? Very often heaven will treat you the same way. You will say something in prayer, and God will say something else because something else is what you need. Jesus saw that this man, though he was very religious, had not been born of the Spirit of God. Being religious will not take you to heaven. Being born again will take you to heaven.

In the beginning God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden. At that time, God had communion with Adam on a daily basis. But when Adam intentionally rebelled against God, that communion ceased to be. Sin broke the communion that once existed between God and Adam. When that happened, Adam not only lost his position as the king in the garden, he also lost his relationship with God.

In Romans 5:12 it says this: “Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, death [came as a result of] sin.” This means that Adam was the one who brought sin and brought death upon the human family. So death passed among all men because of that transgression.

There is no person on the face of this earth who can say, “I am without sin; I do not need salvation,” because the Word of God specifically says every single human person ever born on the face of this earth with Adam’s blood in his veins must be reborn as Jesus told Nicodemus. You must be born again. Through salvation, God can restore a person to a place of fellowship and give back to him the blessings that were lost when Adam transgressed against God.

God’s Part in Salvation

In your salvation there are several parts. We will deal first with God’s part. In Romans 5:8 it says, “God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” God had a part in salvation. He loved us. Jesus gave the golden text of the Bible in John chapter 3 verse 16, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.”

In Isaiah 1:18 it says, “Come, let us reason together,” saith Jehovah. “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Here God is calling sinners to come reason

with Him, to talk with Him. God wants to explain to you how awful, terrible and dreadful sin is, and how wonderful, glorious and marvelous salvation is. God is calling man to come and talk with Him about this.

In second Peter 3:9 the Word of God says, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but our God is long-suffering to us. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” If I were you I’d mark a couple of words there: “he is not willing that any should perish.” I’d put a circle around that. Think about it. God wants everybody, whether they’re in Africa or India or China, to be saved. He does not want one single person to go to hell. Hell was created for the devil and his angels. It was not made for you. It was created for them, and if you end up there, it will be because of your own poor choices.

I’d also put a circle around this: “all should come to repentance.” That’ll stop people from saying, “He’s destined to be saved; he’s destined to go to hell.” That is not true. Nobody in hell will ever say that they were sent there by somebody else. That is not true. You have to personally come against God to go there, otherwise you can never get there. God has given us all an opportunity to be forgiven of our sins.

In Romans 10:11 we read, “The Scriptures saith whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” So that means *whosoever*. No person can say, “I can’t be saved, I’ve been destined to hell.” That is not true. “Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.”

Verse 13 says, “Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.” There’s another one of those words you should put a circle around: “whosoever.” That means anybody, everybody.

Romans 4:21 says, “And being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform.” In other words, God will perform that which He has promised. If God has made a commitment, He is going to keep it. There is no one so deep in sin He cannot be saved. There is no one so far that he cannot be reached. So, whomever you may address, God wants you to know that He has made a promise and He has the authority and the power to fulfill it.

In Titus chapter 1 and verse 2 it says, “In hope of eternal life which God who cannot lie promised before the world began.” Imagine, before the world began God already made room for you. He already included you in His love, in His compassion--before there was a world! When you take that in, it will settle you down in peace, won't it?

Christ's Part in Salvation

We should go back again to the golden text of the Bible in John chapter 3 in verse 16: “God so loved the world that he gave his Son.” And so we see that the Son has something to do with salvation.

In Hebrews 7:25 it says, “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him [Jesus], seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” The Lord Jesus is at the right hand of God at this moment, and he is making intercession for all of us. I was telling a friend yesterday that Jesus spoke to Peter in the last moments before his crucifixion and said, “Peter, Satan has desired to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you.” Peter would make it because Jesus prayed for him. He is your intercessor; he is my intercessor too. He sees the devil sneaking around at your back door. Aren't you glad you've got one that's helping you?

In Jude verse 24 we read, “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling.” You don't have to fall down. That's a lie of the devil. He says it's hard to serve God, but the Bible

says it's hard to serve the devil. Always remember, "He's able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory."

First Timothy 1:15 says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." A faithful saying. Worthy of acceptance. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. That's all He came for. And I was the chief of them, says Paul.

In Luke 19:10 we read this: "The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." That's a great little sermon right there. He did not come to sit on a throne and say "Kneel down before Me" or "Kiss My toe." He did not say anything like that at all. Instead, he says he is seeking the lost so he can save them. Friend, he's after you. He'll track you down the byways and the highways. He'll find you. The Son of man came to seek! He's lookin' for you.

In John 10:9 Jesus said, "I am the door. If any man enter in he shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture." Notice, he leaves it up to you. The door's open. If you want to enter in you can, anyone can.

In that same book, chapter 14 verse 6, Jesus said, "Now I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me." That excludes all pagan religions. Don't let anybody say, "Pagan religions are going to the same ultimate destination to which we're going." No, they're not. They're going the opposite way from where you're going. They're in direct rebellion against everything God has ever said. In fact, the devil has deceived them and prompted them to resist the knowledge of God that would bring them to salvation.

In Colossians 1:14 it says this about Christ: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin." There is no other thing that can bring redemption for our sins except the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Galatians 3:13 it says, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” This means that Christ received your curse and my curse. Our sins are a curse against us. He accepted that curse, and he took it all away. Jesus died like a sinner so you won’t have to die as a sinner. So he has redeemed us from the curse of our transgressions, because he became a curse for us.

The Holy Spirit’s Part in Salvation

In Revelation 22:17 it says, “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let him that heareth say, ‘Come.’ And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” The word Spirit there is with a capital “S,” meaning the Holy Spirit Himself. And so the Holy Spirit is saying to people everywhere, “Come! Come, Come.” That’s His part in our salvation. The blood of Jesus saves us. The Holy Spirit says “Come and get it.”

In Hebrews 3:7 we read, “Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, ‘Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness.’” And so the Holy Spirit is urging us to hear God’s voice and not to harden our hearts.

I want to tell you something. If you hear the gospel fifty times in a row, then at the end of the fiftieth time you still haven’t accepted God message, you can be sure you’ve got a heart of stone inside of you. Your heart is moving one way or the other all the time. It’s either getting sweeter and more tender, or it’s getting harder and more calloused toward God. I am determined never to be calloused. Don’t let the devil harden your heart.

In Romans 5:5 it says this: “And hope maketh not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.” The Holy Spirit can take the

love of God and inject it into your heart! How many want an injection?

John 16:8 says, “And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, righteousness and judgment: Of sin, because they believed not on Me.” This means the Holy Spirit is a reprover--He confronts us and our sins.

In Titus 3:5 we read this: “Not by the works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy, He has saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. So that not by works of any goodness of yours or mine can we be saved, but by mercy and by the renewing of the Holy Spirit!” Don’t you like that? This “renewing” is not for just the past, but the present as well.

In Zachariah 4:6 it says, “It is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Our victory comes by the Holy Spirit.

In First Corinthians 12:3 we are informed, “Wherefore I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God--that’s the Holy Spirit--calleth Jesus accursed and that no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost.” You cannot say that Jesus is Lord unless the Holy Spirit has taught you that he is Lord. And by the way, the word “Lord” means more than Savior. The Lordship of Christ is beyond salvation.

First Thessalonians 1:5 says, “Our gospel came unto you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost.” Now that’s the way to preach—in the power of the Holy Ghost.

And in First John 3:24 the Bible says, “He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him and he in him, and hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us.” We know that God is abiding in us through the functioning of the Holy Ghost within us! Hey, He’s busy in us, isn’t He?

Romans 8:16 says, “The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” It’s the Holy Ghost that makes you know you’re saved! So, you can see, He does have a lot to do with our salvation.

Our Part in Salvation

The Bible is quite clear as to our part in salvation: we must repent (Lk. 13:5; 2 Cor. 7:10), we must be humble (Matt. 18:3; 1 Pet. 5:5-6), we must have faith in Christ (Eph. 2:8; Heb. 11:6; James 1:6), we must confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Rom. 10:9-10), and we must obey Him (2 Thess. 1:7-8; Heb. 5:9).

In summation, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost function in your salvation; then you function in it as well. There is no escape from judgment if we neglect this great salvation (Heb. 2:3).

Chapter 13

Why We Believe in The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

If God's going to do a great work in your life, you need some deep footings. What we're doing in these lessons is providing footings and foundations for your spiritual life. I have said publicly on several occasions that what God needs right now is one million people in America who will teach the Word of God. And I hope you will become one of those people--a person who is proficient in teaching God's Word. Can you say "Amen?"

Introduction

The fact of a Spirit baptism in Scripture is very clear. In Acts chapter 2 and verse 1 we read this: "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as a fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptist said to his followers concerning Christ, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." In

Acts 1:5, Jesus said to his disciples just before Pentecost, “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” With Bible passages like these in your heart, you have no problem understanding that there is such a thing as a baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit is in Prophecy

The Holy Spirit baptism was even spoken of prophetically. Isaiah wrote of this experience as a place of rest and as a place of refreshing for the believers. In Isaiah 28:11 he says, “With stammering lips and another tongue will he speak unto this people. To whom he said, There is a rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing; yet they would not hear.” So entering into the fulfilling of the prophecies of God, we come into a place of rest. We live in a world today that is restless. We live in a world today that is nervous. God’s people are not part of the restlessness nor the nervousness. There is a rest that will cause the weary to rest. It doesn’t matter how much work we have to do, God has a rest for us. And this is the refreshing!

In Joel 2:28 it says, “And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh.” Say “all flesh” to yourself. That means Japanese and Chinese and Indian flesh, and everybody else. Joel continues, “Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions, and upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out of My Spirit.” And so it was prophesied that this baptism of the Spirit would come.

John the Baptist also spoke of it. He says, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”

Peter connected Joel's prophecy with the happenings in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost. In Acts chapter 2 and verse 16 it says, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams, and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit and they shall prophesy." So Peter related the prophecies of the Old Testament with the fulfillment in the New Testament.

What is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

The Greek word *baptiso* means to bury, it means to dip down underneath. Look at Mark 1:8. "I indeed have baptized you with water, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." The two words rendered "baptize" are identical. John was saying, "I duck you in water; he shall duck you in the Holy Ghost."

In Luke 3:16 we read this. "John answered and said unto them: 'I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.'" Once again, there is identical wording.

In John chapter 14 and verse 16 it says, "The Lord Jesus before he returned to heaven said, 'I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever.'" So, this person that we are full of is also our Comforter, and He will abide with us until the Lord Jesus comes back again. The baptism in the Holy Spirit means being indwelt and filled with the Third Person of the Trinity. It means accepting of the promised Comforter.

In Acts 2:4 it says, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit

gave them utterance.” Being filled with the Third Person of the Trinity means that He has the authority and the power within you to give you an utterance that you’ve never had before.

Notice Galatians 4:6. “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts crying, Abba Father.” In conversion you receive the Spirit of the Son of God. In Romans 8:15 it states, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby you cry, Abba Father.” So, in conversion we receive the adopted Spirit into the family of God. We are now the sons of God. In Romans 8:9 it says this: “Ye are not in the flesh, ye are in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” We’re not in the flesh --that is, we are not living under the control of our Adamic nature--but we’re in a Spirit. We’re living under the direction of the Holy Spirit. If you don’t have this Holy Spirit, you don’t belong to Christ at all.

In Mark 14:36 Jesus said, “Abba Father, all things are possible unto Thee, take away this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not as I wilt, but as Thou wilt.” Christ was speaking to His Father, and that he was indwelt by the Spirit just as we must be indwelt by the same fullness of the Holy Spirit.

We read in John 1:11 these words: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not, but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” At conversion we are born into this world of Spirit.

In John 3:5 it says, “Verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.” You say, “What does the water mean here?” In this instance the water refers to the Word of God. We are born of the Word and of the Spirit. In the Word we know the truth. In the Word we accept Christ. Christ is the

Word. He is the fulfilling of the Word. And so we are born of the person of Christ, of the Holy Word of God, and of the Spirit of God. We are born of the water and the Spirit, otherwise we cannot enter in the kingdom of God.

Jesus said in John 3:6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." In other words, that which is natural is just natural. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. But that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit--this is the new nature that God places inside you. It is born there by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The Initial Evidence of Receiving the Holy Spirit

The biggest controversy about the baptism in the Holy Spirit involves the initial evidence. Acts 2:4 says, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." The most unruly portion of any human being is the tongue. If you could ever get a person quiet, you'd almost for sure get him to heaven. And that's the reason why the Holy Spirit takes the tongue, manipulates it and speaks heavenly things through it. In Acts chapter 2, when the church was born, they spoke in other tongues.

In Acts chapter 10 verses 44 we read this: "While Peter yet spake the words, the Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the word, and they of the circumcision which believed were astonished as many as came with Peter because that on the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. They heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 'Can any man forbid water that these should be baptized when they have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?' And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days." This was the first time that the baptism in the Spirit reached the Gentiles.

Twenty years after the day of Pentecost, in Acts chapter 19 and verse 6, the Bible says that when Paul laid his hands upon twelve men in Ephesus, the Holy Ghost came on them and they spake with tongues and they prophesied. Now, I can tell you, the devil hates the speaking in a spiritual language for the simple reason he's out of it. He learned English, but he can't get in on that secret language of yours. That's your hotline to heaven. That's a reason to do a lot of your praying in the Spirit.

In Acts chapter 9 verse 17 we read, "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.'" You say, "What happened to him?" The answer is found in First Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 18 where Paul says this: "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all." The apostle Paul spoke in tongues more than all of them put together! I don't know why anyone who loves Jesus would come against a person who has received such a gift from God. And for you or anyone else to say that it's of the devil, when that person is kind and good and sings unto Jesus and prays unto Jesus, then you don't know what a born again person is. If you say a good person is of the devil, then who's of God?

The Results of Receiving the Holy Spirit

In Acts 1:8 it says, "But ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the utter most part of the earth." Being a witness is living as a witness so people can see Christ by what you do, what you say, how you transact business, and how you live.

In Acts 4:13 we read, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John [put a little circle around the word boldness; they didn’t have any before they got the Holy Ghost] and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.” And so here we find, if you wish to know the results of receiving the Holy Spirit, you receive power and boldness.

We discover more in Acts 6:10. “They were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he [Stephen] spake. Put a circle around the word “wisdom.” This is another fruit of receiving the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

In Mark chapter 16 verse 17, Jesus said, “These signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils. They shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.” These were the things that were going to happen to those people who were filled with the Holy Spirit.

In Romans 8:26 we read, “The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Here you see that the Holy Spirit inside of you can give you a greater prayer life than you’ve ever known before. And if the Bible says it, then it’ll work. In Ephesians 6:18 Paul writes, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication of the saints.” Again, the thought here is the deepening of the prayer life of those who receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Jude 20 says, “But ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.” The infilling of the Holy Spirit can help you build up yourself. How? By praying in the Holy Ghost--that means not praying with the human mind, but praying in the Holy Ghost.

You also receive abilities to overcome by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:16 states, “Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.” If we walk in the positive, the negative doesn’t have a chance. They don’t go the same direction. People live right that walk in the Spirit. When a person falls in sin, he is not walking in the Spirit; he is walking in the flesh. And so as long as we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

In Romans 6:12 it says, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in the lust thereof.” We should never let sin reign in our bodies. Romans 8:13 says, “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Romans 13:14 says about the same thing: “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof.” When we receive the Holy Spirit, He gives us the ability to walk in the Spirit and to overcome the natural man and the devil.

I also believe that the Holy Ghost will guide us into comfort and truth, if we will just stick with the Word (Jn. 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13-14). There are many people off on tangents, off doing things that are not right. So, make it a point to stick close to the Bible.

Chapter 14

Why We Believe in Healing

We have come to one of the greatest truths in the Word of God, and also possibly to one of the greatest controversies. It all has to do with whether healing is something you might accidentally receive because of some good grace of God, or whether it is actually a part of your divine salvation process that we call the atonement that Christ made at Calvary. Let us begin reading in Matthew chapter 8 verse 1. It says, “When the Lord Jesus was come down from the mountain [where he was teaching the beatitudes and other great things], great multitudes followed Him. And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him saying, ‘Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.’ Jesus put forth His hand and touched him, saying, ‘I will, be thou clean.’ And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

In Romans chapter 5 and verse 12 it tells us that by one man, the man Adam, sin entered into our world. We must accept the Bible for what it actually says, and the Bible says there was a time when there was no sin in the world and that one person brought sin into the world. And the text goes on to say that death came by sin. How did death come? Death came by sin; so death and sin are related. Sickness and

death entered into our world as a result of sin. And when we understand that, we must believe that divine healing cannot be a side issue. Since sin came into the world by transgression and since disease came into the world by sin, there must be a true remedy for these problems in the redemption paid by the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation.

Healing Under Promise

Healing of our physical being goes back to the time of Abraham. The Lord said, if the children of Israel would keep His commandments, He would keep disease and sickness from them. Now to me that was very significant, that their healing was related to them keeping the Word of God.

In Exodus 15:26 is a tremendous passage. It says, “If thou wilt diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptian, for I am the Lord that healeth thee.” It seems to me that this verse of Scripture is almost conclusive to God’s relationship to your health problems. I don’t see how anybody that ever read the Bible could miss it.

In Exodus 23:25 it says, “And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless thy bread and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.” Do you like promises like that? Isn’t that simply amazing?

Healing Under law

Now we go to the time of Moses. In Leviticus 14 and verse 18 it states that a priest could make an atonement for the cleansing of a leper. By cleansing the leper it means that this was a divine healing because there was no medicinal healing for a leper at that time. A leper was put outside the local community where there were no humans; he was

forbidden to make contact with any other person. But there was hope. A leper could experience a healing from God.

In Leviticus 14:18 we read, “The remnant of the oil that is in the priest’s hand shall he pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed [the leper]. And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord.” You know what that means, don’t you? He shall make an atonement for him before the Lord so the leper could be healed. Anytime a leper was not cleansed, that meant that he was in a wrong relationship with the priest and with the law of Moses.

Elsewhere we read how the Israelites were healed by looking upon a brazen serpent. Numbers 21:5 says, “And the people spake against God and against Moses, ‘Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.’” God gave them manna every day, but they loathed it. It is amazing how God can give us something and we hate what God gives us. Isn’t that strange? Here was an angry people. They were angry with God and against the leadership that God had provided for them.

So this is what the Lord did: “The Lord sent fiery serpents among them” (Numb. 21:6). In the original Hebrew Bible it only says that He *released* them. God did not angrily throw a snake at them, but they were already there and God released the covering that protected the people. I am sure that none of us realize how many times our guardian angel saves us and how many times God protects us.

These angry serpents bit the people, and many of them died. They died physically because of all the anger they had against God and against His servant, Moses. Eventually, “the people came to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned for we have spoken against God. Pray to Jehovah that He take away the serpents from us,’ and Moses prayed for the people. And Jehovah said unto Moses, ‘Make thee a fiery serpent and

set it upon this pole and it shall come to pass that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, he shall live.’ Moses made the serpent of brass, put it upon a pole. It came to pass that if a serpent bit anyone, if he looked intently at the serpent of brass, he lived.”

What Jesus said about this event in John 3:14 is very significant: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” In other words, Jesus became that brazen serpent for the healing of the world, not just Israel. So we can see here that a bad spiritual condition is related to our physical condition. I only want you to see that all through the Word of God there’s healing. It’s not an isolated situation. The Bible is a healing book!

In Second Kings 5 we read about Naaman, the great general of the Syrian army. The Bible says that Naaman went down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan according to the saying of the men of God. Then his flesh became like the flesh of a little child. Here was a famous army general of Syria and very successful. But he became ill with leprosy, and as he was pining away, a little maid girl of his told him that if he were in the land where she came from in Israel, the prophet of God could pray for him and he’d be healed. He believed her story so strongly that he left his house and went to meet this prophet of God. But the prophet paid him no attention, he wouldn’t even come out of the house to say hello. He just said go dip seven times in Jordan.

Why did he tell him to do that? Well, that general was very proud. He had a lot of gold and beautiful garments with him. He wanted to bargain for his healing. He wanted to pay material things for a blessing from the power of God. But the prophet wasn’t interested in any payment. So he tells him to go duck himself seven times in Jordan. This instruction made the sick soldier angry! He says, “I’ll go home. Our rivers in Damascus are much nicer and cleaner

than the Jordan.” But when he got half of the way home, a humble servant spoke up and said, “Master, don’t cut off my head, but let me tell you something. If he had told you to do something great, wouldn’t you have done it?” And he said “Yes.” “Well,” said the servant, “why don’t you do something simple then?”

Some servants are smarter than masters. And so the general went back and did what the prophet told him. As you know, he was completely healed once he obeyed. All I want to show you is that when a man’s heart gets right, then we find that his body gets right, too! I know one thing: healing only comes to you by faith. If you don’t believe it, there isn’t any for you, or salvation or anything else. But anything you have faith for, true faith for, if it’s in the Word of God, then it’s for you.

Healing Under the Prophets

Now, let’s consider the major prophets in the Bible. In Isaiah 53:4 it says this about the coming Messiah: “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” Notice, there’s only a comma between sin and the healing . . . only a comma between the physical and the spiritual.

God makes no separation here between the spiritual and the physical. Just as He deals with your spiritual parts, so He deals with your physical parts. There’s only one problem. You gotta believe it.

Next, we go to Malachi, the last of the prophets of the Old Testament. In Malachi 4:2 God says, “Unto you that fear My Name [now, you see, there’s your salvation part] shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;

and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stalls [not sick, not bent down, but like calves in the stall]. That's the way you should be because of the healing that He brings to us. That's the way the Old Testament was finalized and completed.

Healing Under Christ

When we come to the New Testament, we find that Christ took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. In Matthew's Gospel, chapter 8 and verse 17, it specifically says that Jesus did this "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." I was showing an Oral Roberts' film around Manila at one time, but one night I couldn't show the film so I asked the general superintendent of the Methodist church if he would do it for me. I said, "Just show the film, then pray for the sick." He nearly fainted. He said, "I couldn't do that." But I said, "You go show the film, tell the sick to come forward; then, walk up to them and say, 'In the name of Lester Sumrall, who believes in Jesus Christ, be healed.'" He said, "I'll do that!" He came back after the event and said, "They all got healed!" Isn't that something?

Whether someone gets healed or doesn't get healed, I have nothing to lose and nothing to win. I'm just a little servant of the Lord, and I know that if I just believe, many of them will get healed. I can't heal anybody. Jesus has to heal them, but I am not afraid of not being successful, you see. And if the Lord doesn't complete it, I don't growl at the Lord. I just say, "Lord, I have performed all that You have called on me to perform, and now it's in Your hands." And in doing that, I have perfect peace on the inside of me.

First Peter goes along with this same truth in chapter 2 verse 24: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto

righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” Now, why at the end of the Bible, in a single verse, does he go into this business of sin and sickness? Why does he say that you’re healed of your sins the same way you’re healed of your sickness? I know one thing: If this was preached more, you’d get ten times as many healings. Why? Because “faith cometh by hearing the Word of God,” and if these Scriptures would be preached to people, they’d build up their faith and you’d see ten times more healings across the land.

In Acts 10:38 it says, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him.” Then in Matthew 4:23 it says, “Jesus went about all Galilee teaching.” Put a little circle around the word “teaching.” We put things backwards. We say if we get somebody healed, then they’ll believe. That is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible says that Jesus went about teaching. Jesus was first a teacher. He preached the good news saying, “Receive eternal salvation.” He told them what they were getting. He taught before he offered it to them. And then it says in the rest of the sentence, “. . . teaching . . . and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.”

Jesus not only came to save the world, he came to heal the world. And I believe with all my heart it’s the will of Jesus to heal everybody in the world that’s sick, just as it’s his will to heal everybody that’s a sinner.

In Matthew 9:35 we read, “Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” This reiterates what has already been said. Jesus said, in Mark 7:27, that healing was the children’s bread. When a little woman came that didn’t know anything about God and didn’t want God, “Jesus said

unto her, let the children first be filled, for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs." The people of Israel were supposed to be believers, so Jesus says, "Let them have the first chance." And this little woman stepped right out and said, "Wait a minute, those who don't understand the gospel, they should get the crumbs." She touched Jesus' heart so powerfully he says, "Take your miracle and go home with it." Here he called healing the children's bread. Now, brother, we need bread everyday. And if healing is the children's bread, let's have a bite every morning.

Healing Under the Apostles

Healing did not stop with Jesus, it went right on with the Apostles. In the Book of Acts it tells us "they brought forth the sick into the streets, laid them on beds and couches that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them" (5:13). They brought handkerchiefs and put them on Paul's body. People were then healed by the laying on of this piece of cloth on a sick person. Was it the cloth? No! It was a faith that reached out and healed those people. Elsewhere, we read that the apostles cast out devils in Jesus' name (16:16-18), and they even raised the dead in Jesus' name (9:40-41; 29:9-12). So it did not stop with Jesus!

Healing Today

Today we have the great words that Jesus spoke in Mark chapter 16, that they who have faith can lay hands on the sick and they will recover. Healing is for today as much as it was for yesterday, and Jesus loves you today as much as He loved you yesterday. All that he did do, he does do and will do because he is the unchangeable one.

Chapter 15

Why We Believe in The Second Coming of Christ

In First Thessalonians 4:13, the apostle Paul said these words: “I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as other which have no hope. [You know, all the heathen are ignorant about the dead, and they have great sorrows for the dead for the simple reason they don’t understand what’s happened.] For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

This return of the Lord Jesus Christ in his second advent is mentioned more than 300 times in the New Testament alone. Paul refers to it in his own epistles at least fifty times. Whole books, like First and Second Thessalonians, and whole chapters, like Matthew 24 and Mark 13, are devoted to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for his church. It is without any doubts one of the most important doctrines of the New Testament. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ is

going to come. And I might be honest with you, I believe He's going to come in some of your lifetimes.

You need to understand that the second coming of Christ is divided into two events. The first event, called the rapture, will take place when all Christians shall be called up to meet the Lord in the air. The second event, called the revelation, will occur when the Lord comes back to earth with the saints to set up His kingdom. This particular lesson is concerned with the rapture.

The Signs of His Coming

What are some of the signs related to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ? In Matthew 24:37 it says, "As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Noah held his family together. His whole family went with him in that ark. He didn't lose one of them. We want to look at the negative so quickly, but look at that positive part! We're the Noah, you see? So what are we supposed to do? We're supposed to hold our families together.

On the other side, of course, was the eating and the drinking. Matthew 24:38 says, "for as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage . . ." This means they were giving themselves over to sensuality--lusts of the flesh. And that's the same as it is today. And they continued on that way until the day that Noah entered into the ark.

There is something else you will want to notice in verse 39. "And knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Put a little circle around "knew not." They didn't know what was about to happen to them, and our world doesn't know today either. Whether you like it or don't like it, it's going to be exactly like Jesus said. Noah preached, but they didn't want to hear! You're gonna find people like that living today.

Luke records this same message from Jesus but adds this statement: “Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed” (17:28-30). And so you get the picture that corruption is going to go from bad to worse in the last days.

There’s another sign in Matthew 24:14. “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come.” I wouldn’t be surprised if that last part is almost totally fulfilled by television. A few years ago in Hong Kong I was playing golf on a little nine hole course by the seaside. And over by the second or third hole I heard some of the most beautiful music--Gospel music. I asked myself, “Am I going crazy!? There’s nothing here but mountains on this side, the sea on the other side, and that beautiful music.” So I looked real close at a woman who was responsible to maintain the golf courses. She had on a wide brim hat, and under the hat she had a little radio and was playing Gospel music. Who would have ever thought that Gospel music could get under a little Chinese woman’s hat that was taking care of the greens way out there in the Orient on a little golf course there? I went over and tilted her head up and I said, “I like that.” And she just smiled and went on her way.

Another sign is found in the budding of the fig tree. In Luke 21 it says, “And they shall fall by the sore edge of the sword, and they shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled . . . And he spake to them a parable; ‘Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is at hand’ (verses 24, 29-30).

The budding of the fig tree and the Jews' return to the Holy Land is one of the greatest signs that will ever be of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now don't let your soul get all involved in the problems of the Holy Land. Please, don't. Don't start siding with anybody there--Jews or Arabs. That's none of your business.

Remarkably, the Jews have been gathered out of over 200 nations of the world, after being gone for 2000 years, and have been made into a nation. And God says when that happens, and Jerusalem is no longer under Gentile rule, the times of the Gentiles is finished. I think that means that the time of the Gentiles is already finished, and we're in the final wind-up right now. That means Jesus Christ is going to come soon. In a parallel passage (Matthew 24:34), Jesus says that "this generation shall not pass away til all these things be fulfilled." So, when you see these things coming to pass, like Israel becoming a nation, then you know for sure that Jesus is going to come in that generation. Whether it's the baby generation growing up, we don't know. He can come tonight; he can come next week. I'm ready. How about you?

Matthew 24:6 says, "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, see that ye be not troubled. These things must come to pass. The end is not yet." We have had 50 years of this business--World War I, World War II, Korean War, Southeast Asia, Africa, the Near East, and so on. Jesus goes on (in verse 7) by saying, "Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places." Famine, pestilence, earthquakes in diverse places . . . Just read your newspapers; it's there almost every day.

Then Jesus says this in verse 8 of Matthew 24: "These are the beginning of sorrows." You'd better wake up! If that's the beginning, what's the tail end going to be? Jesus

continues: “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted” -- that means we’re going to be persecuted, even killed. They’re already doing it in China and Russia and other places. Next, Jesus says, “You shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. Then shall many be offended and shall betray one another, shall hate one another. False prophets shall arise and will deceive many.” There will be people in our cities claiming they can heal broken arms, broken legs, and so on. And it doesn’t matter how dirty they are, if they’ve got a miracle, they will attract a following. The first thing I want to know about such a person is this: what kind of family does he have? I want to know what kind of moral life he has. If he’s unclean, he belongs to the devil. You’d better believe it. False prophets are going to arise, and iniquity shall abound. And because it’s going to get bad, a lot of those that love God are going to wax cold. But, says Jesus, “he that shall endure unto the end [until the Lord comes back] will be saved.”

The Manner of His Coming

According to Acts 1:11, Jesus will come in person. “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” He’s going to come back in person the same way He went.

Now, not only will his coming be in person, his appearing will also be glorious. First Thessalonians 4:16 says, “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout!” That’s positive. That’s strong. That means victory.

Paul continues, saying that Jesus’ return will occur “with a voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” He will come with a shout, with a strong voice, the dead shall arise and along with that, all living Christians who love the Lord will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. We shall be changed

into his likeness. There have been some Full Gospel people in our times that have said you won't go up in the rapture unless you've spoken in a tongue. I want to tell you now, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses you from all your sins, and if you are cleansed by the blood of Jesus, you will go up in the rapture! In Colossians 3:4 it says, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." In Philippians 3:20 we read, "For our conversation is in heaven from whence also we look for the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious immortal body according to the workings whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto himself. In First John 3:2 the Bible says, "Beloved, now we are the sons of God. It does not appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him!"

In Luke 17 it says, "I tell you, in that night there shall be two in the one bed, one shall be taken, the other left. Two women shall be grinding together; one shall be taken, one shall be left. Two men shall be in the field; one shall be taken, the other left" (verses 34-36). Here we see that God is going to make an awful division. Those who are Christians are going to go with him, and those that are not Christians will not go with him.

The Time of His Coming

When is he coming? According to the Bible, the day and the hour is not known by any man. It has never been known by any man, and it never will be known by any man. If anybody sets a date in a book, burn the book so nobody else will read it. Be sure nobody else gets a hold of it. In Matthew 24:36 it says, "of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not even the angels in heaven, but my Father only." In Matthew 24:42 this same thought is repeated: "Watch

therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” And in Matthew 25:13 it says, “Watch, therefore: ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” That settles it.

In this connection, we have a question: “Why is his coming delayed?” James 5:7 is so beautiful. “Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.” Patience is a hard thing to do. We live in a world of sickness and crime. To be patient is very hard. James continues, “Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth.” What keeps Jesus from coming back? Souls--the fruit of the earth!

Second Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” The great bosom of God turns over and over inside waiting for more to come into the kingdom before the Lord returns.

First Corinthians 15 says, “I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall all be changed” (verses 51-52). Glory be to God!

The Purpose of His Coming

The first purpose for Jesus’ coming is revealed in First Thessalonians 5:9. “For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” No born again person is ever appointed to receive wrath. The only judgment the believer will receive after being born again is the judgment that comes at “the judgment seat of Christ,” which is the seat of awards for what you have done (2 Cor. 5:10). It has nothing to do with your salvation. On the other hand, the “great white throne judgment” has only

sinner there (Rev. 20:11-15). Here, God will open His books and judge each one of them. They'll see it on a vast screen, maybe bigger than a mountain. They'll see every thought, and they'll say, "Yeah, that's me." Then God will say, "Where do you think you ought to go?" They will reply, "To hell," and that's where they will go. So, the purpose of Jesus' coming in the rapture is to take away his bride out of great tribulation.

Matthew 24:21 says, "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Mark 13:19 echoes the same message: "In those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of creation." But God's people are not appointed unto any kind of wrath.

Those Left after the Rapture

Those who will be left on the earth after the rapture will go through the great tribulation. Revelation 13:16-17 says that there will be a mark on your forehead and in your hand, and each one will not be able to buy or sell unless he comes under the domination of the antichrist. And when you take his seal, then you're damned forever. There's no hope. You'll have to give up your life in order to be saved during the great tribulation. These are the martyrs that will come up out of great tribulation: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held" (Rev. 6:9).

In our spirit we know that Jesus will come and not tarry. We know the trump of God will sound, the dead in Christ will be raised, and that we will be caught up to be with him. We're waiting for that glorious, wonderful and beautiful day. And may each one who reads this book not miss that magnificent time when Jesus will come!

Chapter 16

Why We Believe Jesus Is the Son of God

The apostle John writes, “In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. That was the true light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world. He was in the world. The world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came into his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:1-3, 9-14).

Christ’s Life Did Not Begin Where He Was Born

Remarkably, the life of Jesus Christ did not begin in the town of Bethlehem. Instead, he was the Creator of the universe; all things were made by him! In Colossians 1:16 it says, “By him were all things created that are in heaven

and earth, visible, invisible, whether in heaven, dominions, principalities, powers. All things were created by him and for him.”

“The Word” is his eternal name. John writes, “In the beginning was the Word; the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (Jn. 1:1). This means he is the eternal Word. In First John 1:1, the Bible says, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of life.” In Revelation 19:13 we read, “He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood. His name is called the Word of God.” In John 1:14 it states, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” So, we see Jesus is the Creator of the universe and that his eternal name is “the Word.”

In Hebrews 1:5 the Bible says this: “For unto which of the angels said he at any time ‘Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.’ And again: ‘I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a son?’” Verse 6 says: “When he bringeth the first begotten into the world he saith: ‘And let all the angels of God worship Him.’” In Psalm 2:7 we read, “I declare the decree the Lord has said unto me: ‘Thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee.’” And in Second Kings 7:14 we read this: “I shall be his father, he shall be my son. If he commit iniquities, I will chasten him with a rod and with the stripes for the children of men.”

All through the Word of God we witness that Jesus Christ is the incarnate Word of God made flesh so that we might see and know Him.

Christ Came to Declare the Father

Jesus’ mission on the earth was to reveal God the Father. Christ could declare facts about the Father because he existed

with Him before coming to this earth, even before the world was ever created! In John's Gospel again it says, "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God. No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." So, we see that Jesus came to declare the Father because so many did not know Him. The word "declare" means to draw out of the shadows, out of the unknown.

John 14:9 says, "Jesus saith unto him, 'I have been so long a time with you and yet, hath thou not known me, Philip? He that has seen me hath seen the Father. And how saith thou, 'show us the Father?'" Jesus came to declare and reveal the Father to mankind.

In Colossians 1:15, it says Jesus is "the image of the invisible God." In other words, he was a visible form of the invisible Godhead.

In Hebrews 1:3 it says this about Jesus: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." The marks of divinity and the characteristics of God were stamped upon the Lord Jesus Christ so clearly that we know he is the Son of God. He was divine in His nature and in His total being.

Colossians 2:9 says, "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." That is a Scripture you should learn. If you want to know what the Holy Ghost is, if you want to know what the Father is, you look at the Lord Jesus and you see it. He is the image of the total Godhead. He is all that God is ever going to reveal to us.

Scripture Reveals Him as the Son of God

God gave this testimony at the baptism of the Lord Jesus

Christ, and again at his transfiguration: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17 and 17:5).

In Luke 22:70 Jesus identifies himself: “Then said they all, ‘Art thou then the Son of God?’ And he said unto them, ‘Ye say that I am.’” In John 10:30 Jesus said, “I and my Father are one.” So Jesus himself gave witness that he was the Son of God.

The apostles gave the same witness. In Matthew 16:16 it says, “And Simon Peter answered and said, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus replied, ‘Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.’” Peter received a revelation of the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ that he was truly the Son of God. It’s time that we all go forth and let the world know that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Most High God, and that there is no other door to heaven except through him.

Christ Declared Himself to be the Son of God

In John 5:58 Jesus said, “Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.” With these two words, “I am,” Jesus declared himself to be the Eternal One.

In John 4:56 we read this: “The woman said unto him [Jesus], ‘I know the Messiah cometh which is called Christ. When he is come he will tell us all things.’ Jesus said unto her, ‘I that speak unto thee am He.’” Jesus knew he was the Son of God, and he wanted us to know it as well.

In John 8:23 it says, “He [Jesus] said unto them, ‘Ye are from beneath, I am from above. Ye are of this world and I am not of this world.’” Jesus spoke of himself as being from above, from heaven.

In John 13:13 Jesus said this: “Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for I am.” It couldn’t be more clear. Jesus admitted that he was Lord and Master. He could not be that without being the Son of God.

He was Declared the Son of God by Miracles

Jesus proved that he actually was the Son of God by his many mighty miracles. In John 2:9-11 we read how Jesus turned pure water into delicious wine. Naturally, everybody there was amazed. Verse 11 says, “This was the beginning of the miracles Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”

In John 6:9-14, Jesus fed five thousand people with five barley loaves and two small fishes. He fed them all and then took up what was left over. In verse 13, it says that there were twelve baskets filled just from the fragments of the five barley loaves and the two fishes. Verse 14 says, “Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, ‘This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.’” And so not only did Jesus seal his sonship through his words, but he sealed his sonship with his works, proving that he was indeed the Son of God.

In John 6:19 you have the story of Jesus walking upon the water. And as he walked upon the water, those present knew that he was the Son of God. Time and again, he proved to those around him exactly who he was.

Here’s another incredible proof: Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43-45). When he did this, “many of the Jews which came to Mary and had seen those things that Jesus did, believed upon him” (verse 45). He was just a teacher in their minds until that moment; then he became the Son of God. They knew that a miracle of this magnitude couldn’t be done unless he is the Son of God. And so the Lord Jesus proved his Messiahship, not only by His words but by His works.

“Lord Jesus Christ” is His Full Name

The Lord Jesus Christ is his full New Testament name. I put this in here because when I was a young man, England

was quite religious, and I used to talk about Jesus a lot when I was there. And a little English woman walked up to me and said, "I want to ask you something, preacher." She said, "Is Jesus Lord?" And I said, "Yes," and she said, "Well, you hadn't told us that yet in this place." I was in an open auditorium. And she said, "Is He also Christ?" And I said, "Yes." And she said, "You hadn't said that either. You've only said 'Jesus.'" And I said to her, "Honey, give me one more chance." His full name is "Lord Jesus Christ." "Lord" is the designation of his deity. "Jesus" is the name of his humanity. "Christ" is the title of his office--"Christ" in the Greek language, and "Messiah" in the Hebrew language; it means "the Anointed One."

Conclusion

Christ came into the world that we live today, came up out of humanity, that he might be identified with us. There was a time when he was not the son of Mary and Joseph. He lived on earth for only thirty-three years, and in those few years, he made it possible for us to become the sons of God and the heirs to the promises of God.

In John 1:12 it says, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe upon his name." Being the son of God, he became the son of man. He identified himself with man in order to make us sons of God.

And so the Son of Man condescended. He could have been born in a palace! He could have been born a nobleman! He could have been born rich! But how could he have understood us if he had been born that way? The only way he could have ever understood us was to suffer. God could have put him in a nobleman's family, but He didn't do that. Instead, He put him in the home of a carpenter. Why? So he could understand working people. He created and owned

the universe, yet he identified himself with every human need that any human ever had!

What is the greatest embarrassment in life? To be rejected by your community. I read every now and again where some great star from Hollywood or from the athletic world goes back to his little home town, declares his faith and says 'I'm your son,' and they all clap for him. But they didn't clap when Jesus went back to town. They tried to kill him. That's maybe the greatest sorrow a man could have, not to be accepted. Nobody wanted him. Nobody cared for him.

Why did Jesus permit himself to go through such pain? So he could save you. He knows us completely! He loves us absolutely! He raises us up in strength and might because he is one of us. And throughout eternity he's still going to be the Son of man.

Seventy-eight times in the Gospels, Jesus declared himself to be the Son of man--he wanted to be identified with you! In John 1 it says Jesus made everything--the whole universe--and yet he wanted to be identified with you to know when you hurt, to know when you have a need. When you were thirsty, he wants to be able to say "I've been thirsty, too." When the tempests of life are slushing over you, he wants you to know that his boat almost sank one night, too. He knows it all! It doesn't matter what you know, he knows it all! That's the difference between the pagan gods and our God.

And I used to talk to their priests; it's amazing how little they know. I'd ask them what all their gods could do, and finally they'd say, "Well, to tell you the truth, they can't do a thing." He would say, "There's a hole in the back of our man-made idols, and there is a spirit of this god that goes in and out. Normally, the spirit's not here; he's off wandering around the mountains now, but when he is inside, then he

can do something. He's dreadful." Then I'd say, "So, you serve a wicked spirit." And many times they'd say "Yeah, he's bad. But we can't do anything about it. We don't know any other spirit." And I'd say, "Well, that's why I came; I am here to tell you about another one. Did you ever hear about a God of love?" "No," they would say, "we never heard of a god of love." "Well," I'd say, "I want to tell you about one." Then I would open the New Testament and read, "God is love." Then I would tell them that God gave His Son to communicate with us. Gave a Son in order that he might have the feelings that we have, the problems that we have, and the sorrows that we have. God gave His Son so that we might become the sons of God, and then live forever and ever with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost!

Jesus Christ came into, and not out of, humanity. He didn't come out of humanity. He came into humanity so you can come out of humanity. Jesus lived on earth for only thirty-three years in order that it might be possible for you to become the heirs of the promise of God. Romans 8:17 says, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." What does it mean, to suffer with him? It means for us to go through life and show other humans what it means to live like Jesus did. And when you incorrectly say, "What has happened to me has never happened to anybody else," Jesus replies, "It happened to Me." He knows exactly how to reach down into your sorrow and your pain and to love you. He knows how to bring you up out of that sorrow. He is great. He is wonderful. Can you say "Amen?"

Chapter 18

Why We Believe in Water Baptism

If there were ever a time when we needed correct foundations, it's today. There has never been a time in our nation's history when so many false ideas have deceived so many people as today. We desperately need to know the truth because it is only the truth that will keep us free.

If we cannot defend the things that we believe in, then we are a weak Christian. Paul had an enormous defense system built up around everything he believed; he had all the big guns loaded. He was a winner in revealing what he believed, and we must be strong in the same way.

Introduction

Let us begin in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 3 and verse 13. It says, "Jesus cometh from Galilee to Jordan unto one called John the Baptist, and he went there in order to be baptized by John. When John saw him, he forbade him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized of you. And cometh you to me to be baptized?' Jesus responded to him and said, 'Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And

lo a voice from heaven, saying ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”

There was a fulfillment to take place. Jesus needed John to baptize him. He could not be a perfect example without this fulfillment taking place. So, John said, “I’ll do it.”

Let us go to the Book of the Acts and look at 8:36-38. “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?’ And Philip said, ‘If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.” Put a little circle around “went down.” That means he did not get sprinkled. They both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

As you’re quite well aware, water baptism is one of the two God-given ordinances of the Christian church. The importance of water baptism is made very clear in the Bible. It’s not a hidden doctrine at all. In our Lord’s great commission we are commanded to preach the gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19-20).

Related to this commission are promises. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mk. 16:16). Therefore, water baptism is an outward witness and testimony and acknowledgement of an inward work of God’s grace of salvation. When you are converted to Jesus, this is an inward work that cannot be observed with the natural eye, and when you’re baptized in water, it’s a witness to what has happened. Baptism is your outward way of showing others that you have died to the world, the flesh and the devil, and you have been resurrected into a new life. In the act of baptism we see the new person coming forth.

Who Should be Baptized?

This is who should be baptized: born again believers who have repented of their sins and have a knowledge of saving grace--people who are sure that they aren't just joining a church, but have repented of their sins and believe with their heart that the Lord Jesus Christ has forgiven them. This is a person who should be water baptized. And that's pretty exclusive, I'd say.

The apostle Peter preached a great sermon on the Day of Pentecost. As he finished, the people listening to him said, "What must we do to be saved, and he said unto them, 'Repent'" (Acts 2:37-38).

Now, it's possible that my next point could be controversial with some of you. Backsliders should also be baptized--that's a person who's been away from God, then they come back to Him and desire to do their first works again.

In Ezekiel chapter 3 and verse 20 it says, "When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling-block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand." That is an awful statement; we have a serious responsibility to backsliders to get them back to God. It's our responsibility to say to people, "Come on. We're almost to heaven; don't stop here. Let me put my arm around you and drag you a little bit and get you closer to the kingdom." We're supposed to be supporters and helpers, not knockers.

Also in Ezekiel, chapter 18 verse 24, it says this: "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he

hath sinned, in them shall he die.” It’s bad business to go back on God.

Then we read in Revelation 2:4, “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” If a person is converted when he is eighteen years old, is baptized in water, then goes away from God for thirty years or so, but finally comes back to God, I would say that when he returns to the blood of Jesus Christ and is forgiven for the sins he has committed, he should also have a public witness before human beings that he has been born again -- he should be baptized again. As I said, this could be a point of controversy with some. But I tell you now, if you want to go to heaven, you shouldn’t mind how many times you get baptized. Let’s not quarrel about it.

Babies, to our opinion, are to be dedicated; they’re not to be baptized. In Luke 2:22 it reads, “When the days of purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Jesus to Jerusalem to present him unto the Lord.” And that was what they did--they *presented* him to the Lord and offered a sacrifice. And so it was a dedication service, not an immersion service.

In Mark 10:13 the Bible says, “And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, ‘Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.’ And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.” We feel that this is the correct manner to bless children. Our opinion about water

baptism is this: that it is a proof that you've died to your sins. A little baby hasn't sinned, so why should they die to something they haven't committed, you see. And you say, "Well, they should be baptized for the sins of their parents." If that's the case, then we should baptize all the heathen who have not repented of their sins. Baptism is a revelation that you are born again, and until you're born again you should leave it alone. It's not for you. It's only for born again people, and little children go to heaven in innocence.

Why Christians Should be Baptized

Believers should be baptized because they ought to follow the example of the Lord Jesus and fulfill all righteousness. That's a good reason. There are some people that say, "Well, the thief on the cross wasn't baptized." That's true, and if you get saved on your death bed, you won't have an opportunity of getting baptized, either. God is a good God.

If you're going to live for God, your first witness is your baptism. This is the time you tell everybody that you've died to the world, the flesh and the devil! That's your first witness. If you're going to die immediately after your conversion, then remember this: Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. But if you're going to hang around here, then carry through on the things that Jesus said to do.

Believers should also be baptized because it is an act of obedience to the Lord. You know, there would be rebellion in our hearts if we said that we are not going to do it. Instead, in our hearts there should be a spirit of submission, a submission unto death. Baptism represents a big submission. But there is more. There is also resurrection after submission. Thank the Lord, when you are baptized, they bring you up.

How Christians Should be Baptized

There are so many ideas in the world, and sometimes we spend so much time quarreling that we don't build ourselves up in God. If you want to believe something a certain way, I'll leave that with you and the Lord. I only present what I see in the Word as being truth.

The Greek word for baptism is *baptidzo*, and it means to bury or to dip. And so to fulfill the true sense of the word. I think people who don't practice immersion really should get another name for it because when they say *baptize*, they're going against the word they're saying. Baptism has no relationship to sprinkling at all. Rather, it has a relationship with submerging something.

When I was in Rome--I've been there many times--I was just wandering around through all the churches they have. I've heard there are 365 Catholic churches in that city. They're all magnificent, you know, and it took many years to build them, and as I looked at one I noticed it had a large baptismal pool. It was big enough to go swimming in. It was made of a precious stone, so it was worth looking at. I called to our guide and said, "What in the world is this thing, sitting here in the lobby?" "Can't you see?" he replied. "It's a baptismal tank!" "Well," I said, "What do you use it for?" And he said, "Nothing." "Why don't you use it?" I asked. He said, "For hundreds of years we used tanks like this, but in a number of countries the water is very scarce, and we wanted to do it alike in every place, so we decided we would sprinkle people instead of immerse them.

I think that many times God looks upon the heart and not upon the outside. You and I are very keen about seeing the outsides of people. God's very keen about seeing the insides of people, and God can overlook a lot of things if there's something clean on the inside. We're not to be judges; God is the total and sole judge.

The Spiritual Significance of Water Baptism

In baptism, when you go down in the water, you go down into the death and the burial of the Lord Jesus (Roman 6:3-5, 8; Col. 2:12). You are buried with him in baptism, and you are also raised with him through faith, just as he was raised from the dead. Baptism symbolizes both death and resurrection, just as Jesus died and rose again.

We Do Not Believe in “Regenerative Baptism”

When Jesus spoke of being born of the water in John 3:5, he was not referring to water baptism, but to the natural birth. Jesus also referred to the natural birth when he said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” (John 3:6). This essentially is a water birth, the fetus floats in the water or fluid for nine months and the water helps to usher that new life into the world.

In Acts 22:16 we read, “And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord Jesus.” We are not to wash away our sins by being baptized, but by calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus. The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanses us from our sins, not the water of our baptism. Water is not the cleansing factor, it’s the proving factor to let everybody know God himself has cleansed us.

You should remember First Peter 3:21. “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” This puts everything in perspective. It is by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ we receive a good conscience toward God.

Titus 3:5 says, “Not by the works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy we are saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of

the Holy Ghost.” It is not the washing which regenerates, it’s the regeneration which washes. And when you get that thing straight within your heart, then there is certainly not a problem with it.

The Testimony of Prominent Men

You’ll be interested to know that Martin Luther said, “I would have those who are baptized to be entirely immersed as the Word imparts and as the mystery signifies.” Isn’t that amazing? And George Whitfield, who is very closely related to the Methodists, said, “It is certain that in the words of our text there is a reference to the manner of baptism which is by immersion.” John Wesley said, “I was not only immersed myself, but practiced immersion.”

It is so easy to do things our own way, but it is so much more beautiful to do them just like Jesus did. If you have any qualm or any problem about a manner or mode of baptism, I would carry it through to its consummation to be sure that your conscience is beautiful before the Lord, and that you’re walking in all the ways that God would have you to walk with all your hearts. And if you’ll do that, then you will have a state of ecstasy within you. Fulfilling all that God has told us to do brings great joy to our total being. And one day, if we’ve done all that we can, we shall stand before Him, not rebuked, but hear Him say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” And that’s what we desire.

Chapter 18

Why We Believe in Holy Communion

Maybe you don't realize it, but there are denominations that do not take Communion (or, as it is also called, the Lord's supper). There are others that give only bread and they do not give the wine. So, it will be good to tell you what we believe and why we believe it regarding Holy Communion.

We shall begin in Matthew's Gospel (26:26). "And as they were eating . . ." This took place in the upper room on Mount Zion. The Lord Jesus had led his twelve disciples up the incline called Zion to an upstairs room. I've climbed Zion hundreds of times. When we lived in Israel, very very often we would spend hours there, sometimes just sitting on the floor in the upper room area, crying out to God and praying. We have a very close relationship to the place where the Lord's Supper was born.

The passage continues. "Jesus took bread, and he blessed it, and he brake it, and he gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take and eat, for this is my body.' And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'"

We further read these words from Paul's writings in First Corinthians 11:23. "For I have received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, 'Take and eat: this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.' After the same manner, also he took the cup and when he had supped, saying, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me.'"

As you know, there are two great ordinances set in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ: water baptism and the Lord's Supper (or Holy Communion). They do not come from men or from denominations or from traditions. They come by Divine appointment from the very heart of the Lord Jesus Christ during the last moments that he lived upon planet earth. The deep meanings of Christianity are symbolized by these ordinances.

The Old Covenant was Given by God to Israel

God has two churches. One is in the Old Testament with the old covenant, and the other one is in the New Testament with the new covenant. God has worked with both of these covenants, and He has worked with people under both of them. Each covenant is sealed with blood, and they run parallel in many ways. We believe that the old covenant was given by God to Israel, and that the symbol of her covenant was blood (in the Passover). In Exodus 12:7 it says, "And they shall take of the blood of a lamb and strike it on the two side posts on the upper door post of the houses wherein they shall eat it." And so they had a covenant of blood that the death angel would not kill their oldest child if they had the covering of the blood, the covenant of the blood.

In Exodus 12:13 we read this: “The blood shall be unto you for a token upon the houses wherein ye are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt.” So the applied blood of the lamb was that which saved the people during the days of the old covenant. When the Lord Jesus came, he came as the Lamb of God in order to replace the old covenant with its natural lamb.

In Exodus 12:8 it says, “They shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread: and with bitter herbs, they shall eat it.” So, before they left Egypt God instructed them to eat so they would have strength for the journey.

In Psalm 105 verse 37 we read, “He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble one among them.” This special miracle of health was because the flesh of the lamb had healed them. None of their two to three million people who left Egypt were weak or sickly. That’s one of the greatest miracles in the total history of mankind. God kept the whole nation well for forty years!

A lot of believers are sick today because they don’t really know who they are; they don’t recognize their position in God. So, when illness comes, they just fall down. You have to be aggressive with God to receive the things of God. If you will live by the promises of God, they will sustain you. You know, if God can keep two to three million people well, he can take care of you and me.

The New Covenant was Given by Christ to His Disciples

One of the symbols of the new covenant is wine, which is the type of the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In First Corinthians 11:25 it says, “After the same manner, he took the cup and when he had supped, saying, ‘This cup

is the New Testament in my blood.” Now this blood was shed, as Matthew 26:28 says, “For this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” So when we partake of the Holy Communion, we are to know that our sins are gone.

The bread is a symbol of his flesh. In Matthew 26:26 we read that Jesus took this bread, blessed it, broke it and he gave it to his disciples to eat. Jesus’ body was broken by the stripes he received on his back. These stripes are for the healing of your body. This is what it says in First Peter 2:24, “Who in his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree that we being dead to sin should live under righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.” And so the Lord Jesus Christ accepted death, and he set it up that we should have a memory of it, and the memory is twofold: (1) for the healing of our natural bodies, and (2) for the forgiveness of our sins.

There are people who take the Holy Communion every day. We are not told how often to take it. There are other groups that take it once a year. That’s a little extreme, isn’t it? I lived in England for two years before the war, and the churches in England all receive it every Lord’s Day morning. Every Sunday morning they have Holy Communion, and it takes up most of the service. You say, “Well, how often should we receive it?” I am not sure what is the best way to do it. I really like the way we do it--on the first Sunday of every month. That gives you three Sundays that you can think about it and then one Sunday to do it, and that keeps it from becoming a usual thing, a regular thing.

You’d be amazed at the war that has gone on in the world over this teaching. When we lived in Hong Kong, there was a large church there with two pastors. Eventually, they had a difference of opinion about Communion. On one Sunday a pastor would teach his own view of it. He would stand up, take a knife, and cut the loaf in half with it. He would

tell the people that he would never permit his hands to break the beautiful body of Jesus. So, he cut it with a knife. The next Sunday the other pastor would get up and say, “Oh, friends, I would never use a knife on Jesus. How could I ever take a knife and cut the holy body of Jesus? I just break the bread.” And sure enough, the church split over a tremendous argument about whether you should *break* the bread or *cut* it with a knife. You know who enjoyed that the most? The devil.

I told a Baptist preacher something once, and he didn’t like it too well. I said to him, “Won’t it be interesting when you and I get to heaven, as we go through the gate, St. Peter or someone will say, ‘Well now, boys, you’re welcome here, but neither one of you had the whole truth; you only had a little part of it.’” Do you know what he said? He told me, “He might say that to *you!*” Yeah, he thought he had it all, while I was just working on it. The truth is that none of us knows the truth as we ought to know the truth. The Bible says, “Now we see through a glass darkly . . .” That should keep all of us humble. I don’t want to go through life as a smart aleck.

Who Receives the Lord’s Supper?

The Lord’s supper is to be received by born again disciples only. More than that, everyone who partakes of the Lord’s Supper must first examine himself. First Corinthians 11:28 says, “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” If you don’t do it, you can get into a lot of problems with God. You know, there will be judgment to those taking communion unworthily. First Corinthians 11:29 states, “He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” People can become sick or weak or even died prematurely if they fail to take Holy Communion properly.

A Time of Remembrance

Finally, the Lord's supper is to be a time of remembrance. You don't backslide if you keep remembering where God brought you from. Backsliders are people that forgot the miracle that took place in their lives and made them to be the sons and daughters of God. So we must remember his death, his scars. We must also remember all of the benefits of salvation, like healing and mercy.

Psalm 103:2 says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all of His benefits: who forgiveth all thy iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies." These are the things that we are to remember.

We should also remember that he is coming back again. In First Corinthians 11:26 the apostle Paul writes, "Ye do show forth the Lord's death until he come." When we take of the Lord's supper, we're anticipating the time when we shall sit down with him in his kingdom, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, and eat together and drink together. What a glorious time that will be. At that meal we will thank God for Calvary and for our Savior who died for us!

Chapter 19

Why We Believe in Worshipping on Sunday

I believe that right now, there are more people studying God's Word than ever before in the history of the world. We are not running short on Bible scholars, and we're not running short on people who are interested in the Word of God. We are glad for it and thankful.

In this particular lesson we are dealing with another one of those touchy subjects. Actually, I am not argumentative in spirit. I'm a positive minister. It grieves me on the inside to have to try to prove what I believe. But we are dealing with a question that we should know the truth about, yet I don't believe we should be quarrelsome about it.

The Sabbath Day

In Mark's Gospel, chapter 16, we read these words: "And when the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Jesus." This took place "when the Sabbath was passed." That means it happened on the first day of the week.

Verse 2 says, “And very early in the morning, the first day of the week they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.” In the Jewish culture, the first day of the week is what you call *Sunday*. They came to the sepulcher at the rising of the sun. Now whether we should worship on the Sabbath day (Saturday) or the Lord’s day (Sunday) is the oldest of all controversies, I guess. It’s as old as Christianity.

The Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, or Saturday. This is the day on which God rested after the work of creation. It was set apart as the day of rest for man in the Law given to Moses. It wasn’t until the children of Israel left Egypt that a certain day was set aside. They began on the day that God told them to leave Egypt, and they called that their Sabbath, then every week they remembered it.

In Genesis chapter 2 verse 2 it says this: “On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.” This is where man got the first idea that on the seventh day this should be a period for rest. The text goes on, “And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because in it he had rested from all his work which God had created and made.”

Then we find in Exodus 20:9 this statement: “Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.” That meant they were to have a total day of rest. Then, in Exodus 20:11 it says, “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” So now you can see why the people that followed God rested on the seventh day, even as God rested on that day.

Contrasting the Old and New Covenants

The Lord's day is the first day of the week, or Sunday. In comparing the old covenant with the new covenant, we're reminded that Jesus did not come to destroy, but to fulfill the law, which is a cardinal truth. In Matthew 5:17 Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, I am come to fulfill." Jesus did not come to hurt, He came to heal. In verse 18 he said, "For verily I say unto you, 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.'" So when Jesus fulfilled the Law, by meeting all of its demands, he became the mediator of a better covenant.

In Hebrews 8:6 it says this: "Now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." We see here that the old covenant has now passed away. Look at Hebrews 8:13. "A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

How did Israel get the old covenant? It was made at Mount Sinai. In Exodus chapter 19:11 it says, "Be ready against the third day, for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai." And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount. Moses went up, and God spoke all these commandments to him. And so the old covenant belonged initially to the Jews, who lived together in one location.

But now, in the new covenant, we are located all over the face of the world. It would be an absolute impossibility for us all to worship at the same time. I mean, one would be doing it at midnight, another would be doing it at 2:00 in the morning, another would be doing it at 2:00 in the afternoon, all around the world. If you're functioning by time zones,

then the church of the Lord Jesus is active twenty-four hours a day. When the old covenant was here, they were all in one time zone, so they could all worship at the same time together. But in the new covenant it's not possible to worship together because we live in different time zones. And so the reason the new covenant it is different is because the church is different.

The mediator of the old covenant was the man named Moses. Look at Exodus 24:3. "Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, all of the judgments, and all the people answered with one voice and said, 'All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do!' And Moses wrote the words of the Lord, and rose up in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings of sacrifice, peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in the basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the audience of the people: and they said, 'All that the Lord has said will we do, and be obedient.' And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, 'Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you concerning all these words.'"

And those laws, as you see in Exodus 24:12, were put into stone. "And the LORD said unto Moses, 'Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.'" And in Exodus 31:18 it says, "He gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God."

These laws were written for the people of God who lived at that time. God's church was the nation of Israel.

But in the new covenant it's different. In John 5:24 Jesus says, "Verily I say unto you, 'He that heareth my words and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but he is passed from death unto life.'" And so we see here that the new covenant comes from the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Hebrews 8:6 it says, "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is a mediator of a better covenant." The covenant of the New Testament is greater than the old covenant of the Old Testament because it is established upon better promises.

Hebrews 9:15 says, And for this cause, he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

And so God's truth today is not written on tablets of stone, but upon our hearts. Second Corinthians 3:3 states, "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." Israel's commandments were written on stone, and our covenant is written within our hearts.

This new covenant was sealed by Christ's blood at Calvary. Hebrews 9:14 says, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself up without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Activities Required by Sabbath Worship

In the Old Testament, the Jews could not work on the Sabbath day. In Exodus 20:8 it says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." They were not to gather fuel for fire on the Sabbath day. Numbers 15:32 states, "And while the

children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the LORD said unto Moses, 'The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.' And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses." You say, "That was a very severe penalty!" Well, you see, it was written on stone. What do you expect? He knew better. If you let one man break the law, then everybody has a right to do the same thing. So they had to stop it. If they were going to have a day when they were going to worship God, they had to hold it fast or they wouldn't have any at all.

When I was a boy, my mother never cooked on Sunday. She cooked on Saturday, and we ate it on Sunday. And we never thought of ever going inside of a store on a Sunday--well, there weren't any open, anyway. But you never thought of anything commercial on a Sunday. It was the Lord's day, it was the day of worship. In Exodus 16:23 it says. "This is that which the LORD hath said, 'Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.'" You see, they were not to cook on the Sabbath day.

They were not to kindle a fire. In Exodus 35:2 it reads, "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day." When I was up in Alaska, a man that belonged to the Seventh Day Adventist Church came and heard me in a

hall where I was preaching. And he invited me over to his house to eat dinner. It was on my Sabbath, Sunday. And so I went over there, and we ate together. When we got through eating, he proceeded to teach me what I should know about the Sabbath. And I listened to him for a while, then I looked and saw a fireplace where there was a roaring fire. It was below zero outside, so I said, "Did you have that fire here yesterday?" "Yes," he said. "Well," I said, "I suppose I should kill you now so that God's Word will be fulfilled in your being dead." "Oh," he said, "you have to have some sense!" I said, "If you're going to fulfill part of it, you should fulfill all of it. And if you're going to fulfill all of it, then you'd better go live in a warm climate or you'll freeze to death."

Christ taught about the Sabbath, and he said it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. Mark 3:1-5 says, "And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day, that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, 'Stand forth.' And he saith unto them, 'Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?' But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about upon them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, 'Stretch forth thine hand.' And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other." When Jesus performed that miracle, the people were angry. They called that working!

In Mark 2:27 it says, "He said unto them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.'" When you get that inside of you, it's real interesting. It just makes a difference which one was made for who. And if it was made for us, it's to serve us and not to hurt us in any way.

The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28)! I mean, he can do what he wants to do because he is the Lord of the Sabbath! The Sabbath isn't the lord of the Son of man, but the Son of man is the Lord of the Sabbath!

Our Privileges under Grace

The ceremony of law was abolished in Christ. We read this in Ephesians 2:15, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." In Second Corinthians 3:17 it says, "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." So we see from these passages that the Christian enters into not a bondage, but into a freedom. We're free to worship God on the day of our choosing.

In Romans 14:4 Paul writes, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." Then in verse 5 he tells you what he's talking about. "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Verse 6 says, "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." There is some tremendous truth here.

If you lived in the Holy Land as we have, you would discover it's a good place for lazy people because on Friday the Arabs have their Sabbath, and on Saturday the Jews have their Sabbath, and on Sunday the Christians have their Sabbath. And if you can change quickly enough, you can have three Sabbaths every week, then you won't have to work very much.

We Worship on the First Day of the Week

I think there should be a day to worship God. But the problem is which day? Should we conform to the law of Moses, which had particularly to do with their escape from Egypt? No. When we come to Christ, we come into a new dimension. We worship on the first day of the week.

In Mark 16:9, when Jesus had risen on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary out of whom he had cast seven devils. And when Christ appeared to the disciples in John 20:19, it was also on the first day of the week, Sunday. So we find here that Christ rose on the first day of the week, and the meeting he had with his followers was on the first day of the week.

Since that time the early church has worshipped on the first day of the week. In Acts 20:7 it says, “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow and continued his speech until midnight.” Notice when they met: “upon the first day of the week.”

Elsewhere, Paul commanded the people to give offerings on the first day of the week. First Corinthians 16:2 says, “Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by in him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.” And so they made their tithes payable upon the first day of the week.

And in the final book of the Bible, in Revelation 1:10, it says, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.” Notice what it says, “on the Lord’s day.” This is the first day of the week. It’s the resurrection day, Sunday.

I prefer to worship on Sunday, but as I said, it’s a controversial thing. You can say, “The Romans made this day and that day, and on “Sunday” you worship the sun. Actually, we are worshipping the *Son*! Maybe we should start making mistakes in our grammar, and rather than

spelling Sunday, “S u n D a y,” we ought to spell it “S o n D a y,” then we would have it completely right--“Sunday” is the day that we are worshipping our Lord and Savior.

However, you and I do not really particularly need one day a week. I live as good on Friday as I do on Sunday, and I live as good on Tuesday as I do on Sunday. And so we don’t wait for a special day to look holy and act holy. We want to *be* holy.

I was preaching in Southern Ireland, in Dublin, and I was staying there with a man that was a layman. We were going to church where I was to preach, and Hitler and Mussolini were rattling their blades in Europe, so we were watching the papers. As we passed by a news stand, I purchased a newspaper, and the man looked at me and said, “We won’t go any farther together. You’ll give that paper back or I’ll never show you the way to church.” He said to me, “You should never purchase anything on the Lord’s day.” When I saw that I had been offensive to him, and I didn’t sell it to anybody, I just laid it in a convenient place for somebody to get one free. And he was very happy after that. We walked along together and he helped me to find the place where I was to minister that day. I’ve had newspapers to be quite a problem in several places around the world, including Smith Wigglesworth when he made me lay it down; he wouldn’t let me come in the house with it. If you’re not careful, you can get into a situation that is not spiritual. But on the other hand, the more that we give to God on a day of rest, I believe the more pleased God is with us. Let’s make Him happy by taking one day that we just praise His Name and worship Him, and we don’t do things like paint houses and cut grass. Let’s make it a day of reading the Word and praising Him.

Chapter 20

Why We Believe in Tithing

Our lesson for this chapter is not controversial. I can flow through this one with great ease and great joy. It has to do with why we believe in tithing. I want to be very frank with you. I think that tithing is kind of mean--that's not enough to give to God. For many years we personally have gone far beyond the tithe. And here is one reason why we do that. When I was in China as a speaker, a man accosted me. He said, "We Communists will have China; you Christians have been here a hundred years and you will have nothing." I said, "How do you think you're going to take China?" And he said, "The reason is this: You teach 10% giving; we don't. We give 100%." And, of course, the Communists took China.

Wherever Communism is installed in the world, you can be certain that they will give their blood in order to bring heathenism and atheism to the people. And so I believe we should realize that if we're going to save the world, we're going to have to do like Jesus. He sacrificed to save the world. And until we are willing to sacrifice the things that he has permitted us to have, we will never be able to save the world.

Malachi chapter 3:8-12 says, “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, ‘Wherein have we robbed Thee?’ ‘In tithes and in offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse because you have robbed me, even this whole nation. [I think God could speak to our nation that way today.] Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a delightsome land,’ saith the Lord of hosts.”

I can hear someone say, “Where is the storehouse?” The storehouse is where you get your spiritual food. In the Old Testament the storehouse was the temple in Jerusalem. It was the place where the Shekinah glory was; it was the place where you received the forgiveness of sin. You should bless the place that blesses you.

God says, “prove Me.” And I like that. I am not sure that anyone has ever taken that to its finality. R. G. LeTourneau, the founder of the world’s largest earth-moving machines, told me personally, how he came up with the idea for these monstrous machines. He said, “When I began to make this equipment, I only used my father’s garage in California where we lived. Then God began to show me things. He explained how every wheel could have its own motor and be ten feet tall. Nobody had ever heard of it. I almost wore the entire company out trying to get tires made that fit my dimensions. Then I put motors in those wheels, and you couldn’t stop them they were so powerful. I found that I could move mountains. While most folks were moving a mole hill, I could move a mountain.” Then he said this to

me: "I began to give God, like my father taught me, 10% of my income. I soon found out I didn't know what to do with the remaining 90%, so I gave Him 20%. Then I didn't know what to do with the 80%, so I gave Him 30%. And I didn't know what to do with so much money, so I gave Him 40%. After that, I still had millions left over, so I gave Him fifty percent. Then 60%." He said this to me as I was sitting in his living room in Peoria, Illinois. With tears in his eyes he said, "I now give God 90% of all that comes to me, and I still can't spend the rest of it. I just don't know what to do with it."

Here was a man that was a multi-millionaire. He began in a garage--I think it was with a dozen dollars. He was not an engineer. God put the idea within him until he became one of the most unusual engineers on the face of the earth. He proved God was faithful. Down in Peru in South America, he went into the jungles and made a whole city. If it hadn't have been for those big machines, it could never have been done by anybody. He just went in there, moved the jungle, built the streets, put in the houses and built them a city. God said, "prove Me!"

Then the Lord says, "I also rebuke the devourer for your sakes." When I read that, I am so amazed. I've never lost anything! I have never been a loser! I've given a lot away, but I've never lost anything. And you know, it never costs me anything--I never have to go to doctors, I don't have to buy medicine, nothing ever seems to break down, everything just keeps flowing! And, you say, "Do I keep my fingers crossed?" No! My heart's crossed! If I began to be molested, I go after the devil. I say to him, "Hey, you are the devourer; leave my goods alone! And I will push him out of there."

The Lord even said that all nations shall call you blessed. Man, that ought to make anybody in the world pay his tithes, shouldn't it? Selfishness has existed almost as long as people have existed on the face of the earth. It is one of the most distasteful traits that any person can have because God desires that His people be open-hearted and generous, like He is. And so He instituted the offering of sacrifices and tithing from the beginning of time. You know, some people think it's under the law? Let me show you otherwise.

Great Men Tithed

We will begin with Abraham. In Genesis 14:20 it says, "Blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he [Abraham] gave him [Melchizedek] tithes of all." Melchizedek was a priest of the Most High God, and as Abraham was coming back from a battle with neighboring kings, he decided to bless the Most High God who delivered his enemies into his hands. Abraham paid him tithes, which must have been a huge bank roll. "And Abram said to the king of Sodom, 'I have lifted up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou should say, I made Abraham rich. Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion'" (Genesis 14:22-24).

Abraham would not take any of the spoils. Instead, he was a tither, and that's in the first book of the Bible! He was being blessed of God superabundantly already, showing you that if you give to God, God in turn gives to you. So many people say, "I try to tithe, but there's none left over." Well, honey, that's going backwards down the road. You don't do it that way; you give to the Lord first, then He makes the

nine parts go all the way through. But if you're going to spend the nine parts first, you'll end up with the tenth part--the devil will see to it.

Now we come to Jacob in Genesis 28:22. "This stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and all that thou shall give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Here was a young man leaving home to start out in life, and the first thing he did when he left home was to promise God a tenth of all that He gave to him. Now, really, a curse can come upon people or a nation that doesn't give God what belongs to Him. It's not yours. God is our partner in the earth. He was a partner with Adam, and He's a partner with us. And if you will not give God His share for His work, then you will not receive His blessings as you should.

Moses had this to say in Leviticus 27:30-31. "And all the tithe of the land, whether it be seed of the land or fruit of the tree, it is the Lord's, and it is holy. It is holy unto the Lord. If a man will at all redeem out of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part." You know, God can charge interest, too. If you touch your tithe, you are supposed to pay it back to God with 20% interest!

Verses 32-33 of that same chapter say this: "And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy: it shall not be redeemed." In other words, you can't say, "Well, old Spot over there, I'll give the Lord him because I don't like him anyway." You're not to do that. You're not supposed to give the Lord the bad ones.

A man the other day gave me a tie, and after I looked at it, I noticed that it was all worn out. I also saw that it was about an inch too wide. And so I could see why he gave

it to me because he didn't want to wear it anymore. And I don't know why he thought the preacher should wear it. Okay . . . sorry. Do you get my point? Don't give God your leftovers!

God's Word Teaches Tithing

What does God's Word say about tithing? Let's look in Proverbs 3:9. "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruit of thine increase." I think we should hold on to that statement.

In Malachi chapter 3:9-10 it says, "Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there might be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." That's what I like . . . full and running over. But then, as I told you, there is a curse to those that refuse God His share. See that you honor God!

In Proverbs 11:24 we read, "There is he that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is he that withholdeth more than is meat, and it tendeth to poverty." You can keep back what you want for yourself, but if you do, you'll discover that you have less than you had before! But if you give, then you'll get more than you had.

In Matthew 6:19 it says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." We know where our hearts happen to be. Where we invest our money, that's where our affections will be.

Look at Second Corinthians 9:7. “Every man according as he prospereth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” That pins it down, doesn’t it? If you don’t enjoy giving, then you’re not pleasing to God.

First Corinthians 16:2 says, “Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay him in store as God has prospered him.” This should happen when you come to worship. Your offerings must be brought to the Lord’s house. And by the Lord’s house, I mean wherever you are getting your blessing from. People that don’t go to church and can’t go to church, if they’re being blessed by a certain program on television, then they should help pay the expenses for that program in order to keep it on the air. And if a church is blessing them, then they should help that church. Wherever your storehouse is, that’s the place that you should bless.

Giving to God and His Work Brings Blessing

When you give to God and His work, this will bring blessings back to you. And these blessings can become unlimited, as we read in Malachi 3:10. “. . . prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” I’ve met a few people that have had it that way. They gave to God so abundantly until they had no place to put all the good things that God had given to them.

And then we’re told that “the liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself” (Proverbs 11:25). That is a great Scripture--if we water, we get water; if you give, you receive. There is just no doubt about it.

The Lord Jesus said, “Give and it shall be given unto you.” If we can learn to do that, we will find that it works in

reverse. It comes back, and it blesses us. And so what we need to do is to follow it through.

Let's look a little closer. In Luke 6:38 Jesus said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." I have found it difficult sometimes to understand giving. I had to learn that giving and faith flow together. You cannot give more than the faith that you possess, and that you can check your faith by your giving. Your giving always is in relationship to the amount of faith that you have. I didn't catch on to that very easy.

For example, in Java in Indonesia, I preached in a church. When we got through, we had the altar call and people came forward to pray. When they finished, they left. Finally, there was no one left there but the missionary host, myself and two sinners. Everybody else had gone home. As the missionary spoke to the two men, one of them got wonderfully saved. He was full of joy. The other one got nothing, as far as I could tell. He looked just as sad as ever.

Finally, they both got up, left the altar and started to leave the church. Now in that church, they didn't take up offerings by walking around with a pan. Instead, they put a receptical by the door, and everybody that wanted to give could put their money in the little box. As we walked to the back of that church building, we could see there wasn't much in the pan. There were quite a few people in the meeting, but they had ignored the pan when they went out.

When we got there, the man that did not get saved looked at the pan, looked the other way, and walked out into the night. But the man that really got saved almost got drunk with it. And when he got there, he opened his pocketbook without looking inside and began to say, "Alleluia." He almost filled the pan! Everything he had went in there! And

then he put his empty pocketbook back, and he walked down the street saying, “Alleluia.” I laughed about it, but God got hold of me and said, “There’s nothing funny about it. At the altar it took faith to be saved, and the first man didn’t have any. When he got to the offering plate, he still didn’t have any faith. He had money in his pocket, but he couldn’t give to Me. He didn’t have enough faith to get saved, and he didn’t have enough faith to give Me any money.” Listen, what was true there is also true here. You can check yourself right now. Do you love to pay tithes?

We don’t want to beat you over the head about this matter, but we do want to pray for you to get faith because when you get faith, you will want to pay tithes. You see? And so maybe you should say, “O Lord, help me, Lord, right now that I might give more.”

I want you to notice something. Men count how much you put in the offering plate. God counts how much you have left in your wallet. You know, there are two sets of books: earth’s books (this is what you put in) and heaven’s books (this is what you have left). So, when you’re a little widow and you only have two cents and you put them both in, everyone in heaven claps their hands! But you might say, “She didn’t give as much as I did. I gave five dollars.” The Lord says, “But honey, you had a hundred and five dollars left over that you didn’t put in, and she had nothing left over!” Remember, the Lord’s good at keeping books. Do you know what that means? It means that the poor have as much praise in heaven as anybody else. Yeah. Isn’t God good to us?

In second Corinthians 9:6 Paul says, “I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” Now you and I both know that our lives are so brief. How foolish it is for us to store treasures in a place where we soon must leave. How insecure is our treasure on this earth. While we’re still

here, it can be lost in a moment. Bonds may depreciate and health may fail before a man can enjoy the wealth that he's made himself. Let us remember that only as we give generously to our God will He give generously to us.

When Howard Hughes died, everybody wanted to know how many billions he had. One man said, "Have you heard how much he left behind?" And I said, "Yeah! All of it. And you're going to do the same. And I'm gonna do the same." So, let's lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. Let's give to the Lord that which He requires of us. I'd rather go hungry than to take God's money and use it!

Chapter 21

Why We Believe in Stewardship

You are about to study one of the greatest topics anyone can get his spirit into for the simple reason that you're going to be judged by your stewardship. Every person who knows the Lord will be judged by the contents of this lesson. So, it's tremendously important that you study it closely.

From Matthew's Gospel, chapter 25, beginning in verse 14, we listen to the Lord as he says these words: "The kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods." The man doing the traveling in this story is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the servants to whom he delivered the goods happens to be you and me.

Verse 15 says, "Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability." So many times we say, "Lord, give me something." And He replies, "Well, I gave you one ability, and you didn't use it. Now you want two?"

The Lord gave to these people goods according to their several abilities. He wasn't wasting anything. There are people that would like to have all nine gifts of the Spirit and sit in their rocking chair and rock the rest of their life away. But the gifts of the Spirit are the weapons of your warfare;

they're not rocking chair gifts! He gives to us according to what we're willing to use for the kingdom!

"And straightway, he took his journey." This part of the passage means that Jesus went back to heaven. "Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. Likewise, he that had two, he went and received two more. But he that received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money." The first two people doubled their money, but this man buried his goods and made nothing of them. And that can represent your talents . . . the abilities that God has given to you.

"After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." If you don't believe there's going to be a reckoning day, you've missed God. You really have. "For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath." The one who had nothing in the beginning was given something from the Lord, but because he didn't use it, it was taken from him, so he went back to zero. But the one who had five goods gained five more. Why? Because he used what he had.

Jesus ends the story by saying, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." I don't like that last verse at all. That means that the person who didn't use what God gave to him actually threw away his salvation. He had a gift from God, and he threw it away.

You see, God is the owner of everything, and He is going to hold everyone accountable for what they have been given. Most people don't understand that. They don't believe it. They don't accept it, and so they'll have to meet the Lord and He'll say, "Everything you had belonged to Me!" Someday, we're going to discover that God is the owner of all things and that we are His stewards, His servants.

In first Corinthians 6:19 Paul said it this way: “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?” You see? We’re not our own. We are servants of the Most High God. Verse 20 of that same chapter says, “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” It’s so difficult to get across this truth. We feel so independent in our own abilities that we just can’t realize that everything we have belongs to God, and that we are the servants of the Most High.

Truths to be Remembered

There are some tremendous truths that we are to think about and pray about every day. The first one is this: God is the Maker and the Owner of the earth that we live on. Psalm 24:1 says, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein.” It belongs to Him! It is His.

In Romans 14:8 we read, “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord’s!” Do you see it? We belong to Him! We are His.

It’s a different world when we come to realize that God is the Maker and God is the Owner of everything, including our very own lives. We belong to Him; we are His servants. Therefore, every decision we make should be a decision directed toward God! Is He pleased with the decision I’m making?

In Acts 4:32 it says, “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that any of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common.” If you’d like to know how the church was born, how it got started, you have it right there. These people took what they had, and they let

the whole church of God profit from it. They didn't hold on to their goods; they gave them away. "No man said that anything he possessed was his own, but they had all things common" (Acts 4:32).

In First Corinthians 4:7 it says, "For who maketh thee to differ from one another, and what is thou that thou didst not receive?" Isn't that beautiful? Everything we have we got from God. We are really the stewards of the Most High God. We've got to know it, we've got to believe it, and we've got to act like it!

In Luke 16 the Lord Jesus said this: "There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods, and he called him, and said unto him, 'How is it that I hear this of thee?' Give an account of thy stewardship: for thou mayest be no longer steward." This steward was a man who worked for a rich man. One day the rich man called him and wanted to know what was happening with his estate. The steward was very sharp. He didn't want to get fired, so he went and made things right with all the people that owed his master money. He gave every one of them a bargain. Then his boss said to him, "You're more clever than I thought you were. I'll just keep you." Jesus concludes this story by basically saying, "If this unjust man knew how to please his boss, how much more should you know how to handle the material things on the face of this earth."

Do you know what the Lord once told me? He said, "I could actually save the world with the junk that my people have laying around their houses. But they not only refuse to give Me what belongs to Me, they won't even give Me their junk--the things that are laying in dresser drawers, like old jewelry, old diamonds, old gold, old silver, old heirlooms. They have enough to save the world, but they won't give it to Me."

A Chinese man in Hong Kong asked me one day if I wanted to see his jewelry. And I said, "Yes." So he took me to the great Shanghai Hong Kong bank and asked for the key to his vault. We went to a special room, and he pulled out a big square box. I couldn't imagine that one Chinese man owned so much jewelry. I said to him, "Why in the world do you have all of that jewelry there?" He said he kept it because it had a much higher value than the Hong Kong dollar. I don't know how much he had, but he had that drawer full. Then he put it all back and locked it up. I didn't get any of it; I just got to look at it. Here was great wealth, but God couldn't use it because this man wanted to hold on to it for personal reasons. He didn't know what it meant to be a steward, and I ought to tell you that he has lost most of that wealth.

First Corinthians 4:2 says, "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." That includes you and me.

In Matthew 16:26 it says, "For what is a man profited if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul, and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Isn't that amazing? If you gained the whole world, if you had all this stuff down here, what advantage is it? Your soul is so much more valuable than everything on the face of this earth. What are you going to exchange for an immortal soul?

Matthew 18:23 says, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants." That's the kingdom of God, you see. Jesus is the king; you and I are the servants, and someday we are going to have to give an account to him for the way we've handled our time, the way we've handled our finances, the way we've handled our tongue, and everything else. We're going to give an account for every aspect of our life.

In Romans 14:10 it says, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For

we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” You should underline that verse very carefully. You don’t have to say, “Lord, look how bad he is.” The Lord will say, “Just a minute, I’ll get you in front of the mirror soon enough, and I’ll be judging you.” I don’t want to judge anybody else. I’ve got my hands full trying to get myself in shape.

In Acts 5:1-5 it says, “But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.’ And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.” I’m glad God doesn’t do that today. I mean, I’d rather you keep on living, even if you’re trying to make like you’re doing something that you’re not doing. I want you to live, hoping that before you die, you’ll get things right.

Life’s Trusts are to be Honored

In First Corinthians 6:19 it says this: “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.” When we talk about stewardship, we’re not just talking about money. We’re talking about our bodies being a life trust. I’m glad that since I was seventeen years old, almost every physical action I have made has been for the kingdom of God. I am so glad that in Australia, though I was only there for three months, I left a church that has a thousand people in it right now. I could have done my own thing in

Australia. I was a stranger there. I could have just slipped around from town to town, given one night talks, looked the churches over, visited at the beautiful country, and played with the kangaroos a little bit. I could have had a good time and left the country, but I would have left nothing behind. I refused to do that. I was only there three months, and two months of it was spent in a crusade where we raised up a church. You've got bodies, and someday you will have to give an account to God regarding how you used it for His service.

In Ephesians 5:16 it says, "Redeem the time, because the days are evil." Your time belongs to the Lord. You're not supposed to waste it. You're supposed to use it in studying His Word, in blessing others, and in prayer.

In Luke 13:6-9 it says, "He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, 'Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?' And he answering said unto him, 'Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it. And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.'" Did you know I can plead for your life before God and say, "Lord, don't let them die. They'll do better. Lord, I'm working with them. Won't You give them another chance, Lord?" And God will do that--He'll prolong a person's living because someone has stood in their place interceding for them.

In John 15:5 and 8 it says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. In this is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Fruit has to do with souls being saved. The reference to "much fruit" has to be with the growth of the kingdom. God wants you to bear fruit. The Father is glorified with that.

In Matthew 25:34 we read that God wants us to do good things--when I was hungry, you gave me meat, and when I was thirsty, you gave me drink. We should bless and help those that need blessing.

In Luke 10:30, Jesus told a story about a certain man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He was a Samaritan, not a believer, and not a member of the church. But he came upon a person in need, and he helped him. If outsiders can show kindness to strangers, how much more should we do it. I believe the church should be the nicest people and the most compassionate people on the face of the earth.

In Ephesians 2:10 it says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." We're created for good works. We're supposed to have good works in our life in order that we might please Him.

Examples of Stewardship

You say, how can I be a good steward? In Galatians 2:20 it says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." That's the way you're to live--a life yielded.

In Acts chapter 7 it says, "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel." Moses loved them. And when he saw them hurt, he came against those who hurt them. That act cost him forty years of exile in the desert, but when God appeared to him, he returned to rescue his people. Moses dedicated his total life, his total personality, to loving others, to blessing others. Still, many people grumbled at him. If you do something for God,

don't expect a lot of appreciation from people. Expect your appreciation from upstairs.

David shows us how to be dedicated in First Samuel 16:11. "And Samuel said unto Jesse, 'Are here all thy children?' And he said, 'There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep.' And Samuel said unto Jesse, 'Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.'" So, David was brought before Samuel, and the Lord said this is the man who will be Israel's next king. Later in this same chapter we read, "And David came and stood before Saul, and as he stood before him he loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer." Still later, we see that David played the harp for Saul in order to comfort him. Here was a man using his abilities that he might bless others and help others. Every one of us have abilities that we can share and give with others.

In Acts chapter 2 and verse 40 it says, "And with many other words did Peter testify and exhort, saying, 'Save yourselves from this untoward generation.' Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Here was another man who extended himself to bless others. Peter gave to the Lord everything he had, including himself, and the Lord used him as a mighty soulwinner.

In Acts chapter 9 and verse 39 it says, "Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them." Here was a woman that they didn't want to see die. She was so good to everybody. They loved her because she gave herself to God and to them in every way she could.

Conclusion

In this lesson, we show you so many means and ways of stewardship. We often think it's just with our finances, but as you can see, it's with our total life that we're stewards unto the Lord.

I'd like you to know that stewardship is not easy. I think you can see that by now. It calls for the utmost of ourselves and of our service. It calls for service with joy --service done not unto men but unto God. No corner of one's life is exempt from being a servant of the Lord and from stewardship. God has always demanded our all. And without complete surrender in all phases of our living, we will not have a victorious life. If you don't give yourself to this, then you don't become a winner. You'll just become a mediocre person. God wants us to be winners.

I believe in these last days, God is calling us to greater measures of sacrifice than ever before in the history of the world. God's calling us to greater stewardship. There are people living today who are better stewards than we've known in all of history. And God wants us all to join that army, and win the world to the Lord Jesus in our generation. In *our* generation, God wants us to do it. We can only do it as we give of ourselves completely. God can do so much with what little we have, like the little boy, you know, who only had five little loaves. God can do so much with what we have if it's delivered into His hands.

Chapter 22

Why We Believe in Witnessing

In this chapter we begin the important study of why we believe in witnessing. The first reason we believe in witnessing is because witnessing is an integral part of our salvation. You might be a Democrat and never try to make another person into a Democrat. Of course, you'd be a poor Democrat. You might be a Republican and have no plans to help anyone else become a Republican. But when it comes to being a follower of Christ, you cannot be a Christian without a desire in your heart to cause somebody to be a Christian. That is not possible.

The first disciple Jesus had was a man by the name of Andrew. At one time Andrew was a follower of John the Baptist. We don't know how long he had been a Baptist, but one day his teacher stood up and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world," referring to Jesus Christ. Andrew was one of these clever persons who understood new opportunities, and he very quickly left the Baptist church and joined the Christian church for the simple reason that he had found One that his own leader said superseded him and was greater than himself.

When we receive a greater revelation, we should not live in the lesser revelation, because if we do, we will not be

living according to all the light that God has brought across our path. Do you believe in living in all the light that's available to you?

When you become a Christian, it should be natural for you to help others become Christians as well. The number one reason why we have to witness is found in Matthew's Gospel (28:19-20) and also in Mark's Gospel (16:15-16). The Lord Jesus said (in Matthew's writing) that believers in him were to go and teach all nations. So we see here that a Christian is under a command from his Commander-in-chief to witness. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus said this: "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

If you would permit me to change that one word, "world," "I would appreciate it. I think Jesus is telling us to go into all your *generation* and preach the Gospel to every creature. You cannot do anything about a past generation. Moaning about it will not save that generation. They don't live anymore on earth. And you cannot do anything about a generation that is yet to come. But there are around eight billion people on earth living in *this* generation. There are more people living at this precise moment than have ever died! And those people are to be made into disciples of Christ. If the proper burden ever hit the church that we were supposed to evangelize this generation, we would have the greatest, moral, religious, economic, and political revolution the world has ever known. It would change the face of the earth if the total Christian body accepted the challenge of its Commander-in-chief. I will not give the devil my generation!

The Candle

You say, "Why should we seek to evangelize others?" The answer is found in Matthew's Gospel (5:14). It's because the Master says we are the light of the world. Now, this means that those who are not evangelized are living in a

spiritual darkness; they do not know the way to go to enter heaven. Then, almost mocking them, Jesus said, “A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.” He said this at the north end of the Sea of Galilee, and Safed was a city located on the hill right behind him. This city was some 2,500 feet above sea level. So when Jesus was talking to the people in front of the sea of Galilee, they could plainly see a city set on a hill. It could not be hidden. Jesus was telling his audience that when they become true believers, they will not be able to hide. If you want to hide, you should get out of this bunch.

Jesus says you are to let your light shine. Where is it to shine? Before men. You know, a lot of us would like for our lives to shine before God. But He said, “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” If there’s anything to cause people to want to live for God, it’s the observing of a good life, a good person, a holy person.

In Mark’s Gospel, chapter 4 and verse 21, Jesus said the candle signifies the Christian testimony and witness in a darkened world. “And he said unto them, ‘Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed, and not to be set on a candlestick?’ Jesus is showing you that every Christian can be a witness. If we’re all candles, then every one of us gives light. There are no exceptions. You can’t say, “We’ll let the boys do it . . . we’ll let the young girls do it . . . we’ll let someone else do it.” No! If you’re God’s candle, your light must shine! And this doesn’t mean just walking down the street smiling. No, that’s something else. Your light is shining when you’re telling people about Jesus! That’s the light, the eternal light that we have under consideration here.

In Proverbs 20:27 it says, “The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.” Then, in First Corinthians 2:11 it says, “For what man knoweth the

things of man save the spirit of man which is in him, so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God that is within him.” In other words, when the Bible speaks about this candle, it’s really talking about a born again person who knows the Lord Jesus Christ. *We* are lights!

In Psalm 18 and verse 28 it says, “For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.” Do you want your candle lit? I’d like to have mine made bigger, how about you? Our candle is our witness before the Lord. It is the power of our witness, and that’s the reason we should say, “Lord, increase the light of my candle so we can penetrate further and further into the darkness.”

Remember Matthew 5:15. It says that men don’t light a candle to put it under a bushel. You know what would happen if you did? That’s right, you’d burn the bushel and completely destroy it. So whatever you are hiding under, you’re going to destroy it. If it’s your church, you’re going to burn the thing up. You’re not helping, but hurting matters, when you try hiding your light. Therefore, when you become a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, you become something special; you become a light. In the world that we live in today, it would be a mighty sad place in which to live if there were no Christians. I wouldn’t want to live there. If there were no lights, there would only be complete darkness. So, let’s thank God for every light, for every Christian, for every denomination, for every pastor, for every church!

This lighting of the candle is a divine work. Notice Second Corinthians 4:6, where it says, “For God who commandeth the light to shine out of darkness has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” The text says God commanded the light to shine out of darkness. Now, we know there’s a double meaning here. In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, He caused light to come into

existence. Where there was darkness, He brought forth light out of that darkness. Likewise, in your life and my life, we were in darkness, but then God called that light to come up out of the darkness of sin . . . God called the light of heaven to come and shine in our hearts. When that happened, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God came into us. Isn't that great?

The lighting of our candle is also a separating work. In Second Corinthians 6:14 it says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness." Now I have never been able to figure out a couple of things. One is this: How can a person who is a wonderful Christian go into an equal business partnership with a person who is a complete unbeliever? I've known of a lot of people who have done that very thing, but I haven't seen much success come from it. And one worse example than that, of course, is when a beautiful young Christian marries a complete non-Christian. They may say that they are going to become "one," but I ask you, "How can darkness and light become one?" If you turn out the lights in a room, the light is gone and the darkness takes over. Then, if you turn on the lights, the darkness is gone; it takes over. Light is a destroyer of darkness. You don't know where it goes. It's simply gone. Well, how in the world can you have a Christian marry a non-Christian and then say that they are "one." It's impossible. Light and darkness don't mix! They will create only problems for each other and their children, then they'll harass the preacher for forty years about it, and he had nothing to do with it! Light is light and darkness is darkness; let's not try to put them together.

Next, we discover that the lighting of the candle is a personal work in every man and every woman. Ephesians 5:8 says, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are

ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” This is a personal work. This lighting up within us is something that God does for each one of us. He doesn’t do it by the family; He does it by the individual person. And I know He puts a little more wattage in some than He does others. So, be sure you pray for more wattage.

The Good Samaritan

In Luke’s Gospel we read, “And Jesus answering said, ‘A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. [This man represents the leadership of religion.] And likewise a Levite, when he was at that place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. [This man represents the layman in religion.] But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring oil and wine, and set him on his own beast. [That meant he had to walk.] And brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence and gave them to the host and said, ‘Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.’”

Here we find a man who is typical of all sinners. He was on a journey, and he fell among bad people. He got hurt, he got pushed down, and he needed help. Then religion looked upon him and said, “Hey, he’s too dirty to look at,” just like we might say about a harlot or a man that’s been in prison or a person who’s an alcoholic. Then a professional layman comes by and says, “Well, I can’t stand that, either.” Finally, there came a person who was called the Samaritan.

He wasn't even of the Jewish faith. He had no standing in the religious circles, yet he had compassion upon him. And through this compassion, he gave him everything he needed. He washed his wounds, he gave him food, he took him to a place of shelter, he paid for his expenses after he was gone, and he was prepared to pay any additional fees that might arise. This last man showed us what we should do when we see someone who is hurting or in need. It could be your next door neighbor getting a divorce. It could be the man down the street, or it could be the woman across the street. It could be the person you're working with.

It's the person who's in need that we should witness to, that we should help. You know, God's going to bring you into contact with certain people, and when you meet them, remember that they need you. God has no partiality, and you shouldn't have any either. Whoever they are, they need God's love.

In John 3:16 it says, "God loved the world and gave His only begotten Son." Another great Scripture is Matthew 16:26. It says, "If a man gains the world and loses his soul, what will it profit him? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" The value of the soul cannot be measured. Not one of you reading this book can be measured for your value. That means every human being on the face of this earth is worth more than the whole of the earth! And if that's the case, we should go after them, we should win them to Jesus. Never forget it: besides being saved, the greatest joy anybody can experience takes place when you win somebody to Jesus.

Chapter 23

Why We Believe in the Hereafter

A week ago I heard a rather well known preacher on the radio, and the things he taught were not true. I said to myself, “Isn’t it a pity that he is spending so much money to teach ideas that are not true?” He had the book of Revelation all mixed up; it was just simply pitiful. Listen to me. If we don’t have our own footings and foundations deep in God, we can be led astray by some pleasant looking person who has a good voice. So, it is necessary for us to study the Christian foundations that we might know the truth!

In Revelation 20 and verse 10 it says, “The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” Now we know the destiny for the devil, the antichrist (here he is called the beast), and the main religious leader during the great tribulation (here he is called the false prophet). It says that they will all be sent into the lake of fire for ever and ever!

Verse 11 of that same chapter says, “And then I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fell away, there was found no place for them.” Later in the Book of Revelation it says this: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven

and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.’ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes [that’s the people that are redeemed]; and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow nor crying, nor shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

We see here that the righteous are destined to eternal life and to live in the presence of the Creator of the universe—they shall live there with Him forever. And this is made possible because of what we call Calvary. Here the Lord Jesus Christ gave his life so you and I might have eternal life.

On the other hand, the destiny of the wicked will be an eternal separation from God. This is known as the second death. At that moment, the God of love will become the God of justice! I’d underscore that if I were you. A lot of people can’t see how a God of love can also be a God of justice. That’s because they don’t understand what love is. Love is not sentimentality, like some people think. Love is based upon truth and integrity and honesty; it is more than sentimentalism.

The Promise of Christ

We have the promise of heavenly citizenship from Christ in John 14:1-4. He says, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that

where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.” And so He said in My Father’s house are many places to live.

Jesus promised, “I’m going to prepare a place for you.” That means after death Christians will live with God forever. They should have no fear in this matter because Jesus promised we shall live with God forever.

In Philippians 3:20 it says, “Our conversation is in heaven from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” Our citizenship is in heaven. We’re just passing through the earth for a very short length of time, but our real true citizenship is in heaven. Verse 21 says, “Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things under himself.” The believer has entered into a heavenly citizenship where he shall live forever with God after he leaves this world.

In Revelation 20:15 it says, “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Your name, I suppose, is in the book of death when you serve the devil. But God takes it out of there when you become a true Christian, and He places it in the book of life. Someday, when we stand before Him, He will open the books and read to us all that we have done. We wouldn’t have understood that a few years ago, but computers today can do a million things at one time; so God can do the same thing as He records all of the details about our life.

Revelation says, whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. So we see there are two destinies in the world that is to come. One eternal destiny is living with God forever because you believe in Him and you live by His commands. The other eternal destiny is eternal desolation if you refuse to love and serve God.

In Revelation 21:8 it says, “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” Here the Bible explains what it means by “the second death.” You don’t have to ask somebody, “What is the second death?” The Bible tells you what the second death is, and it tells you the kind of people that enter into that second death.

You don’t have to be fearful, you don’t have to be unbelieving, you don’t have to be an abomination to God, you don’t have to be a murderer, you don’t have to live immorally, you don’t have to be a spiritist and give yourself over to all kinds of spiritism, you don’t have to be an idolater and kneel down to idols, you don’t have to be a liar. You can be born again and go to heaven! You don’t have to go to hell. Nobody, not even the devil, can make you go there. It’s your own will that takes you there.

Two Resurrections

Now, because there’s such a divergence here of the two destinies of the human family, there will also be two resurrections--one for the righteous, and another for the wicked. In John 5:28 it says, “Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” Do you see it? There are two resurrections. They are not the same, and they do not take place at the same time. One will occur at the beginning of the great tribulation, when there is the resurrection of all those people who have died in Christ. But the people who are evil will not be resurrected until a thousand years later.

In Revelation 20:4-5 it says, “And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.” The first resurrection is when God brings forth those people who have died in Christ or died in God or died in righteousness or died in truth anytime from Adam until the time of the rapture of the church.

Two Judgments

Just as there are two times of resurrection, there will also be two times of judgment. The judgment of the righteous will be according to their works, that’s found in Second Corinthians 5:10. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” Every one of us will be judged before God for how we have lived! I want you to know it’ll be a fearsome time. You say, “But this judgment doesn’t have to do with the destiny of my soul.” That’s correct, it does not have to do with your destiny. Everyone at this first judgment are believers, every one of them. The only thing it will do in eternity is to give you your place there, and some in eternity will wish they had been a greater servant of the Lord Jesus while living here on earth.

Jesus said it this way: “Some shall be over one city, two cities, or three cities, or five cities, or ten cities.” In other words, you will be given a place in eternity that corresponds to your faithfulness now. You might say, “Well, that little

widow over there, she is ignorant and doesn't know much and can't do much." But if she is completely faithful in what God tells her to do, in the next life she won't be ignorant. And she won't be little, either. You see? When she gets over there, she'll be as great as everybody else. The Lord will look at her and say, "You did your best, didn't you?" "Yes, I did," she'll say.

The Lord may speak to some famous pastor and say, "You never did do about half as much as you could have done, did you?" And he'll say, "No." Well, Jesus will tell him, "Then, you only get a half reward over here, too."

And to some evangelist, Jesus will say, "You took off more time than you were on, didn't you?" And he'll have to admit, "Yes, that's true." The Lord will say to him, "Then, you only get this much for a reward."

If God's called you to do something, you'd better do it. If you're called to give, give with all your heart. And if you're called to pray, pray with all your heart. And if you're called to go, go with all your heart. Whatever God's designed for you to do, do it. Do it!

Let me say a word right here, and don't you ever forget it: If God wants you to do something, He'll open the door for it and you don't have to keep screaming at Him. You don't have to be saying, "Oh, God called me to Korea and I've never gotten there yet." Honey, if God wants you in Korea, He's got a lot of ways to get you there. You say, "What does it mean when I feel led to go and I don't go?" You know what it means: It means God wants to know if you're willing to go. And if you're willing to go, it's finalized with God. You say, "Can you prove it?" Very easily. God said to Abraham, offer up your son, but that son never died. When God looked into the purity of his heart, He said, "You've already finished it, it's already completed!" When God tells you to go to Africa, and you say, "Yes, Lord, I'll go!" He

says, “Don’t go any further; you’re close enough. Everyday you should say, “Lord, I will do what You want me to do; I will be what You want me to be.” That’s all He’s looking for . . . a willingness.

As I said, there will be two judgments. The first one will be the judgment seat of Christ. This is where all believers will stand before Him. It does not have to do with your eternal destiny; it has to do with your relationship to your eternal rewards.

In First Corinthians 3:10-15 it says, “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

Every man’s work shall be made manifest. That’s what the judgment seat of Christ is for. Whatever we’ve done in pride, and whatever we have done in self aggrandizement to build ourselves up, that, the Bible says, will be burned. It’ll be the wood, hay and stubble. The fire shall try every man’s work to reveal what sort it is. Whatever I do, I must do it because I love you. I must do it because I care. I must do it because Jesus commanded it. And if I don’t have the right motive in doing it, the Bible says that will be wood, hay and stubble, and it will be burned. It could be the same with the giving of your tithes. If you don’t give it in the right way, that’s burned, you see. If you’re witnessing with

the wrong spirit, it's burned. Everything that is not done the way that God wants it to be done is wood, hay and stubble.

The judgment of the wicked shall not be there; instead, it will take place at the great white throne judgment. "And I saw a great white throne from whose face the earth and the heaven fell away, there was found no place for them, and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:11-15).

Are you seeing it? This is the great white throne judgment. Jesus Christ will be the judge seated upon this throne. And then the dead, small and great, shall all stand before him--not the believers, not the Christians. This is the wicked dead. And the dead will be judged out of those things that God has written down in His books. Then, death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire.

Let me help you understand that. If someone were to kill someone tonight, he wouldn't be taken to the penitentiary tonight. He'd be taken to a local jail instead. He might stay there for several months, then they would bring him before the judge. At that time the Judge will tell him, "You are guilty; you killed that person. I'll have to put you in the penitentiary for the rest of your life."

When a righteous person dies, he goes to be with God. The Bible says, "To be absent from the body is to be in the presence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:8). So, when the righteous die, they go immediately to be

wherever Christ is; they're not sleeping down in the earth somewhere. You mustn't believe that. The dead in Christ go to be with Christ, and those that are wicked go to a place of torment--not later, but as soon as they die. Then, later, there comes the judgment. At that time they will know where they belong; they will realize that they are there for the simple reason that they missed living right.

Heaven—The Reward of the Righteous

Christ has promised a heavenly reward. In John 14:2 he promised you a house to live in. In John 14:3 he promised to have fellowship with you. And in Revelation 21:4, it says that when you get with Him, God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes. There shall be no death, no sorrow, no crying, neither shall there be any pain, all the former things are passed away. That means all sorrows and afflictions will be banished. It will be gone forever. It even says in this verse that there shall be no more death. The greatest enemy man has ever confronted is death, and it shall be banished by the mighty power of God!

Hell—The Reward of the Wicked

While the righteous will enjoy heaven, the wicked will know torment. In Revelation 20:14-15 it says, "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire, this is the second death. Whosoever was not written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

In Revelation 21:8 it says that the fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, and so forth, will be the sinner's companions for eternitiy.

In Luke 16:19-31 we see that the sinner will be haunted by memory and remorse. "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus,

which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man died also and was buried. In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' Abraham said, 'Remember, in thy lifetime you received all the good things, likewise Lazarus evil things, he is now comforted and you are tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.' Then he said, 'I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house for I have five brothers; that they may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.' And he said, 'Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.' And he said unto him, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.'

False Views

We have a lot of things that we ought to give attention to regarding the false ideas about the hereafter. One of them is universalism. It's taught in our world, even our own town. This is the view that everybody will eventually be saved--no one ends up in hell. There are lots of people who say that God is too loving to exclude anyone from heaven, but that is not true. John 3:18 and 26 say, "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned

already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Then we have a doctrine called restorationism. According to this view, you may go to hell for a time, for a temporary period, then you will get out. That is not true. Hell is permanent!

We also have a doctrine called second probationism. In this false position, you will have a second chance of salvation. Somewhere in eternity, between death and the resurrection, you will have a second chance to repent and be saved. But Hebrews 9:27 says, “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” You should put some little circles around the key words there.

Conclusion

Man is given the privilege of choosing his own destiny. And you can be sure that his present decisions will forever seal his destiny. Every human being will make the decision whether he wishes to live with God or live without God for all eternity!