

10 Indictments Against the Modern Church in America sermonaudio.com
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Let us go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, I come before you in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Lord, you know all things. They are all before you like an open book. Who can hide their heart from your presence and your eye? The deeds of the most clever men are exposed before you. Your omniscience knows no bounds and if it were not for grace I would be of all men most terrified, but there is grace, abounding and glorious, poured out upon the weakest of men and abounding to your glory. Father, I praise you and I worship you and I thank you for all that you are and all that you have done. And there is no one like you in the heavens or the earth or under the earth. You are king and there is no other. You are Savior and you share that glory with no one.

Father, this night you know me and my great need of grace. Why am I here except that you called the weakest among men, the most ignoble among brothers and that by your grace, often times, the lesser teaches the greater? That is always my case and I praise you. I worship you.

Father, help us tonight. To the wind with eloquence, to hell with the brilliant intellect, Father. Let the truth go forward. Let me be changed that the state of your Church be more glorious. I pray for grace upon grace and mercy upon mercy for myself and for the hearers who are present here. Help us, oh God, and we will be helped and we will boast in that help in Jesus' name. Amen.

It is a great privilege for me to be here this evening, an astounding privilege to stand here before you and to speak about things such as revival, reformation, the working of God among his people and among men. But tonight I am going to share with you an indictment, an indictment, but it is an indictment of hope.

As I was praying through what I should do in this series of meetings I came to a great conclusion, a great burden that was laid upon my heart. We need revival. We need an awakening, but we cannot simply expect the Holy Spirit to come down and clean up all the mess we have made. We have clear direction from the Word of God with regard to

what he has done through Christ, how he expects us to live, how he expects us to order his Church. And it does little good for men to cry out for extra biblical manifestations when biblical principle is violated all around us.

I want you to know this. There is little need for the devil and evil men to oppose a man praying for revival unless he is also laboring for reformation. We have been given truth and we cannot simply do what is right in our own eyes and then expect the Holy Spirit to come down and bless our labors.

As we look into the Old Testament we see that Moses is given very, very detailed explanation how to build the temple. Now was that given for Moses' sake or for the Church's sake? I think that what is being explained here is that God is specific in his will and that we are not to presume that we can take the smallest detail and ignore it.

Now I know that I am frail man and I know that I am buffeted by many weaknesses, but I have an indictment and I can't call it my indictment because who am I to indict anyone. And I dare not call it God's indictment for how can I presume upon his name. But I will say this. As I look around at the Church and compare her to Scripture, I see that there are certain things that must change.

I am not Martin Luther. This is not 95 declarations nailed to Wittenburg's door, but this is a burden on my heart and I must share it. I must share it.

Now let me say this. What I am going to say will anger some of you, but let me warn you. It may be true that you will be able to accuse me of arrogance. It may be true that you do not like my delivery. I have many times been arrogant and I have many times delivered truth in a wrong way, but don't allow that to be an excuse for you. The question is. What I am saying, is it true whether it is delivered through a faulty messenger or no?

Others of you will be rejoicing in what you hear and you will want to say, "Amen," and maybe pump your arms. But don't do that because all of us bear a measure of guilt. And if you have attained to some spiritual state, then I would say what my brother has said. "What do you have that you have not received and if you have received it, why do you boast?"¹

Would it not be better to worship God in humility?

If you are a younger minister, I do not want you to get caught up in these truths and take them back and storm your church without love. I would make one suggestion. See to it that your knees are bleeding before you begin any sort of reformation. And if you are an older minister serving the Lord for many, many years I beg you not to be arrogant.

An old foolish king can learn from the weakest of his servants.

¹ See 1 Corinthians 4:7

And also I beg you this. Have the courage to change everything even if it is the last day of your life, at least you can go into glory knowing that you attempted a reformation that was biblical.

And I will say this as a warning to the older men. Now, listen to me carefully. I know the admonition in 1 Timothy chapter five of the way I am to address you and so I address you this way, but there is a great awakening going on in this country and not only in this country and Europe where I have been and in South America and many other places, I see young men going back to the rock from which we were cut. They are reading Spurgeon and Whitefield. They are still listening to Ravenhill and Martin Lloyd-Jones and Tozer and Wesley and it is a great, incredible movement. Just because popular media and Christianity today hasn't discovered what is going on, I want you to know that I would have never dreamed 15 years ago that I would see the awakening I am seeing, not through my ministry, but as I go to different places and see what God is doing without any of our ministries.

Whether it is Holland, a thousand young men declaring, "Things have to change," crying out all night in prayer for the power of God and the truth of Scripture or South America recognizing that they have been so influenced by psychology and all sorts of superficial techniques coming from America with regard to evangelism and now weeping and broken are going back and evangelizing their churches, or the inner city of the United States where I have sat up at times until two and three in the morning discussing theology with young African Americans in the hood whom God is going to raise up to do more preaching than anyone will ever be able to imagine on this day.

There is an awakening.

And I am going to say this with tenderness. Most men over 40 don't even have a clue about it. Many of the young people who are turning back to the old men and the old ways and to truths that have brought awakening time and time again in this world, most of these young men are quite young. And they will go to their pastors, they will go to their leaders and say, "Look at this, what we have discovered. Look what happened in Wales. Look what happened in Africa. Look at this and look at this and look at this teaching. It is absolutely amazing."

And most of them will either turn it away or say, "It is nothing any different than what I have been preaching for 25 years," when, in fact, it is completely different than what they have been preaching in 25 years.

And so we need to be very, very careful to understand that God is doing work. And he who began a good work will finish it.²

Many people have the idea that they are going to pray in a revival. And other people say, "Revival will come whether you pray or not."

² See Philippians 1:6

I am not in either one of those camps. But I know this. When I see men and women and young people all over the world praying for an awakening, to me that is the first fruits of revival. And I can count on the fact that he who gave those first fruits will bring in the full harvest.

Now I want to look at 10 indictments, if we have time, things that I believe that we must change.

First of all, the first indictment: a practical denial of the sufficiency of Scripture, especially my denomination, a practical denial of the sufficiency of Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:15 and on says:

And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.³

Over the last several decades there has been a mighty battle with regard to the inspiration of Scripture. Now some of you have not been a part of that battle, but many of us in more liberal denominations most certainly have, a battle for the Bible.

But there is only one problem. When you come to believe as a people that the Bible is inspired you have only fought half the battle because the question is not merely is the Bible inspired, is it inerrant. The major question following that that must be answered: Is the Bible sufficient or do we have to bring in every so called social science and cultural study in order to know how to run a church? That is a major question.

Social sciences, in my opinion, have taken precedent over the Word of God in such a way that most of us can't even see it. It has so crept in to our Church, our evangelism and our missiology that you can barely call what we are doing Christian anymore. Psychology, anthropology, sociology have become primary influences in the Church.

Several years ago, many years ago when I was in seminary I remember a professor walked in and he started drawing footprints on the blackboard. And as he marched them across the blackboard then he turned to all of us and said only this. "Aristotle is walking through the halls of this institution. Beware, for I hear his footsteps more clearly than those of the apostle Paul and the team of inspired men who were with him and even the Lord Jesus Christ himself."

We have come to believe that a man of God can deal in certain tiny areas in the life of the Church, but when it really gets tough we need to go to the social experts. That is an absolute lie. It says here in Scripture that the man of God may be equipped, adequate, equipped for every good work.

³ 2 Timothy 3:15-17

What does Jerusalem have to do with Rome? And what do we have to do with all these modern day social sciences that were actually created as a protest against the Word of God? And why is it that evangelism and missions and so called church growth is more shaped by the anthropologist, the sociologist and the Wall Street student who is up on every cultural trend?

All the activity in our church must be based upon the Word of God, all the activity in missions upon the Word of God.

Our missionary activity, our church activity, everything we do ought to flow from the theologian and the exegete, the man who opens up his Bible and only has one question. What is thy will, oh God?

We are not to send out questionnaires to carnal people to discover what kind of church they would attend. A church ought to be seeker friendly, but the church ought to recognize there is only one seeker. His name is God and if you want to be friendly to someone, if you want to accommodate someone, accommodate him and his glory whether it is rejected by everyone else. We are not called to build empires. We are not called to be excessive. We are called to glorify God.

And if you want the Church to be something other than a peculiar people, then you want something God does not want.

I want you to listen to Isaiah just for a moment, chapter eight. Listen to what he says. "When they say to you, 'Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter...'"⁴ This is a perfect [?] and the church growth gurus and everything else because every two or three years all their major theories change. Not only on what is a man or how you fix him, but what is a church and how you make it grow. Every two or three years there is another fad coming down the line of what can make your church into something super in the eyes of the world.

Just recently one of the greatest or most well known church growth experts said that he discovered that he was entirely wrong on all his theory. But instead of turning them to Scripture on his knees broken and weeping, he goes out to find another theory.

They give no clear word. It says here in Isaiah, "Should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?"⁵

Should we as churchmen, as preachers, as pastors, as Christians, should we go out and consult the spiritually dead on behalf of those whom the Holy Spirit has made alive? Absolutely not, absolutely not.

The second indictment: An ignorance of God.

⁴ Isaiah 8:19

⁵ Ibid.

At times I am asked, “Brother Paul, please come and do a week long series on the attributes of God.”

And many times I will say this. “I am... Well, brother, have you thought this through?”

He said, “What do you mean have I thought this through?”

“Well, it is quite controversial, the subject that you are putting... you are giving to go teach in your church.”

They say, “What do you mean it is controversial? I mean it is God. We are Christians. This is a church. What do mean it is controversial?”

I said, “Dear pastor, you listen to me. When I begin instructing your people on the justice of God, the sovereignty of God, the wrath of God, the supremacy of God, the glory of God, you are going to have some of your finest and oldest church members stand up and say something like this. ‘That is not my God. I could never love a God like that,’ because they have a god they have made with their own mind and they love what they have made.”

Jeremiah 9:23-24:

Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me.⁶

Psalms 50. “You thought,” God speaking:

You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes. Now consider this, you who forget God, Or I will tear you in pieces, and there will be none to deliver.⁷

Now, what is the problem here? There is a lack of the knowledge of God. Many of you, possibly think, “Oh, talking about the attributes of God and theology, it is all high, ivory tower stuff that has no practical application.”

Listen to yourself speak saying the knowledge of God has no practical [?]. Do you know why all your Christian bookstores are filled up with self help books and five ways to do that and six ways to be godly and 10 ways not to fall? Because people don't know God. And so they have to be given all sorts of trivial little devices of the flesh to keep them walking as sheep ought to walk.

⁶ Jeremiah 9:23-24

⁷ Psalm 50:21-22

1 Corinthians 15:34. “Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.”⁸

Why the rampant sinning even among God’s people? A lack of the knowledge of the God, of God.

Now let me ask you a question. When was the last time you attended a conference on the attributes of God? When was the last time, as a pastor, you taught for a solid year on who God is? How much of all the teaching that goes on in America all week has anything to do with who God is?

And then we wonder. Isn’t it so easy to go with the flow, to just follow everybody else and then one day you hear something like this and all of the sudden you go, “I can’t even remember when anybody taught on the attributes of God”?

No wonder we are a people as we are.

To know him, that is what everything is about. That is eternal life. And eternal life doesn’t begin when you pass through the gates of glory. Eternal life begins with conversion. Eternal life is to know him. Do you honestly think you are going to be thrilled about swinging on gates of pearl and walking down streets of gold for an eternity? The reason why you won’t lose your mind in eternity is because of this. There is one there who is infinite in glory and you will spend an eternity of eternities tracking him down and you will never get your arms even around the foothill of his mountain.

Start now. So many different things you want to know and do and all the books. Get out a book on God, this one, and study it to know him, to know him.

Sunday morning, because of all of this, I would submit to you that it would be better not even to have a Sunday morning. Sunday morning is the greatest hour of idolatry in the entire week of America because people are not worshipping the one true God—the great mass at least—but are worshipping a god formed out of their own hearts by their own flesh, satanic devices and worldly intelligence. They have made a god just like themselves and he looks more like Santa Claus than he does Yahweh.

There can be no fear of the Lord among us because there is no knowledge of the Lord among us.

The third indictment: A failure to address man’s malady.

When I look at the book of Romans which is one of my favorite books of the Bible, it is not a systematic theology, but if you could say any book in the Bible was a systematic theology the book of Romans would be the closest. Isn’t it amazing that Paul spends the first three chapters of that book seeking to do one thing? Bring all men into condemnation, bring all men into condemnation.

⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:34

But it is not that condemnation is his great *sunum bonum* in his theology. It is not his end or his final purpose. It is a means to bring salvation to his readers because men must be brought to a knowledge of self before they surrender self over to God. Men are made in such a fallen manner now that you must cut away from them absolutely every hope in the flesh before they may be brought to God.

It is as important in everything, but it is especially important in evangelism. I remember. This was... I was 21 years old and had just been called to preach and I walked into an old store where they would sell suits to ministers for half price. They had been doing it for 50, 60 years. And I walked in there and I was looking for a suit in Paducah, Kentucky and all of the sudden the door opened. I heard the bell ring. It closed. There was an old, old man standing there. I never caught his name, but when he walked in he looked right at me.

He said, "Boy, you have been called to preach, haven't you?"

I said, "Yes, sir."

He was an old, old evangelist. He said, "You see where that building is right outside this building?"

I said, "Yeah."

He said, "I used to preach there. The Spirit of God would come down and souls would be saved."

I said, "Sir, please tell me about it."

He said, "There wasn't anything like this evangelism today." He said, "We would preach for two and three weeks and give no invitation to sinful men. We would plow and plow and plow and plow the hearts of men until the Spirit of God began to work and break their hearts."

I said, "Sir, how did you know when the Spirit of God was coming to break their hearts?"

And he said, "Well, let me just give you an example." He said, "Many decades ago I walked into this store to buy a suit. Someone had handed me \$30 and said, 'Preacher, go buy you a suit tomorrow.' And when I walked through the door the young clerk taking care of the shop turned around and looked at me and when he looked at me he fell down on the floor and cried out, 'Who can save a wicked man like me?' And I knew that the Spirit of God had fallen upon the place."

Now we just walk in and talk to them, give them three exploratory questions and ask them if they want to pray a prayer and ask Jesus to come into their heart and we make a

two fold son of hell who will never again be open to the gospel because the religious lie that we, as evangelicals, have spewed out of our mouth.

I will say something that Leonard Ravenhill used to say. “Now you understand why I preach in a lot of places once.” But that is the truth.

When we treat sin superficially, first of all we are fighting against the Holy Spirit. “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin.”⁹

There are very popular preachers today who are more concerned about giving you your best life now than they are eternity. And they brag about the fact that they do not mention sin in their preaching. I can tell you this. The Holy Spirit has nothing to do with their ministry lest he be working against. That would be the only thing.

Why? When a man says he has no ministry dealing with the sin of men, the Holy Spirit does. It is a primary ministry of the Holy Spirit to come and convict the world of sin. And so know this. When you do not deal specifically, passionately, lovingly with men and their depraved condition, the Holy Spirit is nowhere around you.

Also we are deceivers when we deal with the malady of men lightly like shepherds of Jeremiah’s day. “They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, Saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ But there is no peace.”¹⁰

We are not only deceivers, but we are immoral, like a doctor who denies his Hippocratic oath because he doesn’t want to tell someone bad news because he thinks that person will be cross against him, will be angry with him, will be sad. And so he does not tell them the news most necessary to save their life.

I hear preachers today, they say, “No. No, no, no, no, no. You don’t understand, brother Paul. We are not like the people of the day of John and Charles Wesley. We are not like the culture that Whitefield addressed or Edwards. We are not as hearty as they are. We are broken. We don’t have as much self esteem. We are feeble. We can’t bear such preaching.”

Listen to me. Have you ever studied the lives of these men? What they preached their culture couldn’t bear it either. No one has ever been able to bear the preaching of the gospel. They will either turn against it with a fierceness of an animal or they will be converted.

And to give you a thing about us being more feeble and not having the self esteem, our country and this world is overrun with this disgusting malady of self esteem. Our greatest problem is that we esteem self more than we esteem God.

We are also thieves when we do not speak much about sin. We are thieves.

⁹ John 16:8

¹⁰ Jeremiah 6:14

Let me ask you a question. This afternoon, this morning, where did all the stars go? Did some cosmic giant come by in a basket and pick them all up and throw them in and carry them someplace else? Where did all the stars go this morning? They were there, but you couldn't see them. But then the sky grew darker and darker and darker and as that night turned black as pitch the stars came out in the fulness of their glory.

When you refuse to teach on the radical depravity of men it is an impossibility that you bring glory to God, his Christ and his cross because the cross of Jesus Christ and the glory thereof is most magnified when it is placed in front of the backdrop of our depravity.

She loved much because she has been forgiven much and she knew how much she had been forgiven because she knew how wicked she was.¹¹

Oh, we are afraid to tell men of their wickedness and they can never love God because of it. We have robbed them the opportunity to boast not in self, but to follow the admonition, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."¹²

Our fourth indictment: An ignorance of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I want to submit to you tonight that this country is not gospel hardened. It is gospel ignorant because most of its preachers are. And let me repeat this. The malady in this country is not liberal politicians, the root of socialism, Hollywood or anything else. It is the so called evangelical pastor of our day and preacher of our day and evangelist of our day. That is where the malady is to be found. We do not know the gospel. We have taken the glorious gospel of our blessed God and reduced it down to four spiritual laws and five things God wants you to know with a little superstitious prayer at the end and if someone repeats it after us with enough sincerity we popishly declare them to be born again.

We have traded regeneration for decisionism.

First of all I am amazed after I talk about what I am going to talk about for just a few minutes here how many godly believers of 30 and 40 years walking in the faith come up to me with tears saying, "Brother Paul, I never heard this before in my life." And yet it is the historical doctrine of redemption, of propitiation.

You see, when you talk about the gospel, my dear friend, let's set it up just clearly. The gospel begins with nature of God and it goes from there to the nature of man and the fallenness thereof. And it goes from there, those two great columns of the gospel come to set up for us what should be called and known as, in every believer's mouth, the great dilemma. And what is that dilemma? If God is just he cannot forgive you.

¹¹ See Luke 7:47

¹² 1 Corinthians 1:31

The greatest problem in all of Scripture is this. How can God be just and at the same time the justifier of wicked men, when Scripture throughout the Bible says—especially I will draw from one text in Proverbs—“He who justifies the wicked is an abomination to God.”¹³ And yet all our Christian songs boast about how God justifies the wicked.

That is the greatest problem. That is the acropolis of the Christian’s faith so said Martyn Lloyd-Jones and Charles Spurgeon and anyone else who has read Romans three. You see, you have got to fit this before people. The great problem is that God is truly just and all men are truly wicked, God to be just must condemn wicked man. But then God, for his own glory, put a great love with which he loved us, sent forth his Son who walked on this earth as a perfect man. And then according to the plan, the eternal plan of God, he went to that tree. And on that tree he bore our sin and he became, standing in the law place of his people, bearing our guilt, he became a curse.

“Cursed is every man who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law so as to perform them.”¹⁴

Christ redeemed us from the curse becoming a curse in our place.

So many people have this romantic, powerless view of the gospel that the Christ is there hanging on the tree suffering under the wounds of the Roman Empire and the Father did not have the moral fortitude to bear the suffering of his Son so he turned away.

NO!!

He turned away because his Son became sin.

And so many when he is in that garden and he cries out, “Let this cup pass from Me,”¹⁵ people speculate, “Well, what was in the cup? Oh, it is the Roman cross. It is the whip. It is the nails. It is all this and all that.”

I do not want to take away from the physical sufferings of Christ on that tree, but the cup was the cup of God the Father’s wrath that had to be poured out on the Son. Someone had to die, bearing the guilt of God’s people, forsaken of God by his justice and crushed under the wrath of God, for it pleased the Lord to crush him.¹⁶

I was in German a while back or in a Germanic seminary in Europe a while back and this book *The Cross of Christ*, now it wasn’t John Stott’s book, it was another. I pulled it off and began to read it and this is what it said. “The Father looked down from heaven at the suffering inflicted upon his Son by the hands of men and counted that as payment for our sin.”

¹³ See Proverbs 17:15

¹⁴ See Galatians 3:10

¹⁵ Matthew 26:39

¹⁶ See Isaiah 53:10

That is heresy.

Now that physical suffering, that nailing to the tree, that was all part of the wrath of God. It had to be a blood sacrifice. I will take nothing away from that. But, my friend, if you stop there, you don't have a gospel.

And let me ask you. When the gospel is preached today and when it is shared in personal evangelism today do you ever hear the things I have just said? Almost never. It is never made clear that Christ was able to redeem because he was crushed under the justice of God and having satisfied divine justice with his death God is now just and the justifier of the wicked.

Gospel reductionism. We wonder why it has no power. We wonder why... What happened? I'll tell you. When you leave the gospel behind and there is no longer any power in your supposed gospel message, then you have got to go to all the little tricks of the trade that are so prominently used today to convert men and we all know most of them, all of them do not work.

My dear friend, let me say this. Several years ago graduating from seminary I had to make a decision whether I was going to go for my Ph.D. God, in order to save my spiritual life sent me to the middle of the jungles in Peru as far away from the academic world as I could get. And there I began to realize something.

As Spurgeon said, "Greater men with greater minds than I have approached this doctrine of the Second Coming, but to no avail. It is a great and mighty doctrine." He said, "I will set myself to this: seeking to comprehend something of Jesus Christ and him crucified."

Let me tell you this. This is what... It makes me so angry when men treat the glorious gospel of Christ as though it was the first step into Christianity that only takes about 10 minutes to counseling and after that you go on to greater stuff. That shows you how pathetic we are in our knowledge of the things of God.

My friend, on the day of the Second Coming you will understand absolutely everything about the Second Coming, but you will be in eternity of eternities of heaven and you will not even begin to comprehend the glory of God in Calvary. It is what everything is about.

Young man, young preacher, listen to me. Go after Him on that tree, what it means. You will need nothing to build strange fires in your oven, if you only catch a glimpse of what he did on that tree, what he did on that tree.

I love to say this. I have said it a million times. Abraham takes Isaac up that mountain, his son, his only son whom he loved. Do you suppose the Holy Spirit was trying to tell us about something future? And that son put up no struggle, but laid down and when that Father gave his will in to the will of God he brought that flint knife to pierce his own son's heart. But his hand was stayed and it was told the old man that God had provided a ram.

So many Christians think, “Oh, what a beautiful end to that story.” It is not the end. It is the intermission. Thousands of years later God the Father laid his hand upon the brow of his Son, his only Son whom he loved and took the flint knife out of the hand of Abraham and slaughtered his only begotten Son under the full force of wrath.

Now do you know why that little gospel you preach has no power? Because it is no gospel. Get to the gospel. Spend your life on your knees. Get away from men. Study the cross.

The fourth indictment: An ignorance of the doctrine of regeneration, an ignorance of the doctrine of regeneration.

My dear friends, and I am going to say this bluntly, I know that there are Calvinists here and I know that there are Arminians here and I know that there are all sorts of strange animals in between, but I want you to know this. Although I am leaning more toward—I guess I call myself a five point Spurgeonist—I want you to know this. Calvinism is not the issue. No, I am going to get in a lot of trouble when this goes on the internet. Calvinism is not the issue. I’ll tell you what the issue is. Regeneration. And that is why I can have fellowship with Wesley and Ravenhill and Tozer and all the rest because regardless of where they stood on the other issues they believed that salvation could not be manipulated by the preacher, that it was a magnificent work of the power of almighty God. And with them, therefore, I stand, that I was a work of God.

There is a greater manifestation of the power of God in the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit than in the creation of the world, of the universe, because he created the world *ex nihilo* out of nothing. But he recreates a man out of a corrupt man.

It is paralleled with the very resurrection of our Savior from the dead. If you are a preacher I understand that in preaching there is teachers and preachers and expositors and this and that and all of them are very necessary for the health of the Church. But you must understand this. As old G. Campbell Morgan, I have heard of him that when he would go up that majestic tower to preach he would quote to himself, “As a lamb led to the slaughter, as a sheep before his shearers.”¹⁷ He knew that apart from a magnificent manifestation of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, everything he said would be dead. It is the Spirit that gives life and in that sense every one of us that proclaims must proclaim as a prophet.

What do I mean by that? We are always, we are always Ezekiel standing in that valley of dry bones and they are very dry. And we walk out there and what do we do? We prophesy. We say, “Hear the Word of the Lord.” And we know that the wind of God must blow on these slain or they will not rise again. And when you have fully grasped that in the innermost part of your being, you will no longer give yourself to the manipulation that is so often carried out in the name of evangelism in this country. You will proclaim the Word of God. You will proclaim it.

¹⁷ See Acts 8:32

The doctrine of regeneration. Look at the Wesleys. Look what they had to face for a moment and my dear Whitefield. What was he? Everybody believed they were Christian, thoroughly Christian. Why? Well, they were baptized as infants, brought into the covenant. They were confirmed. They lived like devils. Regeneration was traded for a type of credalism that was given authority by the religious leaders of the day.

And then here comes the Wesleys. No. It is not right with your soul. You are not born again. There is no evidence of spiritual life. Examine yourself. Test yourself to see if you are in the faith. Make your calling and election sure.¹⁸ “Ye must be born again.”¹⁹

Here in America because of the last several years, several decades of evangelism the idea of born again is totally lost. It only means that at one time in a crusade you made a decision and you think you were sincere. But there is no evidence of a supernatural recreated work of the Holy Spirit in your life. If any man, not if some men, if any man be in Christ he is a new creature.²⁰

And now it is the same today. What do we face? I will tell you what we face. It is not a sort of infant baptism necessarily most of the time. It is not a high church confirmation by an ecclesiastical authority. What we face is the sinners’ prayer. And I am here to tell you, if there is anything I have declared war on it is that.

You say. “Brother Paul...”

Yes, in the same way that infant baptism, in my opinion, was the golden calf of the Reformation, for the Baptists and the Evangelicals and everyone else who has followed them today, I will tell you, that sinners’ prayer has sent more people to hell than anything on the face of the earth.

You say, “How can you say such a thing?”

Go with me to Scripture and show me, please. I would love you to stand up and tell me where anyone evangelized that way. The Scripture does not say that Jesus Christ came to the nation of Israel and said that “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, now who would like to ask me into their hearts? I see that hand.”

That is not what it says. He said, “Repent and believe the gospel.”²¹

Now men today are trusting in the fact that at least one time in their life they prayed a prayer and someone told them they were saved because they were sincere enough. And so in their salvation if you ask them, “Are you saved?” they do not say, “Yes, I am

¹⁸ See 2 Peter 1:10

¹⁹ John 3:7

²⁰ See 2 Corinthians 5:17

²¹ See Mark 1:15

because I am looking unto Jesus and there is mighty evidence giving me assurance of being born again.”

No. They say, “One time in my life I prayed a prayer.”

And they live like devils. But they prayed a prayer. And some of them... I heard of one evangelist who was coaxing a man to do that thing. Finally the man felt so uncomfortable the evangelist said, “Well, I’ll tell you what. I will pray to God for you and if it is what you want to say to God, squeeze my hands. Behold the power of God.”

Decisionism, the idolatry of decisionism. Men think they are going to heaven because they have judged the sincerity of their own decision.

When Paul came to the Church in Corinth he did not say to them, “Look, you are not living like Christians so let’s go back to that one moment in your life when you prayed that prayer and let’s see if you were sincere.”

No, he said this, “Test yourselves, examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith.”²²

Because I want you to know, my friends, salvation is by faith alone. It is a work of God. It is a grace upon grace upon grace. But the evidence of conversion is not just your examination of your sincerity at the moment of your conversion. It is the on going fruit in your life. It is the ongoing fruit in your life.

Oh, my dear friends, look what we have done. Isn’t a tree known by its fruit? What 60%, 70% of America thinks it is converted, born again. We kill how many thousands of babies a day? We are hated around the world for our immorality. Yet we are Christian.

And I lay this squarely, the blame, at the feet of the preacher.

Fifth indictment: An unbiblical gospel invitation.

We have touched on it a bit. I want to go further. Look how we do it today. I mean, now listen to me. The more... I have seen this everywhere. The Calvinist, the Arminian, a lot of them share something in common. It is this, the same superficial invitation. They talk a lot of talk about a lot of things and then they come to the invitation and it is almost as though everyone loses their mind.

Walk up to someone says, “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.”

Can you imagine telling that to an American?

“Sir, God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.”

²² See 2 Corinthians 13:5

“What? God loves me? Well, that’s great because I love me, too. Oh, this is wonderful. And God’s got a wonderful plan? I got a wonderful plan for my life, too. And if I accept him into my life I’ll have my best life now. This is absolutely wonderful.”

That is not biblical evangelism.

Let me give you something in its place. God comes to Moses and he says this.

The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.²³

The reaction of Moses: “Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship.”²⁴

Evangelism begins with the nature of God. Who is God? Can a man recognize anything about his sin if he hath not a standard with which to compare himself? If we tell him nothing but trivial things about God that tickle the carnal mind, will he ever be brought to genuine repentance and faith?

We do not begin with, “God loves you and has a wonderful plan.” We begin with a discourse of the full counsel of who God is. And we tell him from the start it may cost him his life.

After that we have exploratory questions. “Hey, you know you are a sinner, don’t you?”

That’s like years ago my mother died of cancer. It is like the doctor walking in on today and say, “Hey, Barb, you know you got cancer, don’t you?”

We treat it so superficially. No weight, nothing solemn.

“Sir, there is a terrible malady upon you and a judgment coming.”

Because if you just tell a man, “Sir, you know, you are a sinner?” Go ask the devil if he knows he is a sinner.

He will say, “Well, yes, I am. A mighty good one at that... Or a mighty bad one depending on how you look at it. But, yes. I know I am a sinner.”

The question is not do you know you are a sinner. The question is: Is the Holy Spirit so at work in your heart through the preaching of the gospel that a change has been wrought so that the sin you once loved you now hate and the sin you once desired to embrace, you are wanting to run from it as though you were running from a dragon?

²³ Exodus 34:6-7

²⁴ Exodus 3:8

And then the question: Do you want to go to heaven?

This is the reason I would not let my children go to 98% of the Sunday schools and vacation Bible schools in evangelical churches because some well meaning person stands up and says, "Isn't Jesus wonderful," after showing the Jesus film. Yes. "How many of you little children love Jesus?"

"Oh, I do."

"Who wants to accept Jesus into their little heart."

"Oh, I do."

And they get baptized. And they may walk a little bit because they have been.... They are being raised in a Christian culture, sort of, a church culture anyway. And then when they turn 15, 16, when they have the strength of will they begin to break the bonds. They begin to live in wickedness and then we go after them saying, "You are Christians. You are just not living like it. Stop your backsliding," instead of going to them biblically and saying this. "You made a confession of faith in Christ. You professed him even in baptism, but now it seems as though you have turned away from him. Examine yourself. Test yourself. There is little evidence of any true conversion in you."

And then when they are 24, 25, after college, maybe 30, they come back to church and they rededicate their life and they join right in with that pseudo Christian morality that encompasses churchianity in America and in the end they hear this: "Depart from me you worker of iniquity. I never knew you."²⁵

You say, "Brother Paul, you are so angry."

Have I not right to be? Somebody must be. Crying out for revival, but we haven't even got the foundations straight.

Oh, that revival would come and straighten our foundations. But would we, while we have open eyes and open ears and have Scripture in front of us, should we not correct these things?

Would you like to go to heaven?

My dear friend, everybody wants to go to heaven. They just don't want God to be there when they get there. The question is not do you want to go to heaven. The question is this. Do you want God? Have you stopped being a hater of God? Has Christ become precious to you? Do you desire him?

That is what political theory is all about, my dear friend. Everybody wants to go to heaven. But men are haters of God. So the question is not do you want to go to a special

²⁵ See Matthew 7:23

place where you will no longer hurt and you will get everything you want. The question is: Do you want him? Has Christ become precious to you?

Often as a person prays they are told after that, “Would you like to go to heaven?”

“Well, yes.”

“Well, then, would you like to pray and ask Jesus into your heart?”

Now, my dear friend, let me say this. There are people who get saved using that methodology, but it is not because of it. It is in spite of it.

“Sir, do you desire Christ? Do you see your sin?”

“Oh, yes, yes, I do.”

“Sir, let’s look at a few Scriptures here that lay out for us what repentance looks like, the Spirit bearing witness that this is happening in your life. Do you see brokenness? Do you see the disintegration of everything you fought and now your mind is filled with new thoughts about God and new desires and new hope?”

“Yes, I see that.

“Sir, that may be the first fruits of repentance. Now, throw yourself upon Christ. Trust in him. Trust in him.”

And then listen to me. You have the authority to tell me the gospel. You have authority to tell me how to be saved and you have authority to teach men biblical principles of assurance. But you have no authority to tell men they are saved. That is the work of the Holy Spirit of God.

But when you take them through that little thing, “Did you ask Jesus into your heart?”

“Yes.”

“Do you think you were sincere?”

“Yes.”

“Do you think he saved you?”

“I don’t know.”

“Of course he saved you because you were sincere and he promised that if you asked him to come in, he would come in. So you are saved.”

And they walk out of the church after five minutes of counseling and they evangelist goes to Denny's to eat, and the man is lost. The man is lost.

An unbiblical invitation. If they ever doubt, if they ever doubt their salvation again, here we go again. If they ever doubt their salvation, "Let's go back to a point in time. Was there ever a point in time in your life when you prayed and asked Jesus to come in?"

"Yes."

"Were you sincere?"

"I think so."

"That's the devil bothering you."

And if they live without growth even in the context of a church without growth in continued carnality, no fear. We blame it on the lack of personal discipleship and we write it off as the doctrine of the carnal Christian.

The doctrine of the carnal Christian has destroyed more lives and sent more people to hell.

Do Christians struggle with sin? Yes. Can a Christian fall into sin? Absolutely. Can a Christian live in a continuous state of carnality all the days of his life not bearing fruit and truly be Christian? Absolutely not or every promise in the Old Testament regarding the New Testament covenant has failed and everything God said about discipline in Hebrews is a lie.

A tree is known by its fruit.

When we work with men in conversion... I have seen preachers who understood much about the things of God, but when they come down ever after an exemplary gospel presentation they will enter, once again, into this methodology.

Let me give you a story and then we will go on to the next indictment, but a story that is one of the most precious moments in my life as a Christian.

I was preaching in Canada just... Actually they told me it was like 30 kilometers from Alaska. There were more grizzly bears in the town than there were people, really. It was a little church of about 15, 20 people and I was preaching. And right when I got up in the pulpit this mountain of a man walked in in his 60s, early 70s, but just a mountain of a man. He could have whipped every one of us in this building.

And as I preached, as I saw his face, I just threw everything away and started preaching the gospel. He was the saddest human being I have ever seen. Just gospel, gospel and when I got done I walked right from the pulpit to him.

I said, “Sir, what is wrong. What is troubling your soul? I have never seen a man so sad and down hearted in all my life?”

And he pulled out a manila envelope and it had some x-rays which I couldn’t understand, but he said this. “I just came from the doctor. I am going to die in three weeks.” That is what he told me. “Now I have lived all my life on a working cattle ranch. You can only get there by float plane or riding horses across the mountains and all this stuff.” He said, “I have never been to church. I have never read a Bible. I believe there is a God and one time I heard somebody talking about some guy named Jesus.” He said, “I have never been afraid of anything in my life and I am terrified.”

I said, “Sir, did you understand the message, the gospel?”

He said, “Yes.”

Now what would have a great majority of preachers done at that moment?

“Well, would you like to ask Jesus to come into your heart?”

That is what they would have done.

I said, “Sir, you understood it.”

He said, “I understood it, but is that it? Is that just...” He said, “A child could have understood that. Anybody. Is that all it is that I understand it and I pray or...?”

I said, “Sir, you are going to die in three weeks. I have to leave tomorrow. I will cancel my plane ticket and we will stay here over the Scriptures wrestling and crying out to God until you are either converted or you die and go to hell.”

And so we began. I began in the Old Testament, the New Testament, every verse of Scripture dealing with the promises of God regarding redemption and salvation, over and over, time after time, reading John 3:16, praying for a while, crying out to God, questioning the man regarding repentance, regarding faith, regarding assurance, working till Christ be formed in him.

And then, finally, just exhausted that evening there was no breakthrough, there was nothing. And I said, “Sir, let’s pray.” And we prayed.

I said, “Sir, read John 3:16 again.”

He said, “We have read this a million times.”

I said, “I know, but it is one of the greatest promises of salvation. Read that text again.”

And I will never forget. He had my Bible on his lap in those big mountainous hands of his and he said, "Ok." He said, "For God so loved the world, that He gave...²⁶ I'm saved. I'm saved. Brother Paul, all my sins are gone. I have eternal... I'm saved. I mean..."

I said, "How do you know?"

He said, "Haven't you ever read this verse before?"

What was going on? A working of the Spirit of God instead of those little tricks you try. What you want to go eat. What you think preaching is a spectacle and after that you go back to the hotel? No, after the preaching is when the work begins. Dealing with souls. People come forward in meetings for counsel by someone who shouldn't be counseling. Five minutes, they are given the... Quick, give the card to the pastor and the pastor says, "I would like to present to you a new child of God. Welcome him into the family of God."

How dare you?

If you are going to present him, say this. "This man tonight has made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. And because of our fear of God and our love for the souls of men we will now be working with him to make sure that Christ has truly been formed in him, that he truly has a biblical understanding of repentance and faith and great assurance and joy in the Holy Spirit. That is what we are going to do."

Look what we have done. I plead with you. Look what we are doing. And this is not some cult. This is us. Stop it. Stop it.

Sixth indictment: Ignorance regarding the nature of the Church.

God has only one religious institution. It is the Church. It is the Church. And our ultimate goal and the ultimate product of revival will be the planting of biblical churches.

I have the greatest fear that the local church today is despised. Tell somebody you are an itinerant preacher, that you have a world wide ministry and they all bow down. Tell someone you are a pastor of a group of 30 and they make you sit in the back during the conference.

He is not the prince of itinerant preachers, he is the prince of pastors.

Several years ago Bill Clinton had a slogan during the election. "It is the economy, stupid." My pastor, Jeff Noblett, one of the elders in our church, the primary teaching, preaching pastor, he said to me one day, he goes, "You know, I'd like to have a bunch of shirts made up."

"What would they say, brother Jeff?"

²⁶ John 3:16

“It’s the Church, stupid.”

Jesus gave his life for the Church, a beautiful virgin, pristine Church. If you want to give your life for something in the ministry, give it to the Church, to a church, a body of believers, a local congregation. It is the Church.

Now let me say this about the Church. I want you to listen well. There is not a remnant of believers in the Church. We all know about the remnant theology, you know, that throughout all the course of Israel there was Israel the people of God and a remnant of true believers. That is not true about the Church. There is not a remnant of believers or a small group of believers inside a larger group called the Church. The Church is the remnant.

And I want to say this. If pastors have ever come to close to blaspheming it is with regard to this. I hear theologians, itinerant teachers, pastors, this and that saying these sorts of things. “There is just as much sin in the Church as out of the Church. There is just as much divorce in the Church as out of the Church. There is just as much immorality and pornography in the Church as out of the Church.” And then preachers say, “Yes, the Church is acting like a whore.”

I want you to know this. You ought to be very careful calling the bride of Jesus Christ a whore.

I will tell you what the problem is. Pastors and preachers don’t know what the Church is. I want you to know that the Church of Jesus Christ in America is beautiful. She is frail at times. She is weak. She is buffeted. She is not perfect, but I want you to know she is broken. She is humbly walking with her God. The problem with you is you don’t know what the Church is.

Today because of the lack of biblical preaching the so called Church is filled up with carnal, wicked people identified with Christianity. And then because of all the goats in the midst of the lambs, the lambs are blamed for all the things the goats are doing and then the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of us.

Have you ever read... Let’s just.... I know we are running out of time, but just go quickly with me, just go quickly. I want to show you something. Go to Jeremiah 31, thank you. Verse 31 of Jeremiah 31. “‘Behold, days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.’”²⁷

Now I do not want to take away anything from the people called Israel, but this text is also applied to the Church. Understand that. I don’t want to get into any battles on eschatology, but in the Bible, in the New Testament, the book of Hebrews it is applied to the people of God.

²⁷ Jeremiah 31:31

“Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.”²⁸

I hear preachers saying all the time, “Well, when you look back and you see Israel, you see a bunch of godless, idolaters, people. And in the midst of them there was a tiny remnant of true believers.” That is true, but don’t apply that to the New Testament Church because he says, “I am going to do something different,

Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them.”²⁹

He hasn’t just given you, if you are converted, he hasn’t just given you a stone tablet of laws. He has supernaturally, through the doctrine of regeneration, written those laws in your heart. And because he has done that, “I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”³⁰

And look what it says. “"They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,’ declares the LORD, ‘for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.’”³¹

Again, the doctrine of regeneration. God is doing a new work these last 2000 years. We don’t have a lot of churches in America. We have a lot of really nice brick buildings on finely manicured lawns.

Just because someone says they are of the Church or they are Christian doesn’t make it so. Look what he says. They will not even have to teach one another.

Now that doesn’t mean there won’t be teachers and preachers, but there will all be an outstanding knowledge of God among them, particularly with regard to their sins having been forgiven.

Quickly just jump. Look at 32, chapter 32 verse 38. “They shall be My people, and I will be their God.”³² He doesn’t say, “I hope so, maybe, if I get lucky, oh, if I can get enough evangelists to work with me, maybe this will all come out right.”

He says, “I am going to pull a people for me, a people that I am going to give to my Son.” And he says, “They shall be My people, and I will be their God.”³³

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Jeremiah 31:32-33

³⁰ Jeremiah 31:33

³¹ Jeremiah 31:34

³² Jeremiah 32:38

Look at this. “And I will give them one heart and one way.”³⁴

Now, don't be angry with me, any angrier than you already are at least. But listen to me. The 70s and 80s and all the Jesus marches and everyone weeping and crying, “The Church is so divided. The Church is not one.”

My dear friend, let me tell you something. If the Church is not one there is a prayer out there that God the Father did not answer for his Son. And this new covenant promise assailed.

So I want to redirect you a little bit. I want to submit to you, the Church is one. She has always been one.

Have you ever sat down on an airplane or maybe met someone in a marketplace you didn't even know and you being maybe Baptist or Mennonite or this or that, but truly evangelical, truly Christian, you talk to him for no more than few minutes and you discover, “He is a believer. This is a live one.”

And at that moment you would give your life for him. You would give your life for him.

I remember one time we were in Departamento Amazonas in Peru and it was during the time of the Sendero Luminoso and the civil war that was going on there. We rode 22 hours up in the back of a grain truck under a black tarp and at about midnight we pulled the tarp off, the truck stopped and we jumped off into the jungle. We stayed the night just at the edge of the jungle and made our ways up to a place called [?]. About half way up we got lost in the dark the next day so we were praying, me and my dear friend Paco, we were praying, “Oh, God, give us some direction. We are lost. If we are found in here the terrorists own the place. The military wouldn't even go in.” We cried out, “Oh, God, give us some direction. Help us.”

We heard a bell. And then we heard somebody talking. It was a strange conversation at first we thought. Then we realized it was a little boy coming in from the fields with his burro and he was talking to his burro. And so we got behind him and we followed him. Then we stood on the edge of the town, a little village, huts, adobe homes and I said, “Paco,” I said, “You know, if terrorists own this thing we are dead.”

“Yeah, but we have got to somewhere.”

So we got down, walked up to a man who was drunk in the dark and said, [?] “Are there brothers here?” Because everybody knows what that means in the mountains? It means a real Christian.

And he said, [?], “The old woman over there.”

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Jeremiah 32:39

So I went over there. There was an old Nazarene woman and I knocked on the door. I said, "I am an evangelical pastor. Please help me."

That old woman reached out with that lantern. She grabbed me. She pulled me inside. She grabbed Paco, took us down. Her house was cut out of a kind of a cliff in the mud and took us down in the basement where there was some hay and chickens and things and she sat us there and she lit a lamp and then a little boy came in and she called to him and said, "Go get the other brothers." And they started bringing chickens and yucca and everything else, risking their life. Why? Because we are one.

Stop saying all these silly things that you are saying, that the body of Christ is divided and it is a mess and it is full of sin. I would not talk about the bride of Christ that way if I was you.

What you have got is a bunch of goats and tares among the sheep. And because very little biblical, compassionate Church discipline is practiced, they live among the sheep, they feed on the sheep and they destroy the sheep and those of you who are leaders in the Church are going to pay a high penalty when you stand before the one who loves them because you did not have enough courage to stand up and confront the wicked.

As a matter of fact, listen to me. The average scenario in North America with regard to churches by and large, the churches are democracies. And I don't want to get into the ifs and pros or cons of that. But here is what happens. Because the preaching of the gospel is so low, the church is basically the majority of it are carnal lost people and because it is a democracy they by and large govern the direction of the church. And because the pastor doesn't want to lose the great number of people and because he has wrong ideas regarding evangelism and true conversion, he caters to the wicked in his church and his little group of true sheep that belong to Jesus Christ are sitting there in the midst of all the theater, in the midst of all the worldliness, in the midst of all the multimedia going, "We just want to worship Jesus and we just want someone to teach us the Bible." And pastors are going to pay for that.

I have.... It is true. It is just true.

You are saying, "Oh, you are just angry."

My dear friends, do you know what it costs me to say this? It is true. Trying to keep together a bunch of wicked people while a little flock in the midst of them are starving to death and are made to go in directions they don't want to go with the carnal majority.

Listen to me. If my wife was at Walmart late one night and you walked by as a man and you saw that two men were abusing her, three, four, five, then men were abusing her and hurting her and you put your head down in the name of self preservation and you walked by, I want to tell you something, my friend. I will not only look for those 10 men, I will look for you.

It is the bride of Christ and she is precious to him. It is going to cost you to serve to Jesus. It could cost you your church, your reputation and your denomination, absolutely everything. But the bride of Jesus Christ is worth it.

Look what it says. I love this. Look, 39. “I will give them one heart and one way.”³⁵ And what is that way? It is Christ and it is holiness.

Every true believer I have ever met spoke much of Christ and had a longing desire to be more holy than they were, more conformed to Christ. And, look. “I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them.”³⁶

Oh, what a text that is. But let’s just go on really quickly. “I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good.”³⁷

Now, we just read this and so many people who are wicked, who are lost, they just go to church on Sunday. They hear this verse. “Yes, God has made an everlasting covenant with me. He will never turn away from me, never, never. I am secure because of God’s grace.” But they fail to read the second part.

And look what it says. “I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.”³⁸

The evidence that God has made an everlasting covenant with you, sir, is that he has put the fear of God in you so that you will not turn away from him and if you turn away from him and he does not discipline you and you continue turning away from him, it is evidence that he has not put his fear in you, you have not been regenerated and you have no covenant with God at all.

Oh, it’s true.

The seventh indictment—and we will just rush through this—and I know that this is misunderstood today and so I am going to define it: A lack of loving and compassionate Church discipline.

Most evangelical pastors in America today ought to take Matthew 18 and rip it right out of their Bible.

You can’t do that, sir. You have got to take the whole thing.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Jeremiah 32:40

³⁸ Ibid.

Many pastors, their theology gets left behind when they come out of their office, out of their study. They are theological in conversation. They are theological in their office, but when they step out, they run the church by carnal means.

I am not an elder at my church and so—and have not been there very long—so I can say this without boasting. It practices church discipline. It is a very large church, about 1000. And they estimated they have saved 30 marriages in the last several years through loving, compassionate church discipline that does not begin with excommunication. It begins with, “Ye who are spiritual...”³⁹

We say, “Oh, I am too loving. We can’t practice discipline. We just... we are just too loving.”

You are more loving than Jesus? He is the one who commanded this.

“Yeah, it will cause so much problems.”

Yeah, you’re right. Maybe that’s why there’s not a whole lot of problems between the church and culture today because we are not confronting culture.

And we don’t confront culture just by going out there and picketing Hollywood. We confront culture by obeying God. Noah built the ark and condemned the world. You don’t have to have a protest sign. Just walk in obedience and the world will hate you.

My dear friend, “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.”⁴⁰ Oh, what a wonderful thing. “But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.”⁴¹

It is not that these guys are on your side. They are going to listen and judge. Maybe you are the one that is wrong. Maybe your brother is not in sin. Maybe you are overcritical and legalistic. Who knows?

And listen. “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”⁴²

My dear friend, I believe that we need to hear this. We can either start obeying God and disciplining ourselves or we can have God do it for us. And maybe the hour is coming and now is when that is going to happen.

I am not talking about critical, legalistic, hateful men. There’s enough of those. I am talking about a man, a group of elders, leaders who love enough to lay their life on the

³⁹ Galatians 6:1

⁴⁰ Matthew 18:15

⁴¹ Matthew 18:16

⁴² Matthew 18:17

line because they know this is not a game. This is not something that we do just for this life, that eternity is at stake, the salvation of souls. Look at all these Christian bookstores. Look at the old books of the old days of the Wesleys and the Whitefields and on and on, the Puritans and the Reformation. Most of those books dealt with what is the gospel, how do you preach it, how do you bring someone to Christ, how do you discern true conversion, how do you be a doctor of souls.

We have joined Rome in this matter. Rome: The baby is baptized, the baby is Christian. The baby is Rome's. Never again deal with conversion. Just create all sorts of worldly means to try to keep them in the Church.

Evangelicals have done the same. Pray a little prayer with them after two or three minutes of counseling, after a half an hour of preaching, 25 of which was very funny stories and then drawing the net after five minutes. Counsel them for a little bit and then declare them saved and then spend the rest of their days discipling them and wondering why they don't grow.

I want to submit to you, I believe in personal one on one discipleship, but, my dear friend, the Church got along for a thousand or more years without it, without what we know as personal, one on one, discipleship with all the books and all the different things.

I want you to think about this. One on one discipleship became gigantic in the late 70s and until today. What was the cry? Just as many people are going out the back doors, coming in the front door and the reason why that is happening is because we are not discipling people.

No. The reason why it is happening is because people aren't getting converted, because his sheep, they hear his voice and they follow him, whether you disciple them or not.

Now we ought to disciple, but that is not why they are leaving. They went out from us because they were not of us.⁴³ And they hardly got a chance to be of us because they never heard a true gospel and no one ever dealt with their soul.

So we spend a fortune discipling goats, hoping they will become sheep. You can't teach a goat into a sheep. A goat becomes a sheep by the supernatural working of the Spirit of almighty God.

Now Church discipline... I moved my family to this church because they practice Church discipline, because I need to be under Church discipline, the watchful care of elders and other members who take this seriously. I want my children, if they are converted one day, they are all tiny right now, but if they are converted or they make a profession of faith and then go awry, I want to know that my children will be brought before the Church, if necessary for the salvation of their soul.

⁴³ See 1 John 2:19

Some of you in here would get so mad if a pastor walked up to you and said, “Honestly, I have been praying about your child and I fear that they are unconverted.”

You would get so mad you would rally up a group to have that pastor kicked out instead of realizing, “Oh, praise God, we have got a man of God here.”

Eighth indictment: A silence on separation.

There is a void of serious teaching about holiness. My dear friend, general teaching on holiness, everyone agrees. Let’s be holy. We need to be more holy. Let’s have a holiness conference.

But when you get specific about what that means, that’s when everything turns into a turmoil.

“Pursue peace with all men,” the writer of Hebrews tells us, “and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.”⁴⁴

Does anybody believe this?

You say, “Brother Paul, I have been blamed so often for teaching, you know, works religion.”

Listen to me. Listen. Again, it goes back to regeneration and the providence of God. If God truly converts a man he will continue working in that man, through teaching and blessing and admonition and discipline. He will see to it that the work he has begun will be finished. And that is why the writer says, “Without sanctification, without holiness no one will see the Lord.”⁴⁵

Why? Because if there is no growth in holiness, God is not working in your life. If he is not working in your life it is because you are not a child.

Look at the difference between Jacob and Esau. “Jacob I loved...Esau I hated.”⁴⁶ Yet God fulfilled all his promises to both of them. Jacob was blessed. Esau was blessed. How did God demonstrate his judgments and wrath against Esau and his love toward Jacob? I will tell you how. He let Jacob run wild. He let Esau run wild, no work of discipline, no work of godliness, nothing. But he beat Jacob to death almost every day of his life.

The loving discipline, the correction of God to bring us to holiness.

⁴⁴ Hebrews 12:14

⁴⁵ See Hebrews 12:14

⁴⁶ Romans 9:13

Now there is so much teaching on this, but let me just say this. “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice.”⁴⁷ Romans 12:1 and then go on to two.

Your bodies. Why does he say “body?” I think to avoid all this super spirituality.

“Well, I have given Jesus my heart and you can’t judge a book by its cover.”

Well, as a matter of fact, you can judge a book by its cover. Jesus never said you couldn’t just a book by his cover. He said you could. “You will know them by their fruit.”⁴⁸

And if you think that you have given him your heart, then he will have your body. And I will tell you why. The heart, my friend, is not some blood pumping muscle or some figment of a poet’s imagination. It refers to the very essence or core of your being. Don’t tell me Jesus has the very essence and core of your being and it doesn’t affect your body. It is just not going to happen.

And so what do we do? We go through Scripture, what, legalistically? No, drawing inferences? No. Just standing on the commands of Scripture.

About what?

I do not agree with everything the Puritans said, but I love the Puritans and one of the reasons why I love them because I believe they honestly made an attempt to bring everything in their life under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Their minds, because they wrote 800 page books on what should I think about according to the Scriptures. What should not enter into my mind according to the Scriptures? What should I do with my eyes? What should go in these ears and what should not go in these ears? How should the tongue be ruled? What should be the direction of my life?

And yes, I am going to scare you to death. How should I dress?

Now here I am going to be careful here. I don’t want to draw inferences and things. My dear friend, my wife says it this way. If your clothing is a frame for your face from which the glory of Christ springs forth, it is of God. But if your clothing is a frame for your body, it is sensual and God hates it. Enough said?

Now I can’t go through everything of holiness and holiness isn’t just outward expression, but we have become to be a people that uses the interior work of the Spirit as an excuse to say nothing is ever going to happen on the outside. And that is not true.

⁴⁷ Romans 12:1

⁴⁸ See Matthew 7:20

Some of you young men, you cry out probably more than I do that the Spirit of God would fill you and work in you, but it only takes one half hour of television to so grieve him, he will be miles from you.

Ninety-nine percent pure, 1% sewer I am not drinking.

One time I was struggling and Leonard Ravenhill was talking to a dear friend of mine who was saying, "Brother Leonard, a young man, brother Paul, he is really struggling." And he sent a tract. I still got that tract. I will never, never part with that. It said, "Others can, you cannot."

I don't necessarily agree with everything.

Young man, listen to me. I don't go to malls. I don't, not because I am more holy than you. It is because I know what I am.

There is the story of one of the finest, greatest violinists in Europe playing his final concern, an old man. And when he finished a young man walked up to him, violinist and said, "Sir, I'd give my life to play like you."

And the old man said, "Son, I have given my life to play like me."

"I want the power of God on my life." Then something has got to go.

"I want to know him." Then some separation has to occur.

Let me tell you something, young man, everyone else is running around, all their little retreats and all their conferences and getting together with group hugs and singing Kumbyah and everything else. Maybe you need to get alone in the wilderness with God and fast for seven days on your knees studying the book of Psalms, just being alone with God, belonging to him.

To be a man of God there has got to be a sense where sometimes even your wife who is of your own flesh, one with her, she looks you in the eye and she knows she can't go where you are going.

There is silence on separation. I think, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness?"⁴⁹ Nothing. "Or what fellowship has light with darkness?"⁵⁰ Nothing. Darkness is the opposite of God's revelation.

At what harmony Christ was [?]. Nothing. Or what has the believer in common with the unbeliever? Nothing.

⁴⁹ 2 Corinthians 6:14

⁵⁰ Ibid.

He says, “Come out from their midst.”⁵¹ Come out from the midst of what? Come out from the midst of lawlessness, darkness, satanic devices and the life and worldliness of the unbeliever. Come out from it.

I have a ninth indictment and this is very important to me as an older man with a young family. I didn’t get married until I was 30. My had something of a little brain tumor for the first eight years. We couldn’t have children and then, oh, praise God, a child was born and then another and then another and then, who knows?

Psychology and sociology have replaced the Scriptures with regard to the family.

My dear friend, pastors, leaders, think about this. Our churches or our Sunday morning services—better said—are so cosmetic. Just because there seems to be beautiful worship and the sermon went well and people seem to be moved, that is not evidence. I will tell you what evidence is. The home, the marriages, the families.

Judges 17:6. “In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.”⁵²

If I talk to people because I go for all kinds, I find a godly man who has raised godly children and I go and I latch on to him. But in most cases do you know what I find out? The people I talk to in church all of it is wife’s tales and sociology and this and that and every other thing, what is right in their own eyes and can’t give me one biblical verse. But every once in a while I find a man and a woman who set themselves to set their family according to Scripture and the difference is overwhelming.

When I am on an airplane I love to do this. Men will sit down beside me and they will go, “What do you do?”

I go, “Oh, I’m a husband.”

They go, “Oh, what else do you do?”

“Oh, I’m a father.”

“What else do you do?”

“Well, if I have any time left over I preach a little.”

What does it matter if a man win the whole world and lose his family? And let me just put it to you this way. Based upon what are you raising your children and loving your wife? Based upon what? If you can’t start going into Scriptures right now and pulling them apart and showing me how your family is founded upon it, I can assure you, you are a captive of psychology, sociology, the whims and the lies of this age.

⁵¹ 2 Corinthians 6:17

⁵² Judges 17:6

You see, you don't have the right to do... You have no authority, sir, apart from the Word of God.

Look at Genesis 18:19. "For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."⁵³ What a beautiful thing?

And listen, Romans chapter 12 verses one and two. Well, verse two tells us that the will of God is perfect. So if you ever come up with this idea as a man of God, "I am sacrificing my family for the sake of the ministry," I will tell you, you are a bald faced liar. You are sacrificing your family for the sake of the little kingdom you are trying to build because the will of God is perfect. That means I do not have to violate the will of God with regard to my family in order to fulfill the will of God with regard to the ministry.

God doesn't need you. He does desire that you be obedient, that you be obedient.

I just want to give you two examples. Now before... It is like when someone asked me one time, "Brother Paul, are you against evangelism?"

I said, "Yes and no. I am not against biblical evangelism, but I am against the way you are doing it."

"Are you against Sunday school and youth groups?"

"Yes and no."

I want to explain something to you. Now, for some of you I am not going to be enough and for some of you I am going to be too much. I just want to use these two things to point out what is wrong with us.

Sunday school. No matter what denomination you are a part of, if you are a part of some denomination that is kind of organized I can assure you that your denomination spends multi millions of dollars on Sunday school material, multi millions of dollars of conferences, on teaching teachers how to teach Sunday school, on doing everything in the book to promote Sunday school. I know that for a fact.

Let me ask you. How much money does your denomination spend and how many conference and man hours are put in to teach fathers to teach their children? So now you have found it, haven't you? God doesn't have a plan B. He has a plan A. You circumvent plan A, plan B won't work.

⁵³ Genesis 18:19

Now I am not saying that children can't come together in groups and be catechized or be taught or anything, but if that ever even begins to hint to supplant the ministry of the Father in the home, blow it to pieces.

Do you see what I am saying? Look at just that one tiny instance. Everything for Sunday school, everything for Sunday school. But there is hardly a conference in this entire country to teach men how to teach their children. And most of the time in the Sunday school it is nothing more than entertainment because the Sunday school teacher doesn't have the authority to discipline your child. And even if they did they wouldn't do it because they don't believe in it.

That's just one tiny instance. Let's look at youth groups.

"Well, youth need to be together. You know, they need to be together."

Ok, well, let's look. Proverbs 13:20. "He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm."⁵⁴

Who ever told you youth ought to be together? Who ever told you that? I'll tell you who told you that. 1960s psychologists, generation gap. Youth are to be with adults so that they stop acting like naïve fools and join adulthood and put away foolishness which leads to destruction.

Now I am not saying you can't bring youth together, but I submit if you do, have all their parents there.

And you say, "Well, what about the lost youth that come into our church?"

Well, what are they seeing now? The lost youth come in to your Christian youth in Church and they see almost the same thing they see in their own home, no parents, kids teaching kids. Or one guy a little bit older with mousse in hair teaching your kids.

But what would happen if lost youth came into your church and they saw the children there, the youth in a loving, wonderful relationship collectively with their parents and they would go, "Whoa. I have never seen anything like this before. His dad, look at him. He loves...I mean he loves his dad. I mean look at the... So is this Christianity?"

You see, my dear friend, let us say... I am no doctor, but a man comes up to me with a bleeding forehead and he says, "Brother Paul, I have been everywhere. No one can diagnose my problem."

And I say, "Well, I am no doctor, but I'll follow you around for 24 hours."

⁵⁴ Proverbs 13:20

And I notice that every time the hour strikes if it strikes one he hits himself in the head with a brick one time. If it strikes two he hits himself in the head twice with a brick. If it strikes 12, he hits himself 12 times in the head with a brick.

After observing this, cautiously and carefully, taking notes for 24 hours, I come up to him and I say, “You know, I think I have figured out your problem. I am no doctor, but I think I have figured out your problem.”

It is that pathetic among us, church. Why do our children do what they do? Why is everything...?

It is like one old dear saint, someone asked him one time, he wouldn't let his teenage son go out with a young lady to be in some private place. And they said, “Don't you trust your son?”

He said, “No, I don't trust my son. What ever made you think that? I don't trust his dad. I wouldn't put his father alone with a woman that wasn't his wife and yet I have much more to lose than boy. I have much more control of my will than a teenager with raging hormones. So what would you... What would make you ever think I would do that?”

We violate biblical principle after biblical principle after biblical principle and then we wonder why everything is a mess.

Lastly, just real quick turn with me... You know when I say real quick I am speaking an allegory or something. Go to 1 Timothy. I was listening a few months ago as to all the horrendous things that are happening to our—I don't know what you would call them anymore: republic, democracy, country, I am not really sure, socialistic state—and I was so burdened as I sat there listening and I was saying, “Oh, God, what can I do? I would, right now, Lord, honestly with all that is in me I will jump in the middle of the fire. I will... If there is a charging rhino I will jump in front of it. Just tell me what to do. Do you want me to go to Washington and just stand in front of the White House and preach until they throw me in jail? I am tired of just preaching to Christians and in churches and all of this. God, just... The country is going to hell. Just throw me. What do you want me to do? Just throw me at them.”

Verse one of chapter four. “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith,”⁵⁵ 1 Timothy 4:1, “paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.”⁵⁶

Now, he goes on to basically tell young Timothy that all hell is going to break lose in culture, that everything is just going to be maddening, men as beasts.

⁵⁵ 1 Timothy 4:1

⁵⁶ Ibid.

I was with Conrad and Mbewe a few months ago and I heard him preach. They call him the Spurgeon of Africa and rightly so. If you get a chance to listen to him, listen to him. He is one of my favorite preachers in the world. And he said this.

He said, “In Africa we no longer fear of beasts. We don’t run from beasts. We fear men and run from men.” He was talking, of course, about depravity.

But he said here that, “Just the world is going to come unglued, Timothy.”

Now what does he say, too? Verse six. In “In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith.”⁵⁷

And right there this text just started unraveling for me. Paul, yeah. The world has lost its mind. Everything is going to happen. It is under my providence, but listen to me. Here should be your reaction in the midst of all hell breaking loose, in the midst of apostasy, in the midst of persecution. Here is what you need to do. Be constantly nourished on the words of faith.

We always want to run out there and do something. We want to fix something. God is seeking men of character, polished, swords. First of all, son, be “constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.”⁵⁸

This “you have been following” is very important. I think it is indicating to us that a simple intellectual study of Scripture will not, will not achieve the goal that God has for his men. They must obey it. They must begin following. You cannot learn doctrine well until you follow the doctrine you learn.

And then he says this. He says, “But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women.”⁵⁹

My dear friend, let me tell you something. All this Emergent Church stuff, much of the Church Growth stuff, all of the cultural sensitivity, throwing out the window biblical sensitivity, it is just a bunch of little boys wanting to play church without the power of God on their life. And I will stand on that statement.

It is a lesser than David trying to fit himself in Saul’s armor. To the wind with it.

The more you trust in the arm of the flesh, the less you are going to see of the power of God.

He says this, “On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ 1 Timothy 4:6

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ 1 Timothy 4:7

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Man of God, you want revival. So do I. We need an army, though. If powerful swords, if mighty, flaming pipes and swords and weaponry are to be dropped out of heaven for us to fight, then we must be the caliber of men who can yield those things and wield those things and fight with them with sound character. We should discipline ourselves to the purpose of godliness.

Young men, discipline yourself to prayer. Discipline yourself to the systematic reading of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation over and over and over and over again. Discipline yourself in your speech. Discipline yourself in the company you keep. Discipline yourself in when you go to bed and when you rise up. This is a war. Discipline yourself.

Young men, I can tell you this. Unless you are some exception, being born in the age that you have been born, if you are under 30, yea, even under 40, you probably lack discipline because you have never been able to work. You have never had need to work for your food and your fathers never made you work so hard that your bones cried.

The men who have accomplished much and been used of God have been men of labor in the ministry. This is hard and it will cost you everything.

And by the time you are an old man you will be broken, but strong in the things of God.

Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.⁶¹

Oh, my dear friends, who cares about your best life now? Eternity. The day you stand in those granite halls before the Lord of glory and kings and the greatest men on earth are divided and split and culled, some cast into eternal hell and some invited into eternal glory live for eternity.

These Olympians, how majestic they are, but only for a moment. They start training when they are four and five years old. They never do anything but train until they are 22. They run a nine second race for a medal they hang up and that's it.

Cannot you give equal for eternal things?

Some of the greatest men of God have been men very limited in their bodies. In their abilities they were so limited that they had to focus themselves into one thing. It is the ministry.

“For bodily discipline is only of little profit.”⁶²

⁶¹ 1 Timothy 4:7-8

⁶² 1 Timothy 4:8

It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God.⁶³

This is not some martyr thing in which we uselessly give our lives to nothing only to be pulverized with out hope. No. We serve God and God will honor us. We affix our hope on that and that gives us strength, strength.

Oh this life is a vapor. I am 47, but yesterday I was 21. Where did it all go? It is a vapor? While you have strength, preach. I praise God that in his providence as a young man I spent myself in the Andes Mountains and in the jungles of Peru doing what I no longer have the strength to do.

While you are a young man, while there is strength in you, labor with all your might. Take those stupid video games of yours and crush them under your feet. Throw the TV out the window. You were made for greater things than these.

If you are a child of the king nothing on this earth can satisfy you, nothing.

“Prescribe and teach these things.”⁶⁴

Now, there is so much here, but look at 15. “Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.”⁶⁵

Let’s say that on a wooden table my child spills a glass of water. And by the consistencies of nature, the laws that God has placed in her, the water heaps up a bit on the table, so much that you can see it as a pool. You walk by it and you say, “There is water spilled on the table.” It is evident to all.

But then I come by and I take a towel and I lay it across the spilled pool of water and I lift it up.

And you say, “I no longer see any water. Where is it?”

It is absorbed in the towel.

Men, you are to be absorbed in these things of godliness and character. Men, I plead with you. Listen to me. This is so important. You are not errand boys. You are not to spend your days wiping the noses of carnal churchmen. Get yourself in your study. Drink deep. Be so absorbed in the knowledge and the knowing of God that people say, “Where is he? He used to be such a man about town, such a friend to everyone, such a personable fellow. Where is he?”

He is absorbed in these things.

⁶³ 1 Timothy 4:9-10

⁶⁴ 1 Timothy 4:11

⁶⁵ 1 Timothy 4:15

We are men of God. We are ministers of the most high. There should be an otherness about us. We should have a distant gaze in our eyes towards a distant [?]. The greatest thing we can do for our people is to be men of God absorbed in the things of God so that when we open our mouths the Word of God comes out.

Where I go to church Jeff Noblett is the main preaching pastor. He has always given himself to study, but when I got there I talked to him and I talked to other leaders. And any time someone asked me something I said this. "Please do this one thing. Take as much of the burden off of brother Noblett as we possibly can and let him live in that study with God because I have got children out here. And the greatest gift that man could give to me is to study to show himself approved and to come out in that pulpit in the power of the Holy Spirit and proclaim, 'Thus saith the Lord,' correcting and rebuking, giving great promises and warnings. Please do that for me."

Pastor, please do that for your people because he says, "Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."⁶⁶

I want... Let's just finish with this. This verse means almost nothing in the evangelical community today. How many pastors do you think and preachers take it seriously, "I need to pay close attention to myself to insure salvation for me and for those who hear me"?

I have a question, pastor, when was the last time you examined your own life to see if you were in the faith, to see if you really know him.

You see, my dear friend, I have great assurance when I study my own conversion, when I discuss it with other men, when I look over the...

⁶⁶ 1 Timothy 4:16