

The following is a collection of Sermon Notes taken from the time Nancy and I started visiting ISBC until 1999. Most sermons were from Tom Suiter

Undated — Remembering the Food in Egypt. Numbers 11:4-6

We need to acquire a taste for heavenly things: I believe that when you are born again, you will lose a taste for earthly things and will have (supernaturally) a taste for the things of God.

We need to have a proper perspective on the past: People forget how miserable they were apart from God.

Israel was walking toward God but they were facing toward Egypt. These people had not really repented. (Aside: Some people today are trying to back into the kingdom of God by keeping an eye on the world while half-heartedly moving in Christian circles.)

We need to understand that God is on our side: The Lord will fight for you! (See Rom 8:28,29)

We need to understand God's ultimate plan: Look to the future — to eternity.

Undated — Responding to God's Revelation Matt 14:22-33

God's Revelation Regarding Worship

Jesus revealed Himself as the Son of God. He demonstrated His dominion over all things. Jesus showed He was over all our fears and failures. He revealed Himself as the I AM. The response from His disciples was worship. They responded with THOU ART.

Revelation is essential to knowing God. (Jesus revealed God to us: Gal 1:12, Eph 1:17, Eph 3:3, Rev 1:1)

When God speaks to us out of His word, it is a revelation. There is also an expected response. Our first response is agreement - an amen. Before we can have true worship we need both the revelation and the response.

When God reveals His [Person] to us, our response is [awe].

[Purpose - amazement] [Holiness - awe] [Glory - awe] [Grace - amazement] [Power - afraid] [Wisdom - agreement] [Justice - afraid, agreement] [Wrath - afraid] [Love - amazement] [Truth - agreement]

Undated Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no vision (revelation) the people cast off restraint.

Revelation can have either an active or passive response.

Passive is to say or do nothing. This is a way to grieve the Spirit.

Active is to obey the Spirit and to honor God.

Appropriate ways to respond to God's revelation (examples from Scripture):

Lift up your hands, stand up, shout, kneel or bow down, prostrate (fall face down), clap your hands, and dance.

May 3, 1992 From Within

Rom 12:1,2

We are not shaped from without but are changed from within. The age in which we are living is going to become worse. There will be a growing separation of the worldly and the Godly. Many get caught in between. Others will take a stand for Christ and they will be obviously different.

Before this world system falls apart completely, people of the world will seek out Christians because we have the light and understanding. We are to be pure and hold. We, as Christians, are allowing the world to gradually conform us to the world. We must ask "what good is gaining the whole world and losing your soul?" We do not belong to the world — we

have been chosen out of this world and that is why the world system hates us. We cannot live our lives by the rationale of the world but must live by the Word.

By the cross we are dead to the world and the world is dead to us. Why then do we continue to try to live by the rules of the world? Everyone who is born of God overcomes the world system.

How has the world influenced us?

Attitude: We have become more “open” to man’s opinions. We need to know what the Word says rather than what we or someone else thinks.

The Way We Dress: There is a principle of holiness that we need to follow. Compare Exodus 26:1 and 28:6. The priests dressed in the same array as the interior of the temple. When we go out into the world we are representatives of Jesus. Therefore, we need to be arrayed in holiness. (We are to dress modestly before God.)

How We Use the Lord’s Day: The Scriptures are clear in this, “Six day shall you labor and the seventh is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. In it you shall not do any work.

In Entertainment and Music: We are caught up in play and find we have more interest in ball games than we do the Bible.

We have one calling and that is to be as Jesus is.

May 10, 1992 The Light

Rom 13:11-12 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

Eph 6:10-12 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

1 Thess 5:4-5 But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness.

Before there was anything there was darkness and the darkness ruled. And out of that darkness, God spoke and said, “Let there be light.” On the sixth day, God created man and took something of His light and put it in man and man began to shine and all of creation could see the light. But the prince of darkness was not pleased and decided to put out the light. So he crept into the garden and pierced the heart of man with darkness. The darkness grew until one brother killed another and the prince of darkness was pleased.

God’s people were in the darkness of Egypt. God called out from the burning bush of light and sent Moses to bring His people out of the shadows of death. He told the people that the God Who is Light sent him to lead them out of darkness. But darkness would not let them go. God spoke to Death and sent him down into Egypt.

God brought them to the mountain and gave the law so that those who would walk in the way of the Lord would be in the light. But darkness opposed and captured those who lived on the edge of light and darkness for most of them lived on the edge. So God sent His prophets and darkness killed the prophets.

So God called upon a star to shine with an unusual brightness to guide men to the Light of the world. A cry of a Baby was heard in the darkness. He prince of darkness pledged to put

out the Light. But the Light fled to Egypt. Next the Light was found in a village in Galilee and the Light was shining and it was overcoming the darkness. Then one day, men who loved darkness cried out “put out the light, put out the light.” So they nailed the Light to a cross and as He died darkness covered the earth and the prince of darkness was elated and thought that he had overcome the Light and conquered the souls of men. The disciples of the light took down the body and placed it in a dark tomb. And they was a celebration in hell. In the midst of the celebration, they came a Light. The minions of darkness fled and a voice cried out “I AM the Light of the world.”

Then Jesus gathered His followers and told them to be light so that people would see them and glorify the Father of Lights. The prince of darkness began to see the lights everywhere. The Giver of Light had given His light to many. Darkness pledged to put out these lights and the world entered the Dark Ages as the prince of darkness grew. But the Father of Lights had a special light that would not be extinguished and they shared the light and it grew.

The war between light and darkness still goes on in this that is the dominion of darkness. One day God will send His Son into this present darkness one more to bring His lights into their eternal home in heaven.

October 3, 1993 Understanding vs Believing (Ron Barker)

We find many Christians who are trying to live in the Old Testament — this is a result of trying to institutionalize God. There is an overwhelming sense of apathy in the Church. What will it take to motivate people? We must realize that we will have to give an account of what we have done with the treasure of the gospel. We must be motivated by our love for the Lord Jesus and not find our motivation in what others expect us to do.

Romans 3:19 ff: Understanding vs believing the Gospel. Explaining the Gospel.

Sin: rebellion, falling short, the character of our old nature.

God’s judgment: We have been declared to be dead in our sins.

The way to remedy: Atonement, God (in Jesus Christ) died for our sin.

God’s Motivation: His love - not that we deserve it - this is the grace of God.

For us to move from just understanding (head knowledge) to believing (heart knowledge) we must experience God’s salvation.

October 10, 1993 A Song of Depression (Tom Suiter) Psalms 142

In verse four we see the words, “No one is concerned for me, no one cares for my life.” The great human need is to be loved and accepted and to have sense that we are worth something to someone. This is the value of the family.

Part of the problem of feeling “they don’t care for me” is that we are part of the “they” as viewed by other people. Other parts of the problem are selfishness and being too busy.

Feeling rejected by others starts in childhood. Children can be cruel to each other. Consequently, we become conditioned at the beginning of life to think that others do not care. Unfortunately, this pattern continues into adulthood and is even present in our churches.

“Nobody cares for me” can lead to criminal behavior and activity.

See 2 Cor 3:13 — Principle: So often we are blind to the truth. It is only in Christ we have the veil removed to see the truth.

“Nobody cares” is an Old Testament concept. In Christ we can know there are those who care.

2 Sam 23:13 — This was at the same time David wrote Ps 142. David fell into a pity party even when there were those who would have died for him.

How can we say “nobody cares” when Christ died for us. We need to open our eyes and hearts.

Myth: You can’t know someone until you live with him/her — This is not true. The truth is that you can live with someone for many years and still not know them. The only way we can know someone is for them to reveal themselves to us.

We guard our hearts — Someone asks “How are you?” We say “Fine.” Most of our relationships are shallow.

We need to open our home

See Rom 12:9ff v.11 problem — Lack of spiritual fervor
v.13 share with those who are in need

Practice Hospitality: How do you “practice?” By just doing it. We can’t wait for hospitality to happen. We have to practice it. We are to practice hospitality to all our brethren by opening up our homes.

1 Peter 3:7 ff v.8 we are to love each other deeply -- love covers a multitude of sin.
v.9 offer hospitality to one another without grumbling

We must take our eyes off our “pitiful selves” and look at the needs of others. If we do this, then our needs will seem to go away in comparison. We will find the joy of the Lord in giving something away.

Nov 14, 1993 A View from Above Eph 3:1

How to handle life when the walls cave in? We don’t like to have “trouble” as part of our theology. Paul was a prisoner.

Not all prisons are made of stone walls and iron bars. We can be imprisoned by habits, financial situations, circumstances. Sometimes our prison is nothing more than our attitude toward our circumstances.

We are all in prison. We are a prisoner of Jesus Christ or we are a prisoner of sin. Paul saw himself as a prisoner of Jesus Christ but the world saw him as a prisoner of Rome.

March 14, 1994 16 Keys to Love That Is True 1 Cor 13

Love IS: patient, kind, rejoices in truth, protects, trusts, hopes, preserves, never fails.

Love IS NOT: envious, boastful, proud, rude, self-seeking, easily angered, a record keeper of wrongs, delight in evil.

A person who is boastful is “me-deep” in conversation.

How to choose your friends -- “those you bring out the best in you.”

When we are operating in/through our spiritual gifts, we are energized by what we do.

May 15, 1994 Keeping Unity Eph 4:1-3

Even if you have unity you still have to be in the process of keeping the unity. The agreement you have achieved can breakdown unless energy is invested (put into) building it.

Why do we need unity? (John 17:20) Jesus prayed that we would be “one” just as He and the Father are “one.” We are in unity when we are at “one” with the Father and the Son. The reason given by Jesus for unity was that the world might believe that the Father had sent the Son.

The success of evangelism depends on unity in the church. Only three percent of the

world claims to be “Christian.”(?) Few examples of unity can be found. The reason is that we in the church have not obeyed the word of God.

The basis for our unity is our relationship with Jesus. 2 Cor 6:14 warns us to not be yoked together with unbelievers. Elsewhere we are told to come out from among them and be separate. We are told to purify ourselves and to seek after holiness.

The basis for unity must be our personal relationship with Jesus. In Eph 4:3 we are told to make every effort (not half hearted). Additionally, we are to be completely humble and gentle (character traits from within). We are to be patient and bear with others (actions toward other). These characteristics help build the bridge to unity.

We could argue that “humility” is the number one Christian virtue. God will not make you humble. He says humble yourself. (See 1 Peter 5:5 . . . all of you clothe yourself with humility)

Gentleness: meekness is the quality that allows a person to be in control of himself. It is strength in submission to the will of God. Willing to suffer a wrong for Jesus. Gentleness is a choice we make.

Patient and forbearing: These traits emerge when we are humble and gentle. We are to be patient with people and hold yourself in control by not giving in to the passion to open your mouth.

Bearing with one another in love: We all need to learn how to deal with “difficult” people. These are God’s sandpaper.

Oct 23, 1994 Eph 5:1,2 The Skill of Imitating

Actors imitate by observation. Many people approach Christianity as “actors” of the faith. Christianity is **not** mimicking Jesus on the stage of life. We cannot always tell the difference between the genuine and the imitators. (See also the Parable of the wheat and tares.)

As Paul used the term (imitators) he did not mean to just act out a role. The root of the word as used by Paul is close to the word for “image.” Just as child may be the “image” of his/her parents. There is a genetic basis and the child can also see the parents.

We imitate by derivation (source) and by observation (experience). We get the genetic make-up from the Holy Spirit — being born of the Spirit of God. Therefore, we can imitate God because we have our source of life in God. I have Christ living in me and I am to focus on Christ in what I do (experience). We are to do what we see Jesus do just as Jesus did what He saw His Heavenly Father do.

The strength of imitation: We are to live a life of love. The kind of love that gives up self — unconditionally.

Love is a commitment and a practice. It is not a feeling. The only way we can have this happen is for Christ to be in us to empower us to be as He is. The only genuine way to imitate God is to love Him supremely. We become like that which we love.

Nov 6, 1994 How We Should Live Eph 5:1-8

In verse 3 we see that certain things should be totally absent from the life of a child of God. There should not even be a hint of such things in our lives. We must not even think about such things. Lives characterized by immorality, impurity, and greed are to be separated from Christians.

We were once in darkness, but now we are light in the Lord. Analogy of coming from a

dark room into a well lit room and then into another dark room. Normal people would be seen only from reflected light. Those who have light within them shine even in the darkness.

Since we live in a dark world, we need to shine. We have been made light in the Lord. The Source of the light is the Spirit of God dwelling in the inner most part of our being. We must make sure that the outer person (the mind, emotion, will, and the body) does not cloud and dim the light within. (The importance of a proper devotional life is seen here.)

We are to have nothing to do with the fruitless works of darkness.

Just our presence should expose the works of darkness.

The light we have in us can never be put out — it is eternal.

We need to turn up the flame and clean up the globe so that we can shine forth the light of Jesus.

Nov 13, 1994 Kingdoms Eph 5:15

Jesus went about preaching and teaching regarding the Kingdom of God.

Paul told us to be very careful . . . making the most of every opportunity, redeeming the time.

The word “time” used here is “kouros” or the age in which we live.

The span of time:

Editors Note: There is a difference in the “last days” (an extended period of time) and the “appointed time of the end” (a much shorted time period).

Nov 27, 1994 The Work and Ministry of the Holy Spirit Eph 5:15-20

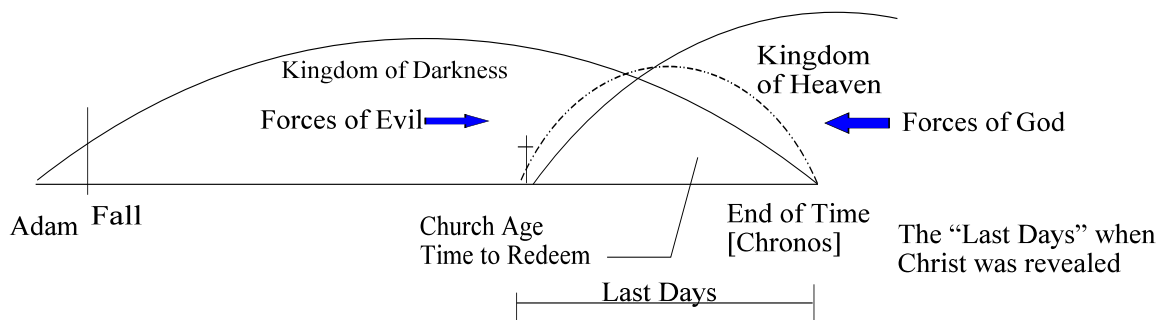
There is a baptism into the Holy Spirit. (See also Eph 4:4-7) — one Lord, one faith, one baptism. By one Spirit we are baptized into Christ. But when Jesus comes He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. The spiritual transaction is something that God does.

Rom 6;3-7 Have died to self — alive to Christ.

1 Cor 12:13 All given the one Spirit to drink — “be filled with the Spirit.”

Be Filled: Command to do, Condition to be maintained, Communion with God and other Christians.

Jan 8, 1995 Ephesians Study



The last part of Ephesians is divided into two sections:

5:21 Submission — to one another out of reverence for the Lord.

6:10 Authority — authority works only as we are submissive to one another.

The family unit is mentioned in the context of submission. The family unit is under attack by materialism and other things we hold in our hearts. This include hedonism, sensual pleasure, feminism — all these cause erosion of the family unit.

Psalms 1:1 advises us to NOT walk in the counsel of the ungodly. We need to hear Godly principles. God has a divine order in creation. Man was given authority over all God had made. Man was to be submissive to God and the animals were to be in submission to man. Adam named all the animals during the time the animals were in submission to him.

God also has an order in our society:	God, rulers, (governmental), people
God also has an order in the church:	God the Son (Head of the Church), apostles, prophets, evangelists (see Heb 13:17)
God also has an order in spirit world:	God, Christ, Christians, spirits/angels
God also has an order in the home:	See 1 Cor 11:3, 1 Peter 3:1-8

Submission in an attitude of the spirit. If the ruler is not godly, then submission may be necessary without obedience.

Jan 15, 1995 Submission: The Pyramid of Power (Authority) Eccl 4:9-12

Notice in vs 12 the third partner is God Who provides the Base of the triangle. We are vulnerable when we stand alone. Two provide some protection and stability, but three is totally strong. Our feet (that on which we stand) need to be anchored in the Lord lest they slip.

Eph 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Submitting is leaning on each other. Reverence for Christ is our anchor. Submission plus proper attitude plus proper relationship equals power.

1. Wife's relationship to God: Submission to God is an affirmation of faith. The wife who is not submissive to her husband is not in submission to Christ. The wife is not accountable for her husband. The wife is responsible for her heart attitude. Submission cannot be forced - it comes from within. It is NOT live it on the outside but must happen naturally because of the rightness of the heart.
2. See Proverbs 31:10ff A wife's relationship to her husband (submission) is an announcement of dependency. It is also an agreement of cooperation.
3. A wife's relationship to herself - a meek and quiet spirit - she knows who she is.

Jan 22, 1995 The Crucified Husband

Eph 5:21-33 Just as Christ gave His life for the Church, the husband must give his life for his wife. The husband is to be characterized by sacrificial love. A husband's love should be strong enough to do four things.

1. To elect her - choose or set apart. Willingness to put her first in your life. Provide loving leadership - we live out holiness by Christ's example.
2. To edify her - to build her up. Praise your wife - be honest. Build up communication between the two of you. Build up her confidence. Build up her character - be a character modeler.
3. To envelope her - protect your wife from social exploitation (by other men). Christ loves the church and is jealous for (over) her. If you have open communication, she will tell you what is developing away from you. Protect her from financial pressure. Protect from rebellious children, from emotional burn out -- help out with things she does.

4. To elevate her - put in place of honor. Let others see her as someone special to you. If you as the father esteems her highly, then the children will also. Elevate her to a place of holiness. We need to have loving leadership. Elevate her to a place called heaven. The husband is to lead.

March 5, 1995 Preparation for Revival

Why have or schedule revival meetings? Is this not passe. We attend the meetings but we do not experience revival. Historically, the church has experienced awakenings and then would cycle back to the condition of being spiritually dead (or asleep). We go through the motions but nothing happens.

Some of the examples of revival from the Old Testament show us

1. Revival comes in a time of decline. God has trouble getting our attention when we are prosperous.
2. There is an awareness of our sins (usually sins of neglect and omission -- too busy).
3. We start confessing our sin and there is a return to God and we have dramatic influence on the world.

This is then followed by peace and prosperity and the cycle repeats.

1 Kings 18:1-2, 17ff: Wet wood and sacrifice sets up an impossible (humanly speaking) situation for fire to burn (revival to come). Therefore, if revival is to come, it must be from God.

2 Chron 15:1-15, 2 Chron 29:1ff What should we do?

1. Pray (ask) for revival, 2. Attend the services, 3. Plant seed to reap a harvest. This is not a last minute thing.

March 26, 1995 Revival, Renew, Refresh

After evangelist come and leave those who remain must be about the business of bringing in the harvest. This is time to teach and shepherd the flock.

In John 6 we see a parallel to a revival experience and gives some ideas of how to carry on after the revival meetings are over. Chapter 6 starts with feeding 5000 people. The crowd came and there was a lot of excitement. Then the crowd was fed. After Jesus left the crowd stayed. They wanted more bread and excitement. (This is the "fresh" bread.)

In Mark 6:51-52 we find they did not understand the significance of the miracle of the 5000 people being fed. It did not build their faith and they failed to trust God when the storm came up. They failed the test. (This is the "forgotten" bread.)

In verses 26ff we see the "hidden" bread. The people did not seek Jesus because of Who He is but because of what He could do for them -- for the bread they could get. Jesus told them they needed to partake of the True Bread of Life. He used such terms as "consume His flesh and drink His blood." Since they had a literal interpretation of what He said, they were offended at the statement.

Jesus becomes the "forever" bread in our lives as we feed on the work and assimilate the word of God into our very lives.

April 2, 1995 Character Development 2 Peter 1:1-11

Character is Moral Excellence. Having good character is being as Jesus.

Starting with faith we add character (virtue), add knowledge, self control, perseverance, godliness, kindness, and love. The faith we have is given by God. It is a relationship with Jesus.

It is more than just believing Who Jesus is.

Heb 2:10 God has a purpose to bring many sons to glory -- visible expression of God.

Rom 8:28-29 God wants us to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Eph 4:11-13 We are attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

May 21, 1995 Molding by God, Ralph Warren, Edisto Beach Baptist Church

Jeremiah 18:1-5 God has a plan for every life. Sometimes we become “marred” or through disobedience, we get “messed up.” When this happens, God then forms “another pot” from our clay. It will be different from what God had first intended for our life. Nevertheless, God does not toss aside the clay but He makes the best pot He can with the clay on the potter’s wheel. (See also Rom 8:28). God does not give up on us. He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of the Lord.

(Editor’s notes: God is still at work - (See also Experiencing God).

Another view of the marred clay — all of us have sinned. We are all marred clay; however, God can use us in His kingdom. Regarding the Potter’s Wheel: we need to be where God is working for Him to mold us into the best we can be. Without repentance and turning to God, we can not be where God is because we have gone away from where He is and we must return. God does not force us to yield to Him; however, the troubles and woes of a life apart from God would seem to be enough reason to seek relief.

July 23, 1995 God’s Design for His People Acts 2

God has a design fro His people. We can do nothing without Jesus. Jesus said He could do nothing without the Father. Without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the church can do nothing. God did not intend for the church to be just organized. It is instead an organism. We are to be alive. Church is not what we do — it is what God does through us.

(My notes: There is a difference in being born of the Spirit and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Jesus was “born of the Spirit” from His conception — yet it is clear that at a point before His public ministry began He was “baptized of (by, in) the Spirit.” Born of the Spirit is for life, baptized of the Spirit is for ministry. As John the Baptist told us, Jesus will baptize us with the Holy Spirit.)

Acts 2 is transitional. The Holy Spirit came to empower the Church for ministry. The early followers of Jesus went from being fearful to being bold.

The effect of the Holy Spirit on the Church:

- v 3 Countenance: The appearance or outward manifestation of your life will be effected. Jesus came in the Holy Spirit to bring joy and peace. The early followers were “on fire” for the Lord.
- v 11 Conversation: We will declare the wonders of God in such a way that people will understand. In most cases, when the Holy Spirit came upon people, someone spoke. The purpose of our ministry is to witness of Jesus. He should be our topic of conversation in all circumstances.
- v 14 Courage: Peter stood up to address the crowd. This same man denied Jesus after Jesus had been arrested.
- v 42 Commitment: They continued steadfastly (devoted themselves). They continued in the doctrine (the truth of God’s word), fellowship (spiritual fellowship), breaking of bread

(physical fellowship), and they committed themselves to prayer.

v 43 Community: All together — having things in common.

Until the church lets the Holy Spirit make a difference, we will not make a difference in our countenance, conversation, courage, commitment or our community.

Sept 10, 1995 The Soils Mark 4:1-9, 13-20

Preliminary remarks: We need to be working on the right project. Much activity is not enough. The vision of a “church” with much activity - the word written above it was “wickedness.” If the work we are doing is not what God would have us do, then it is deemed wickedness.

We are the soil — the sower proclaims the word of God, the seed. The good seed must fall on good soil or there will not be a harvest. If there is no fruit, then the soil must be called into question - assuming that the seed is good seed.

Each of us must address the condition of our soil.

We have been spoiled. We want to hear good preaching since it makes us feel good. We may be missing the point. One of the wicked things we do is that we discovered how we can “do church” without God. This is wickedness. We have programs, sermons, activities that we do. If God is not in it, then it is wickedness.

The hard soil along the path must be broken up before it can receive the word. If we are not receiving the word, then the devil comes and takes it away. How does this hard soil manifest itself? We have already planned our lives and God is “planned out” or just given token mention - leads to no fruit.

The shallow soil (stony ground) produces plants with no roots which leads to short time endurance or “fair weather” believers. These lose their joy very quickly. Examples are people with their own belief system and who will not change to what God says — leads to no fruit.

The thorny ground person hears the word but other things choke out the word — leads to no fruit. Our lives become so cluttered with other cares of this life. While it is true that we have needs, but man does not live by bread alone.

The deceitfulness of riches is manifest when we can't serve God because of our concerns for materialism. The result is that we bear no fruit.

Good soil bears fruit — compare to John 15.

Oct 8, 1995 (pm) An Attitude God Hates

Self-sufficiency says “I don't need God.” We see this in Adam, the Tower of Babel, the Pharisees, and many other examples. The Amalekites were the Pharisees of the Old Testament. There may be some Amalekite in each of us. (Editor's Note: What follows assumes that the Amalekites were descendants of Esau — there are other references that suggest they were a much earlier people since they are mentioned in reference to territory in the account of Abraham.) In Gen 25:23 we see the incompatibility of the man God chooses and the man of the world. The battle is engaged from the outset. Jacob and Esau represent two kingdoms that can never be at peace. (See also Malachi 1:1-5 regarding God's rejection of Esau.)

Esau was self sufficient - he was man's man - macho. The descendants of Esau (Edomites) were like Esau. When Israel returned from Egypt, the Edomites ambushed the Children of Israel from the rear (where they were most vulnerable — women and children were in the rear of the company).

Deut 25:17-19 The action of the Amalekites was not to be forgotten. There was to be no

- compromise with the what they represented.
- Exodus 17:5-11 When were are doing battle with the Amalekites, the victory is only in the strength of God. We cannot win in our own strength.
- 1 Sam 15:1-3 The only means of dealing with the attitude of self-sufficiency is to destroy it completely. This is the reason we are exhorted to take up our cross daily.
- 1 Sam 15:8-26 We may obey the Lord in many areas, but He will not count it as obedience until we have removed self-sufficiency. We cannot make the excuse that we held on to this or that so we could use it for God. If it is self-sufficiency, then God wants no part of it.
- 2 Sam 1:6-10 Eventually, an Amalekite took the life of Saul. It was considered by the Amalekite as a mercy killing. However, that action brought judgment from David. (Editor's note: Can we excuse euthanasia in our culture, when it is God's prerogative to give and take life?)
- The Amalekites represent the flesh or the self life. We have an Amalekite within us. The spirit wars against the flesh. The flesh would destroy the new life in us. We cannot compromise with the flesh - it must be destroyed.
- 1 Sam 30 The Amalekites took away what belonged to God's people. David (as a type of Christ) went into battle with the Amalekites and recovered all that was lost.

Jan 14, 1996 (pm) Watchman on the Wall Eze 33

V 10: Our sins are weighing us down in God's sight. How then shall we live?

Phil 3:12 ff How to Win at the Ultimate Finish Line.

2 Tim - Paul wrote: I am ready to be offered. I have fought the good fight . . . crown of righteousness will be given to us when we cross the ultimate finish line. The race we are running is called life. The started when we received Jesus as Lord of our life.

Phil 3:12: To take hold of that for which Christ took hold of me. Christ took hold of us so we may win the race (prize) and receive the crown of righteousness. We must then be focused on the goal before us. It is what God wants for us.

Our high calling is in Christ. He is the goal. God has predetermined that all things will be culminated in Christ. Our focus is to express His person — Jesus is living in me; therefore, I must express His life within me.

We are to exhibit His strength — we have the power of God to do what is right — we are extensions of His life.

We are not to be distracted. We should not be dislodged from the track on which we are running the race of life.

Forget the past successes and failures. We must go forward with purpose. It is not what I plan but what He plans. I am to be directed by His plan. I am to be dynamic by His power. I am t be delighted by His person.

If we are to win the race, then we must cross the finish line. Follow through is important in everything we do.

Demas was an example of a person who stopped — he was distracted and left the race. There is just one goal for us in life. That goal is Jesus Christ.

Feb 25, 1996 (am) New Wine and New Wine Skins (Renewal) Luke 5:36-38

We have become a New Creation in Christ. We can't be made new (for the first time) again but we can be renewed.

Luke 5:36-38 — Old wine is said to be better. Old wine represents the Judaic system. It was living according to the law. Many things the old is more palatable, it is smooth and it goes down easy.

In today's church, the old may be vintage (maybe in some cases "cultural") Christianity. We have become comfortable with the old settled (in a rut) existence.

Many will start out growing, soaking up the word, applying it. Some start out this way, but settle into the comfortable "don't rock the boat" existence. This is becoming "old wine." We drift into "lukewarmness." Because of this tendency we need to be renewed.

Old wine skins become inflexible, dried out and empty.

New Wine: God is the New Wine. It is the Spirit of God within us. We are to be renewed everyday. God provides the resources, but we are to build with what He provides. We are to "put off the old and put on the new." We are the new skins — we must be able to grow as the wine "works" within us.

Wine containers we made of goat skin but before the skin is useful we must first remove the goat (the old nature) — otherwise, we just wind up with a drunk goat.

The wine affects the skin. The skin takes on the aroma of the wine.

Unless the old nature is put to death we are not useful as a wine skin. Goats like to climb and they will eat anything. The old nature in us is like that. We cast off restraint and want to go (climb) wherever we want to go and we try to consume anything we want (applies to body, soul, and spirit).

Jesus wants to radically change our lives. We must die daily to be renewed daily.

June 8, 1997 Knowing God Phil 3:10

To know Christ and the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of sharing in His suffering that we may become as He is in His death with the outcome to attain to the Resurrection.

We get involved in reshaping ourselves. Diets, working out, seminars, etc. We get caught up in these things so that we are trying to take control. But God is the Potter and we are the clay (Rom 9:20-21).

We cannot have a resurrection without a death. We want to know God and His power delivered on a silver platter rather than on a potter's wheel. The potter's wheel is where we are conformed to the death of Christ (Heb 5:8).

Phil 2:5 ff - We choose our attitude. Suffering is when things are not in the shape we think they ought to be.

June 15, 1997 (am) Throw in the Towel John 13:1 ff

In boxing, throwing in the towel is a sign of giving up. When Jesus came, He did not throw in the towel but "took up the towel." Jesus came as a servant (with humility). When Jesus took up the towel in the upper room, it was not a sign of giving up but a sign that He had already won the battle. He did not need to prove anything to anyone.

Our basic nature is selfish. In Christ, we have a new nature which enables us to become a bond servant (slave). A practical application of this for Father's Day is to consider how to behave to show we are worthy to be honored. The only legitimate way is by being a servant. The key in relating to our wives is LOVE

- L Labor or help out around the home. Laughter (lighten up). Life up wife (compliment her). Listen
- O Outdo (in being a servant). Open your heart (talk).
- V Value. Vocalize.
- E Envelope her, Esteem her, do the Extra things.

This Key opens us up to Serving.

The Key in relating to our children is TIME

- T Tell them the truth - based on the word of God (in words and in your life). Teach them, Talk to them, Touch.
- I Involve yourself in their lives (do things with them).
- M Model - be a good example. Manners - demonstrate. Marriage - have a good marriage before them
- E Example - need to Enable and Empower -show how and get them to do it to gain confidence. Encourage - comes from knowing who you are.

It is not so important that you “serve as a leader” but that you “lead as a servant.”

June 18, 1997 Signs and Miracles - John’s Gospel - The Seven Miracles

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1. | Water into wine | Salvation by the word | |
| 2. | Nobleman’s son healed | Salvation by faith | |
| 3. | Paralytic healed | Jesus searches for man (salvation by grace) | |
| 4. | Feeding of 5000 | Jesus is Bread of Life | For each miracle there is a corresponding result. |
| 5. | Walking on the sea | Salvation brings peace (ca No. 1) | |
| 6. | Healing of Blind | Salvation brings light (ca No. 2) | |
| 7. | Raising of Lazarus | Salvation brings life (ca No. 3) | |

June 29, 1997 (am) Putting God in America Joel 1-2

- 1:12 joy has withered way. 1:13 Repent in sack cloth, etc.
 2:12,13 Return to God will all your heart, rend your hearts and not your garments.
 We should be heart broken before God because of the condition of our nation.
 2:17 We need to be weeping before God for His mercy. We have abandoned our God.
 We no longer say “the word of God says” but instead we say “I think.”

June 22, 1998 (am) The Love Connection

Phil 3:10 I want to know Christ . . the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His suffering , become like Him in His death.

Analogy - car engine - connection of wheels to road is what we typically see and results in activity. A more important connection but is not readily seen is the battery connection. Some may have a corroded connection. In the same way if we do not have the love, we are like a car with an unconnected or dead battery — our lights won’t even come on (our witness is dead).

Gal 5:6 The only thing that counts is faith that expresses itself in love.

Eph 3:16-21 Christ to dwelling our hearts by faith . . . rooted and grounded in love.

1 Cor 13:1 Faith without love is nothing.

1 John 4:7 Let us love one another . . . he who does not love, does not know God. To love God means we know Him and put Him first above all else. We cannot have

divided loyalty.

John 13:34-35 A new commandment . . . As I have loved you. We say we love Jesus, but Jesus said that we are to love one another. This is the way the world knows we love God.

John 14:15,21 If you love Me, keep My commandments. If we are saved, then His commandments are a delight to us.

Look at our obedience: What are we doing with our lives?

Put God at No. 1 priority

- Serve Him in the local Church
- Jesus loved the church enough to die for it.
- Should we not love the church also?
- Perfect love cast out fear — fear is opposed to faith.

What happens when we disconnect from the power source?

Lack of faith or poor connection - caused by iniquity.

Matt 21:12 Our love grows cold because of iniquity. Then we try to live off someone else's faith and love.

Matt 16:18-19 Jesus gave us the key to the Kingdom — It is the key of faith.

If we are not enjoying the power of His resurrection it is likely because of a corroded heart connection.

Rev 2:1-4 . . . You have forsaken your first love.

Sept 14, 1997 Our Testimony - Silent or Open? What are the Consequences?

2 Tim 1:8 ff - Do not be ashamed:

1. To testify about our Lord
2. Of those who are prisoners for the Lord.

We join in suffering for the gospel by the power of God. He has saved us and has called us to a holy life. He did this for His own purpose and because of His grace.

Never be afraid to stand with the minority which are right. Someday the minority who are right will be the majority.

Do not be ashamed to confess Christ. Example, "See you at the pole" meeting at school.

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. We are not to be ashamed of the gospel.

We are empowered to witness. God has saved us with continuing results. His power is to save, to set apart and to sustain. He is able to that which I've committed to Him . . .

If we commit our lives to Christ, then He will keep them. If we commit our job, money, children, etc, then He will keep (protect, save) all.

1 Sam 30 David recovered all the Amalekites had taken. This is prophetic in that Jesus has gained the victory and has recovered all that was lost in the fall.

Sept 21, 1997 Specialty John 4:7-19

Everyone has a specialty. The specialty of the church is relationships. These are dual: Relation to/with God and to/with each other. Most "Christians" so not realize they should have a real relationship with God that is alive and vibrant - growing and glowing.

People will come (flock to) a church where the love relationship (giving and forgiving) is shown. The church is where everyone is someone. Every church is to be a seeker church rather

than a satisfied church.

Our perspective is important: Consider how we might view these letters:
God is no where versus God is now here.

Nov 9, 1997 Walking Through the Storms of Life

Sometimes it is necessary to turn our backs on the mob (public opinion) in order to turn our face toward life.

Do not resist nor resent the storms of life. Sometimes the storms do not seem to let up.

God will sacrifice our feelings to develop character in us. When we have “no control,” then we will trust in God and find Him sufficient.

Do not assume that God is going to make things comfortable and convenient. He wants to build character and commitment. It is only through the storms of life that these are built.

God delivers salvation from the storms and trials in His time.

Though the disciples obeyed Jesus, the storm still came.

Example from Old Testament: Numbers 11:10-15 (Life of Moses)

Prerequisites to walking on water with Christ:

- a. Desired to get to Jesus — not satisfied with the status quo
- b. Problems are not an end in themselves — we are to look beyond the problem to God who saves.
- c. Willingness to fail — to have flexibility.

Nov 30, 1997 Thinking As a Servant

2 Cor 10:1-7

Rights of a servant - zero

Life is a battle ground and not a playground. We need a renewed mind (Rom 12:1,2). Jesus had a servant mentality (Phil 4).

The philosophy of today is to merge with society/culture rather than yield to God.

There are several Fortresses against which we must do battle:

1. High Self-Esteem or self centeredness. We may think we do not need anyone else.
2. Culture: It is not politically correct to believe in the absolute truth of the Bible.
3. Ignorance: Many are ignorant of who God is. They are prisoners in contentment. The worse prisons are not those of confinement but of contentment. Many are ignorant of the written and living Word. If we are contented with what we have, then we will not change.

Two weapons to bring down the strongholds. Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

People should know God is alive and active because they see Him living in us.

Dec 12, 1997 PEACE Rom 5:1-2; Eph 2:14-15

We are at war with God or we have been. There can be no peace with God without realizing we were at war. There can be no salvation without realizing we were lost. (We can be at war with god and not know it. We can be lost and not know it.) We are dependent upon the grace of God to receive His salvation by faith.

Peace is being reconciled to God. The wall that separated us from God are the righteous demands of God (one side) and man’s disobedience (the other side). God cannot change His righteous demands and man cannot meet those demands. Jesus provides the answer in that He meets the righteous demands through His obedience. He provides the means to destroy the wall

or to remove the barrier (wall) and to provide us with access to God. Thus we have peace since we are reconciled to God.

1. In Gal 5 we read about the “peace of God” rather than peace with God. Such peace is a fruit of the Spirit.
2. We also need to have peace with ourselves - with our past. The past sins arise to condemn us.
3. Peace in our relationship then follows. We need to take the initiative in making peace with others. In order to restore a broken relation we have to provide the sacrifice of ourselves. This is what God did in Christ.

We will never have peace with the world. The carnal man will always have enmity with God and with everyone else.

Dec 14, 1997 The Law of Giving - Given to Give Matt 14:15-20

God has given us the creation and the creation provides us with what we need in the material realm. When we give we are putting God’s purposes into action. God is the ultimate Giver. God gave us His Son - the ultimate Gift. God want His wealth to be in circulation. Money is not wealth until it is used.

We appropriate God’s wealth by giving. We are not to limit this idea to money.

2 Cor 9:6-8 Giving puts God’s power into operation. We want God to be active in our lives. We first need to have a spirit of reception. Once we receive, then we can give to God and will give us what we need.

In the situation of feeding the multitude, the disciples realized they were incapable of providing what was needed. They found a meager amount of food. If they had been selfish, one or two could have eaten the small amount. However, since they were generous and unselfish, they gave what they had to Jesus. The little was multiplied to feed thousands.

Dec 17, 1997 How to Turn Trouble into Triumph

2 Kings 4:8 Elijah and the Widow

Principles for turning trouble into triumph

8. Prepare a special place for God in your life and home before the tragedy comes.
9. Embrace the blessings of God as a precious gift everyday.
10. Take your tragedy and lay it before the Lord. (This would be at the place you have prepared for God in your life.)
11. Express faith in the power of God.
12. Drive forward to meet God face-to-face. Do not accept the rod (substitute) but cling to God. Do not leave without God.

See also Luke 11:5-13 and 18:1-8

Dec 28, 1997 Eph 5:15-16

Be very careful how you live. Take advantage of every opportunity because an opportunity may pass away and never come around again.

Be Careful - (strict, accurate, precise and rigorous) We are to be disciplined in our walk. A disciplined life is one that is lived under the authority of Jesus (He is Lord).

Be Discerning in our ways — be wise, evaluate the past and make changes to avoid repeating mistakes. Prepare for the future by making best use of the present. Realize that our physical lives are finite.

Be Deliberate in work — why are we here? We need purpose in life. We, as Christians, are on mission for Christ. We are under the authority of Jesus — we are to be God conscious. Therefore, we relate all that comes our way to God's way and will. Our lives are to be a visible expression of the life of God.

Be Detached from the world and its influences.

Jan 4, 1998 (am) CATCH THE VISION COMMITMENT THAT ENDURES
Renewed Commitment.

Great need in most congregations is commitment. It is the foundation from which all ministry springs. There is a danger that we become committed to a cause rather than being committed to Christ. When the cause is over, then the commitment is over. Our commitment must be to Christ. The Greek word for "faith" is sometimes translated as commitment.

Heb 11:23 ff. In the first part of Moses' life he became committed to a cause to help the Hebrew people. He was "in control" and working in his own strength. In the second forty year period, he went through an examination phase of his life. In the third phase, God called Moses to abandon his own strength - to abandon his self. The rod Moses carried was an extension of Moses strength. God told him to "throw it down." It became a serpent - when he picked it up it became a rod again. When we throw our life down it is our strength, when we take it up it is God's strength. We must lay down our life so God can remove self and give it back with His life.

Jan 4, 1998 (pm) 2 Tim 3:1-3

The last days will be difficult times. Depraved minds (no trace of spiritual awareness) and Deceived minds. With this description fitting our present society, can we really expect to have a positive influence in our world?

Matt 5: You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world. We are salt to hinder the progress of social decay. We are light to dispel the inherent darkness. The Christian mind is to be aware of the need and to know what we are called to be. Will we respond to God's initiative to use us in His work?

Jan 11, 1998 (am) Focused Life - Eyes, Mind, Heart.

We cannot focus on more than one thing at a time. Jesus was focused on the will of the Father at all times.

Judges 7 - Key Factors to be Focused in Life

1. Put God's purpose over our plans.

When the odds are against us (35,000 to 300), then we must trust God to give the victory.

2. Follow God's Leadership.

When we focus on God, then He provides the leadership to lead the people to do what He has commanded. In this case it was to Sound the Trumpet and Shine the Light.

3. Stand Firm in our Assigned Positions.

4. Pursue the enemy with all our strength.

Jan 11, 1998 (pm) Rewards of the Servant -- 1 Cor 3:10

Dependable, enthusiastic service. The act of unselfish living is practiced by few Christians and

mastered by even fewer.

Five Crowns

- ◆ Imperishable - victorious in running the race of life. Under the control of the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ Exaltation - victor's crown
- ◆ Righteousness - anticipate the return of Christ
- ◆ Life - who suffers faithfully
- ◆ Glory - those who desire to please God and God alone

Jan 18, 1998 Committed to Live by Faith 1 Sam 16:34-37

The righteous shall live by faith. Faith is my positive response to the revealed word of God.

- ◆ If we are to live by faith then we must be anointed by the Spirit of God. Anointing is for position and power.
- ◆ We must also be instructed by the word of God. Three area of concern --
 - Discipline - developed his ability
 - Dominion - conquered his fears
 - Discernment - to say the right thing at the right time.
- ◆ We need to be encouraged by the faithfulness of God. We see in our past how God has delivered us from dangers and this encourages us.
- ◆ If we are to see the Activity of God, the we must Act in faith.

Jan 25, 1998 (am) Commitment Romans 12:1,2

We do not bring the "best of our lives" and present that to god. Our lives are to wholly holy nad then we are to give our all to God. We are to live a life of sacrifice. (Editor's note: We to be sacrificers - not survivors.)

God want our wills, that we will to do the will of God. How much time do we sacrifice? It is to be constant - continuing. All of our time is to be given to God to do His will.

How much money do we sacrifice? All belongs to God.

What about family? Are we willing to lay all on the altar of sacrifice?

To Abraham, Isaac represented the fulfillment of the promises of God. Are we willing to lay down the fulfillment of God's promises to us — give it back to Him — to trust Him fully?

We are to die **to** the things of this world and **to** sin rather than to die **in** the things of this world and **in** sin. By doing so, we are then transformed by the renewing of our minds. This transformation is an inside-out work. It is not just an outward change.

What do we do with our thought life? Do we put our thoughts on the altar of sacrifice?

God did not save us only so we could go to heave when we die. God wants us to be useful to Him now to do the works He always wanted done (even before the foundation of the earth).

Jesus gave His life so we could live. He now calls for us to give our life to Him so that He may live in us.

Jan 25, 1998 (pm) The Balanced Life Various Scriptures

Our lives need to have a center. If we are off-center, then we will "wobble."

Rom 11:36 Christ is the center of the universe.

Col 1:16-17; Eph 1:9-10; Phil 2:9-11

A man centered universe has given us a secular society that is rotten to the core. If we do not have a Christ centered life, then we wind up on the edge and disaster is just a “step” or a heartbeat away.

A man-centered universe gives us a false sense of security. If we are Christ centered, then we know who we are, why we are, and where we are going.

We will have a new power in our lives when we have Christ as the number one priority and center of our lives. We can see reality - what God intended us to be as human beings.

Feb 1, 1998 (am) Christ in His Role to (in) the Church

Eph 1:18-22 Christ is the Head of the Church which is His Body

Savior - Heb 2:9-10

Shepherd - Heb 13:20-21 The Shepherd leads those who will follow. The real need is for us to follow.

Sovereign - Col 1:18 Christ is the Head of the Church and we must be in submission to Jesus.

Sanctifies - 1 John 2:19-20 Anointing from the Holy One.

Feb 1, 1998 (pm) Is There More to the Christian Life than the Routine?

Acts 4:18-20 - God provides the power and boldness when we need it. Most of the time we only trust ourselves. Trusting ourselves forces us into the routine, and we do not see God's mercies.

Eph 3:16-19 - Four provisions from God to give us boldness.

1. Empowered Life (v 16): Internal strength to stand for Christ. We need to admit our weaknesses. Today, the church is very proud (similar to the church at Laodicea). They did not realize how inadequate they were spiritually. They were looking only at material things. Brokenness must occur in us before the fullness and power of God can be manifest in our lives.
2. Exchanged Life (v 17): His life for our life. John 2: 23, 24: Jesus did not commit Himself to some.
3. Expressed Life (v 18): What God is doing through the Church.
4. Enthroned Life: Christ on the throne of our life. When we are squeezed, what's inside comes out.

Feb 15, 1998 Deacon Devotion (Jim Carson) Discipleship

James 5:16b and Romans 12:2

The transformation of minds takes time. Salvation which is the transformation of hearts is instantaneous. After (or during) transformation we will know what God's will is. If we are uncertain about the will of God, then it may be that we are not in the process of being transformed.

Do we apply the same standards to ourselves that we apply to others? Do we practice what we preach? We lament what is happening to the younger generation and yet what is happening to them may be a direct result of our poor witness.

The mark of maturity is following the commands of God.

As deacons (ministers) we are to point others to Christ so they can be transformed.

Feb 22, 1998 (am) Elements of a Great Building Program

Haggai 1

1. Comprehend the voice of God (vs 1, 12)

2. Calculate the time (vs 2-4)
3. Conform to God's word - give careful thought to your ways (v 5)
4. Appropriate the resources of God (v 8)
5. Apply the resources of God to God's work
6. Controlled by the Spirit (v 14)

March 1, 1998 (am) Equation for a Great Work

Joshua 3:5 - Sanctify yourself and God will do a great work through you. If we do not set ourselves apart (become holy) then God cannot use us.

We have been called out of the darkness of the world and have been made to be light by the light of God He puts in us.

Part of the process of sanctification is cleansing.

2 Chronicles 29:3 . . . remove all defilement - clean it up! V. 15ff - purified the temple

Eph 5:25 . . . That He might sanctify the church . . .

Eph 5:3 . . . List of things to clean up . . . Don't let your life become cluttered up with junk.

2 Chronicles 29:18-19 Things were put in the right place. If we are clean but are not in the right place, then God cannot do a great work through us.

March 1, 1998 (pm) What Dulls the Cutting Edge

We need the fire of the Holy Spirit in us. This is the "saltiness" of the Christian life.

What takes off the cutting edge? Too much activity makes us physically tired. Burning the candle at both ends is a picture of trying to do too many things. We need something to burn about, but we don't need to burn out.

The key is that we not rely on human effort by working in our own strength.

Secular Opinions:

Private Sins:

March 8, 1998 (am) Preparation of Faith

Numbers 13 and Joshua 14

Num 13:30

Josh 14:10 ff

In verse 12 Caleb refers to what God promised him that day (45 years ago). With God helping us we can have the victory (what God has promised). By faith, we can see things others cannot see.

Also, if we are to do a great work, then we must do what others will not do.

Faith Requires Action: The territory was given to them but they would need to "possess" the land — to literally put their feet on it (see Josh 1:3)

March 15, 1998 Significance in Ministry

Acts 15:1 ff

Significance or importance is measured by what others see as meaningfulness in our lives. (Editorial note: While the preceding statement may be true, I'm not sure that this **should** be the case. Our evaluation of importance must always be measured against what God's will is for our lives. If we are in and doing His will, then the opinions of others should have no influence on our assessment of significance.) Paul mentored Priscilla and Aquila and lived with them for 18 months. They then moved on with Paul to Ephesus. Paul eventually left the work at Ephesus in their care. In 1 Cor. 16 there is mention of the church that met in their home. In Acts 18 they

invited Apollos to their home and explained the way of God more adequately. Paul mentored them and they mentored Apollos.

They had practiced what has been called the Timothy principle (2 Tim 2:2). Teach someone who can teach someone else who can teach someone else, etc. There is an continuing need for mentoring in the church today, especially in the home — parents and grandparents to children and older children to younger children.

Romans 16:3-4 (Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.) Here we see “significance” in that this couple risked their lives to help Paul. All of us are blessed by the writings of Paul. Priscilla and Aquila helped make it possible. They also still had a church meeting in their home. They were risking their lives to do this, also.

(This may be editorial comments) We cannot know how significant that which we do will be on the lives of others. We do what we do as unto the Lord. It is a result of God living His life in us. As we are faithful, God uses us them to impact others.

1 Thes 2:11-12. We are to minister to others as a father ministers to his children. This will involve encouraging, comforting, and urging. (See also v. 13 and v. 19.)

March 22, 1998 (am) Gathering Together

1 Chronicles 28:11ff, 19

1-5 Who is willing to dedicate himself to the Lord today? (See also 14-16, 17)

Obstacles we have in dedicating ourselves: Too much debt. It is a national attitude problem. As a nation we owe \$5.5 trillion (\$20K per person). We are a debtor nation.

God’s intent for His people is that we be the head and not the tail, we not borrow but that we lend to the nations (Deut 28).

Personal debt in this country is about \$ 1 T. If we are in debt, then we are in bondage. Financial bondage leads to spiritual bondage. If we (as individuals) are in spiritual bondage, then the church is influenced by that bondage.

April 5, 1998 The Foundation of the Cross 1 Cor 1:17-18

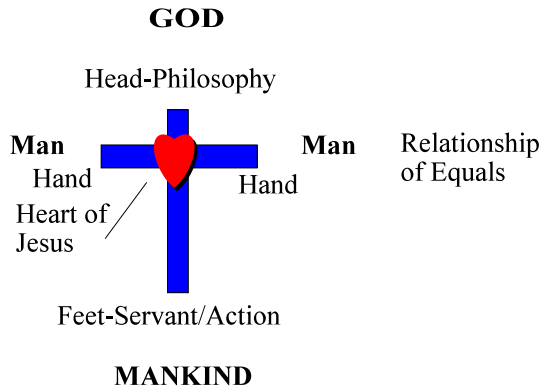
The central message of the Bible is the Cross. In our world, we have used the cross for an icon - it has been glamorized. It was not a glamorous thing.

Preaching that God would redeem mankind through a death on the “tree” was foolish to the Greeks. They thought we can save ourselves through intellect. For the Jews, the message of the cross was offensive - cursed is anyone who hangs on a tree.

Rom 5:6 Christ died for us while we were yet sinner. The cross was symbolic of death. In God’s judgment, the soul that sins shall die. Each of us has sinned - none is righteous - therefore, all need salvation.

God gave His Son to pay the price for our sin. He gave His life that we might live. This is the statement of the Cross. There has to be a death to pay the price of sin. Because Jesus died in our place, we can have life.

Though we live in the world, by the cross, the world is crucified to us and we to the world.



Editor's Notes: Christ on the Cross provides a link between God and Mankind. Here we see a relationship of God over mankind. In the Church, we find the relationship going from the head to the feet of Christ. Christ is the Head and provides us with the philosophy (way of thinking) and we are the expression of His feet (servanthood and action). In the horizontal direction we see Jesus's hands outstretched to connect man with man and thus bring peace with our fellowman. In both cases the connection goes through the heart of Jesus.

April 12, 1998 (am) From the Ground Up

Eph 4:17-24

God is doing a new work, with a new foundation. It is not based on man's ideas. It is not enough to just improve the old situation or our old thinking. If we were to improve man 1000 times he would still fall short of what God wants for man.

Mankind has tried several approaches: Philosophy (positive thinking), psychology (self esteem) — these still have not created a new man. Some have tried pleasure. However, God has only one method of making a new person and that is through Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 15:47-49, 2 Cor 5:17 The gift of salvation is "God in us" through Jesus.

Some struggle to do what God wants and can never accomplish it. This is because they have not received the "resurrection" Who is Jesus. When He comes He brings the power to live in us. We (by ourselves) can not live the Christian life.

God wants to give us a New Person, New Power, and New Purpose

Eph 2:5 Before we were dead in trespasses and sin, now we are alive. We are to be alive in Christ to be able to participate in His life. God puts His hand in the glove of my life.

New Perspective: We have been made to sit with Christ in Heavenly places.

We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. We are to be examples of His workmanship.

April 26, 1998 Garrett Sheldon

1 John 4:13-15

What issues/problems/situations/decisions are you facing? Ask the question - "What would Jesus do?" To know the answer, look at what Jesus taught and did.

Jesus invited us to come to Him and He would give us rest. Have we taken these issues/problems/situations/decisions to Jesus to find His rest?

The book *In His Steps* is compelling because it was inspired by God and because it deals with ordinary people. Our Christian faith is tested right where we live. Jesus' new commandment "Love one another as I have loved you." This love is not abstract. Patience and kindness can no be practice in the abstract. We must be patient with those who try our patience and kind with those who are not kind or those with whom we do not have to kind.

Christian love depends on God's love.

Jesus told us to "sin no more" not because we will be condemned (as Christians we are

not under condemnation) but because we are harmed the most by sin.

See 1 Peter 2:23 Sources: The Word of God, The Presence of the Holy Spirit, and The Fellowship of Other Believers.

May 31, 1998 PM Living in the Quiet Place

If we are under stress, then we have

Lack of Peace and Shallowness.

Three tools the devil uses against us:

Noise, Hurry, Crowds

If we are kept “busy” even with good things, then we miss out on the best things.

Matt 6:30-31: Go with Jesus to a quiet place and get some rest.

Matt 4:28-30: To move to the quiet place may take some major adjustments. We may not be able to control the external environment, but we can control the interior environment. How?

1. Separation from the world of noise and confusion. Turn off the TV, radio, stop news papers, magazines, etc. Prioritize activities and let those with low priority go undone.
2. Find selections from the word of God. Ps 119:30-32 tells us we need to study and digest the word of God.
3. Solitude with the Savior — See Ps 91:1
4. Security in our relationships with Christ. See Romans 8:1 — we are comfortable in the presence of Jesus.
5. Serenity in our lives

Living in the quiet place is living with Christ as the center of your life.

June 14, 1998 AM Fulfilling My Assignment

The Great Commission is applicable to all Christians. God has given all of us an assignment.

The question is “Are we fulfilling our assignment?” We can see similarities in our situation and the situation of Jonah.

Jonah 1:1-2 Johan was a contemporary of Amos and Hosea. He was a court prophet, times were prosperous and Jonah as accepted by the kings. It is easy to lulled to sleep in times of ease. God still speaks in the prosperous time but we often do not hear. Prosperous times make for pampered saints. We obey when it is convenient for us or we do that with which we are comfortable.

We will complete or fulfill our assignment

1. When we stop running from our responsibilities. (Jonah 1:3)
 - A. We have responsibility for our own sin. We need to recognize our sin, confess and repent.
 - B. We have responsibility for our sanctification. We must yield ourselves to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. We are called to holy even as God is holy.
 - C. We have been called into service. Servants do not get to choose what they will or will not do. They do what they are told to do.
2. When we are awoken from our sleep. (Jonah 1:5) How can we sleep when so many are perishing? Jonah had to confess his sins and consign himself to death (vs 10-12). The church needs to recognize the truth that the reason our nation and the world is in such a mess (storm) is because the church has be running away from God.
3. When we are swallowed up by God’s sovereign purpose.

August 16, 1998 AM The Holy Spirit and Discipline

1 Cor 6:12-20

There are differences in human discipline and Christian discipline

Human Discipline: From within our strength.

Christian Discipline: The Holy Spirit empowers us to be under control. Our part is to put self to death which allows the life of Christ to be what works out or manifests itself.

The human tendency is to be undisciplined. To discipline is to train - it does not imply punishment. Discipline forms habits and habits develop character. (The same thing could be said of “lack of discipline.”)

Three Areas of Discipline from the Holy Spirit

1. Our Relationship to God
 - a. Private Worship or devotion time and meditation times
 - b. Public Worship
2. Our Relationship to Self
 - a. Soul - Our mind, emotions and will are to be under the control of the Holy Spirit
 - b. Body- the desires that are carnal express themselves via the body. These would include such things as laziness, gluttony, sexual sin, etc.
3. Our Relationship to Others
 - a. Marriage - bringing lives together under the direction of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Family Relationships
 - c. Work Relationships
 - d. Church member relationships

The first discipline is just to know Jesus, to be in His presence and to follow His word. If we are not under His discipline, then we are just pretending to be His children.

September 13, 1998 AM It's Your Serve (Extensively revised and expanded.)

Matt 20:26-28 Jesus seemed to make a distinction between being “great” and being “chief.” Greatness (in verse 26) can develop from a ministry to other people. The Greek word used there is *diakonos* and means “one who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master.” Of course this could be a minister or a servant. On the other hand, if one would desire to be chief, then a greater commitment is involved. Rather than just being a minister, the route is being a bond slave. The Greek word use here is *doulos* and means “a slave, bondman, man of servile condition.” Strong’s concordance also says that the word is related to “one who gives himself up to another's will, those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men, and one devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests.” This two-fold commitment and result is seen again in verse 28 where Jesus talked of His own mission. Not to be ministered to but to minister AND to give His life a ransom for many. The Greek word for “give” is *didomi* and can mean any or all of the following: to give something to someone of one's own accord to give one something, to his advantage, to bestow a gift, to grant, give to one asking, let have, to supply, furnish, necessary things, to give over, deliver. Notice the similarity in this meaning and that of a description of a bond slave — “one who gives himself up. . .” Jesus is recognized as being great by the ministry He delivered to people in healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons, and feeding the hungry. However, it was in His demonstration of

being a bond slave that He is recognized as Chief — number one. We see the behavior of a slave in Jesus as He gives Himself up in His death on the Cross. It is in this atoning work of His death, burial and resurrection that He proves that He is the Worthy Lamb, the Anointed One of God, the Son of God.

In addition, we see in Rom 12:1 the word “service” used. This is an act of service (*latreia* in the Greek) and refers to the service and worship of God according to the requirements of the Levitical law. This is service with responsibility.

These three definition of service and servants give a picture of that which we do with regard to God’s call on our lives. Some things we do are done from a sense of obligation. This would be the *latreia* service. An example of such an obligation is tithing. Other things we do from the heart because of the needs of other that touch us. This would be ministry to people. The ultimate acts are not done because of obligation nor is it something we have recognize and have a heart for, but it is because of our devotion (read that love) for one to whom we are totally committed. This is the *doulos* service. This is giving of “who we are” rather than “what we can do” and “what we have.”

The *latreia* service is living according to the letter of the law (God’s word said and I will do it). The *diakonos* service is living according the spirit of the law that fulfills the requirements of the law by loving my neighbor as myself. The *duolos* service operates according to the New Commandment of Jesus where He told us to love one another even as He loved us.

All of the above is contrary to our basic nature and to our conditioning. As babies we learn to expect that we are to be served. We expect to “grow out” of that attitude and as mature we do get over the idea that we must be served. Some outgrow the immature attitude better than others. All of us retains a latent (if not overt) expectation that we are to be served. It is one thing to know (in our minds) that we have no right to expect someone to do things for us; however, our inner expectation and desire is that someone serve us. Being converted and having the mind of Christ is the only true solution for the in-born attitude of thinking we are superior. We must be transformed so that we know our place as servants and never lose sight of who we are — we are bought with a price, we are not our own.

As servants of the Master, we can be expected to be equipped for the tasks He has for us. We must find and use the spiritual gifts because these are the tools of God’s servants. For most of us that means going beyond the point of intention to the point of action.

October 4, 1998 AM Ready

Matt 25:1-13

Babylon was an example of earthly success that failed to be successful in God’s sight. At the pinnacle of their success, the hand of God wrote on the wall — “you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting.”

It is characteristic of people to think they are indestructible and to ignore God’s warnings. We live according to our whims and are unprepared. A time is coming when the Lord will return and it will be too late to get ready.

You cannot develop character overnight. It take a lifetime to become the person God wants us to be. Now is the day of opportunity. One day the door to the “wedding party” will be shut and there will be an end to opportunity.

October 4, 1998 PM Ordinary People for Extraordinary Times

Acts 4:13 — Peter and John were ordinary men who astonished the Jews because they had been with Jesus.

They were converted to Jesus Christ — a relationship to and with Jesus will set our earthly direction and determine our eternal destination.

Acts 4:10-11 — They had a comprehension of the truth. We must be able to relate life to the truth and to Jesus Christ.

They were courageous in the face of opposition (vs 13 and 20).

They communicated the gospel (v 12)

They were committed beyond discouragement. (vs 24 ff.)

October 18, 1998 PM God Can If We Will (Kenneth Ayers)

We need to be involved and be available. If we want to be used by God, we will find that God will provide a way.

Requirements for God to use us:

1. Love God and love people: We need to love people to Christ. We cannot argue them into the kingdom of God. This means we must build relationships. The purpose of Sunday School is basically to reach people for Christ. It is not just to teach those who are there. If we are to be effective, then we need annual enrollment goals for SS attendance. Each SS class needs its own prospect list. Using the SS class to reach out to people of their own age group will give prospects an idea of the kinds of people with whom they will be associated with if they join a particular church.

2. Christ Is With Us: The world is not neutral toward Christianity. In fact, it is generally hostile. We must have Christ in us to empower us by working through us because of the opposition. (In fact, we need His enablement even when there is no opposition.)

3. Expect Results: We communicate our expectations to those we meet. If we are anticipating growth, then we will start new classes.

We will have both opportunity and opposition. The most difficult door for most of us to open is our own front door. Getting out of our comfort zone is a point of opposition.

January 10, 1999 AM Building the Church (Tom Suiter)

Matt 16:13-20

The church is made up of those who know Jesus as their personal Savior (Lord). The Greek word translated church is ekklesia and means “those who have been called out” of the darkness of the world into the light of the kingdom of God. The term ekklesia was used for others who were in various functions of education or government or other areas. These other areas offer their own version of salvation. For example, science is working on gene therapy to solve all the problems of mankind from personality disorders to physical maladies. Environmentalists think they can save the world by preserving all the animal species. Politicians propose that following their policies will get us out of the mess (that their policies got us into in the first place).

Psychology offers us human potential that teaches that we are gods. The new agers offer us eternal life through reincarnation.

Jesus said He is the only Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is the only means of salvation. The church is built on the power of Jesus. It is He Who is building His church. He is building it through the witness of believers. Not only does Jesus build the church, He also sustains it. He said the gates of Hell shall not stand against the church. Therefore the church has the power to

set the captives free from the confine of the kingdom of darkness.

The church is built according to the purpose of Jesus. He gives us the ability to lock and unlock according to His purposes. What is allowed in heaven, we are to allow on earth. What is prevented in Heaven is to be prevented on earth.

Key of Faith: The key is believing not thinking in our own mental capacity. Also, it is believing and not feeling or depending on our emotions.

Key of Prayer Key of God's Word Key of the Holy Spirit
The church is to be a colony of heaven on earth.

January 10, 1999 PM Prayer (Tom Suiter)

Gen. 4:25-26 Then men began to call on the name of the Lord. Prayer is conversation with God.

Jer 33:3 Call upon me and I will show you . . .

God answered prayer in the Old Testament and the New Testament. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Therefore, God still answers prayers.

If the church is to grow, then we must be a people of prayer.

The CONTEXT of prayer.

Humility - speaks of our motive. Not to be seen of men but because we are seeking God.

Boldness - persistence (1 John 3:19,20,21) a clear conscious

Faith - James 1:5ff. If we do not pray in faith, then we are just saying words.

In Jesus' Name - John 16:23ff. Not a formula but is more akin to power of attorney.

The CONTENT of prayer.

Prayers should contain the word of God. Phil 1:9 and Eph 1:15ff are prayers we should pray for each other.

Prayers should be made up of words of faith – speaking the word of God with confidence and believing what you say will come to pass.

Prayers should also have words of praise – thanking God of the answers to our prayer of faith.

Praise comes from a heart set on God.

The CONTRIBUTIONS of prayer.

Releases the power of God.

Releases the captives of the enemy. (Ex: Peter in prison)

Restricts the activities of the devil. Consider Jesus's words to Peter that the devil had desired to sift him, but Jesus said He had prayed for Peter. Jesus ever lives to make intercession for the saints, therefore, Jesus is praying for us now. Since Jesus is living His life through us, then we are to be praying for the saints also.

Luke 4:18-19 – this should be our prayer that God's Spirit will be upon us to do what Jesus did.

9-18-02

Comments on Eccl. Vanity of vanities - all is vanity.

At the great white throne judgement many will attempt to recite all their accomplishments, etc. God's declaration of all such things are "vanity"! He could say, the wisest man who ever live had already told you that all such things are vanity.