

Chosen Vessel - Bible Study & Sermon Preperation

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the dangers of spiritual complacency and meddling after experiencing victories in faith.

Duration: 55:06

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 25:14, Psalm 1:1, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, James 1:22, Jude 1:3-4

Topics: "Leadership"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of King Hezekiah from the book of Second Chronicles. Hezekiah had experienced great spiritual victory, but after that, he became tempted to meddle and let his defenses down. As a result, he became sexually promiscuous and lost his focus on God. The speaker emphasizes the importance of not thinking we have arrived spiritually and always relying on God's help. He warns against idols and distractions that can take our hearts away from God. The sermon concludes with the reminder to study and assimilate the message before preaching it, so it comes from the heart.

Transcript

Ready to prepare our sermon. All week long, I've been reading all of the commentaries and all of the materials that I can find that cover the scripture around the area where I'm going to draw my text. I get exegetical type of commentaries, I get expositional type of commentaries, and I read as much as I can in order, as Chuck said, that you might feed the conscious level, the broad base.

And all week long, I am doing this reading on a broad level on the text and the area around the text. Now, my own practice, and I have found that this works best for me, I do not advocate this necessarily. Each man finds his own level.

But I get up early Sunday morning and I get up with just my Bible and I start waiting upon the Lord to then bring to me the message for the people from out of this text. I don't have my commentaries now. I don't have my dictionaries now.

I'm just going to allow the spirit to bring forth that which I have planted into my own heart on the word of God and on the background for this text. Now, as Chuck was mentioning, as we then start to develop it, we start asking the questions where, or when, or why, or how. And I'll show you how we do this, but let's turn to 2 Chronicles chapter 25.

And for brevity's sake, because of time, we're going to start reading with verse 14. Now, we know that the Holy Spirit authored the Scriptures, and we know that he put in various incidents in order to teach us certain lessons, certain truths. What is the Holy Spirit trying to teach us by putting in this particular portion of the word? And as I'm reading through in my mind, why did the Holy Spirit incorporate this story into the text? They were all written for our examples.

What is the example he's wanting to teach me out of this passage? Now, it came to pass after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them and burned incense unto them. Wherefore, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand? And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the king said unto him, Are you made one of the king's counsel? Shut up! Why should you be smitten? And then the prophet shut up, and he said, I know that God is determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and you have not hearkened unto my counsel. Then Amaziah the king of Judah took counsel or advice, and he sent to Joash the son of Jehoiath, the son of Jehu, the king of Israel.

And he said, Come, let us face off with one another. And Joash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah, that was the king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Let thy daughter marry my son. And there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and he stomped down the thistle.

Now you say, Lo, thou hast smitten the Edomites, and your heart is lifted up in thee to boast. But stay at home, for why should you meddle to your own hurt, that you should fall even thou and Judah with thee? But Amaziah would not hear, for it actually was coming from God, that he might deliver them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom. So Joash the king of Israel went up, and they saw one another in the face, both he and Amaziah the king of Judah, at Beth Shemesh, which belongeth to Judah.

And Judah was put to the worse before Israel, and they fled every man to his tent. And Joash the king of Israel took Amaziah the king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoias, at Beth Shemesh, and he brought him to Jerusalem. And he broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, four hundred cubits.

And he took all of the gold and the silver and all of the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obed-Edom, and the treasures of the king's house, and the hostages also, and he returned to Samaria. And then the death of Amaziah finishes off the chapter. Now, as we look at this particular passage, the thing that stands out in my own mind, and there are many things, I could probably pick five different sermons out of this text, because there's just an awful lot here.

But the thing that stands out in my mind is the question that Joash asked Amaziah, why do you meddle to your own hurt? So I want to talk about meddling. So, I have my text in 2 Chronicles, and I have my subject, meddling. Now, when did he meddle to his hurt? What was the background? First question I'm going to ask is, when did this happen to him? And as I look at the text, I realize that this happened right after a great victory.

He had just defeated the Edomites. Did you know that one of the periods of greatest danger in our lives follow some of the most dynamic experiences that we have with God? Being on a mountaintop is glorious,

but it's also dangerous, because it seems that Satan is waiting at the bottom of every hill. He's in the valley, waiting for you to come down off the mountain.

Peter, James, and John were with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, and they were so excited. Peter said, Lord, it's good for us to be here. In fact, I don't want to leave, Lord.

Let's just build three tabernacles, and let's just stay right here. Let's not go down. Oh, what an inspiring experience, seeing the Lord transfigured.

And when they came down from the hill, who was waiting? A father with a son who was possessed of an evil spirit. He had brought him to the disciples, and the disciples could do nothing. And Jesus had to face that, and the disciples faced that conflict with the enemy the moment they came down off the hill.

Hey, this has been a hilltop experience for some of us. Watch out. Watch out.

You see, Satan is always trying to rob us from that victory that God has brought. So, right after victory. So, we have to warn the people, there can be dangers in victory if we get our eyes off of the true God, if we get our eyes on to, say, what I did, and we begin to attribute the success or the victory to something other than God.

And so, you develop the dangers, what dangers exist, why they exist, and so forth. You develop that under your point of dangers in victory, because Satan is going to try and take away from you that which God has done, always. That's one of his ploys.

He is always counterattacking. Right after you've taken a victory over him, he's going to counterattack, and you've got to be careful about that. So, you show the dangers of victory, and you develop your points of danger.

Now, with him, the king here, Amaziah, his came really through the bringing of these gods of the Edomites back with him, and beginning to set them up, setting up the false gods within his life. Now, how did he meddle to his own hurt? You see, we're asking the question, when? Right after the victories. How? How did he? Remember the story? How did he meddle? He meddled to his own hurt by bringing in these foreign gods.

How else? All right, did not take the counsel of God, refused the counsel of God. But he was taking counsel, wasn't he? What do we read in verse 17? He did take advice, but it wasn't God's advice. It must have been the counsel of the ungodly.

And what was the result, or what was the counsel, actually? How did he meddle then? These are areas, but how did the meddling manifest itself? What was he then doing? Challenging the enemy to a fight. Hey, I see so many people meddling around like this. They actually want to challenge Satan to a fight.

Hey, man, I really got the victory now, you know, man, I'm all pumped up, you know, because what God's done in my life. All right, Satan, where are you? You know, come on, I dare you, you know. Whenever I see someone going out to challenge Satan, I think, oh no, you know, and I just wait for the, you know, the crash and the collision and the pieces to fall.

All right, he challenged the enemy to the fight. That's how he meddled to his own hurt. Now, what was the result of his meddling to his own hurt? He was defeated, and then what did the king do that had captured

him? Well, first of all, before he spoiled, he brought him back to Jerusalem and did what? He tore down a part of the walls or he destroyed part of his defenses.

Now, the third one you've mentioned took the spoil, took the gold and the treasure and so forth. Now, we've got to apply the message. This is the story.

We've outlined the story as we've seen it in 2 Chronicles. Now, you can lay out the story, then make application, or you can make the application as you are going through the story. But you've got to always make an application of the message.

You've got to make it apply to the people. Otherwise, you're just telling a story. There's got to be an application.

God has to be telling me something in this story. What is God telling me in this story? God is telling me, going back over the story now, that there is a real danger in meddling around. That as a child of God, sometimes I am tempted to meddle.

And I am especially in danger right after periods of great spiritual victory. Don't think that you have arrived spiritually, that you don't have to trust the Lord daily. Don't think that you're so big in yourself or you're so powerful in yourself that you can handle any situation, that you don't need the help of God in everything you face.

Beware of those things that would take your heart away from God. Beware of idols, things that will come up in your life that will take your attention and your heart away from the things of God. Because the moment you drift away from God, you're in big trouble.

Now, there are Christians today who are guilty of meddling with things that can really hurt them. There are things that we shouldn't be meddling with at all. Kids begin to meddle with drugs.

A pastor may begin to meddle in a flirtation. There are areas where you dare not to meddle around because your meddling can only lead to your own hurt. Why should you meddle to your own hurt? Why should you meddle around with something that all it can do is hurt you? It doesn't make sense to meddle with things of your own hurt.

Beware of that self-confidence that will cause you to go out and try and pick a fight with the enemy. I'm ready to handle anything. I can go around the enemy's territory.

I'm ready, you know, to storm the enemy. Be careful. You may be meddling to your own hurt.

Now, the results of a person meddling to his own hurt. First of all, that defeat at the hand of the enemy. But then, unfortunately, once you have done it, a part of your defenses have been wiped out.

You know, the first time you did it, it was hard. In fact, it's always the hardest the first time. There was a big battle going on.

I know I shouldn't. Oh, you know. And it was hard.

It was a tough battle. But when you did it, a part of your defenses were destroyed because the next time you faced it, it wasn't so hard to do. You didn't have as much resistive power now.

Satan has already, you know, drawn you into it. The next time, it was a little easier. Part of your defenses were destroyed.

And the next time, it was even easier yet. And a person gets to where he has absolutely no defenses. The walls have been torn down and you are now defenseless before this particular habit or this thing that you started out meddling with.

Now, it has a hold of you and you can do it without even a twing of resistance. I mean, they're just, you know, it becomes a habit or a part of your life. Your defenses are destroyed.

And it's amazing how easy it is for a person to get caught up in a vice that at one time, they abhorred and hated themselves. But they started meddling. Meddling with an area that they had no business being in.

Meddling with something they had no business doing. And as the result, a part of their defenses or their defenses were destroyed and now they are defenseless and the end result is the robbing of your treasures. You've lost something.

Something of purity. Something of righteousness. You think of the kids that start meddling around with sex.

And when they've had their first sexual experience, oh, it was tough. It was a conscious thing. They went home and cried all night and repented.

And it was really something that really bothered them. And they lost something. Something that they can never replace.

Some treasure, a valuable treasure was taken away, their virginity. And they can't replace that. It's a treasure that has been lost.

But unfortunately, some of their defenses were also destroyed. And now with their defenses down, it's not, they don't have the power and the strength to resist as much the next time when that temptation comes and start meddling around. Until they finally become very sexually promiscuous and they can do it without even any regards and not worry.

Meddling to your own hurt. So, you see how that you can take by asking the questions and then formulating the answers, you develop your outline and you develop your message from your text. And as Chuck said, the important questions is why did it happen? When did it happen? How did it happen? What was the result of it happening? And so, you set up your outline and then as you go down it, you know, it's easy to develop your thoughts.

You've got them organized. And again, you know where you're going. You know what the application is.

You know what you're trying to bring across to them. You know what you're warning them about. So that as you get to the end, you know you're at the end and you don't keep rambling on.

I start out in my mind with the application. In other words, I know where I want to go when I start. Even in my outlining, I have in my mind the application that I'm wanting to make to the people.

The application is, hey, don't meddle around where you don't belong or in things where you aren't supposed to be meddling. Stay away from this dangerous practice of meddling. That's going to be my

application.

That helps dictate the outline, yes. I oftentimes, and you'll notice in Spurgeon in his message or G. Campbell Morgan in his message, he'll give you the introduction. Now, we didn't bother going into the introduction.

Amaziah was 25 years old when he became the king over Judah, the southern kingdom. And he gathered together his army, 300,000 men, and they went down against the Edomites. And God gave them a great victory over the Edomites there in the Valley of Salt.

And so after he came back from this great victory, he made the mistake of bringing back the Edomite gods. And I give this kind of a background to the story as an introduction. And I sort of give an overview of the story.

But then I begin to zero in on the text itself, why should you meddle to your own hurt? You know, then he challenged the northern kingdom to a fight and the king said, hey, why should you meddle to your own hurt? You've gotten the victory over the Edomites, just sit at home and enjoy that. Why should you meddle to your own hurt? And how people are so often guilty of meddling to their own hurt. Now, when does a person meddle to his own hurt? Or I want to show you today, you know, when a person does this and how a person does this, but what the sad results are if you are guilty of meddling in areas where you don't belong.

And so then you might tell them in advance, but then you go back and you come through your outline and you make your point. All right, let's take another one. This time from the New Testament, we're going to take the book of Jude.

Now, the book of Jude is just a short little book. And so you should read it over and over and over and over again until you pretty much have the whole outline of the book of Jude in your mind. Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ and called.

Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied. Beloved, I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation. It was needful for me to write unto you and to exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

For there are certain men crept in unawares who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believe not. The angels which kept not their first estate but left their own habitation, he's reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, under the judgment of the great day, even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, going after strange flesh, are set forth as an example of suffering and vengeance of the eternal fire.

Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh. They despise dominion. They speak evil of dignities.

Yet Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses. He dared not to bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuked thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not.

But what they know naturally as brute beast in those things they corrupt themselves, woe unto them. For they have gone the way of Cain, greedily after the heir of Balaam for the reward, and they perished in the gainsaying of Korah. These are spots in your feasts of love.

They feast with you, feeding themselves without fear. Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds, trees whose fruit withered without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, raging ways of the sea, foaming out their shame, wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon all, to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all of their hard speeches which the ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lust, and their own mouth speaks great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of the advantages. But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you that there should be mockers in the last time who would walk after their own ungodly lust. These be they who separate themselves, their sensual having not the spirit.

But ye, beloved, now notice he's been talking about all this background, now he's going to get to you, he's applying it. And here's a good perfect sermon here because now he's making application. But ye, beloved, warned you against all these false guys and all the stuff they're doing, all the ungodly stuff and all.

But you, building up yourselves in the most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion making a difference, others saved with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

To the only wise God our Savior be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. Now, what would you say is the heart of the message of Jude to those? Who is he talking to? Those who are sanctified by God, those who are preserved in Jesus Christ, those have been called.

Keep yourself in the love of God. What could he possibly mean by that? Is he saying that God's love is conditional? Does the Bible teach that God's love is conditional? When did God start loving you? When you were still a sinner. Christ died for the ungodly.

Herein is God's love manifested him while we were yet sinners. Christ died for the ungodly. So I'm asking the question, what does he mean keep yourself in the love of God? So you've got to ask questions, remember, because people are going to be asking questions.

So what does he mean? First question, what does he mean? Keep yourself in the love of God. That's my message. Keep yourself in the love of God.

What is meant by that? All right. First of all, negatively, we know that he doesn't mean to keep yourself so holy, righteous, and pure that God can't help but love you. Because God loves us, thankfully, when we're not so good, when we're not so pure, when we haven't, you know, does God only love those victorious, overcoming Christians that are always happy, always rejoicing, always doing the right thing? If he did, then we would all be in trouble, wouldn't we? So he can't mean keep yourself so pure, holy, righteous, good

that God can't help but love you.

So you take it from the negative sense of it is not to keep yourself so holy that God can't help but love you. This is negative. Positive, what does he mean? Well, if he means to keep yourself in the love of God, and he doesn't mean keep yourself so pure and holy, by going back to the illustrations that he gives to us, and this is where you've gone over your, you know, you've read this thing over and over and over until the thing is really set in your mind.

By going back to the illustrations that he has given to us of those who fail to keep themselves in the love of God, he means to keep yourself in the place where God can do what he wants to do for you, because he loves you. In other words, God always loves me, but God can't always do the things that he wants to do, because my life is inconsistent. It's out of harmony with God, and I'm not in the place where God can bless me as he wants to bless me, because I've moved myself from that place of blessing.

You see, love's nature is to give. God, because he loves me, wants to give to me. God can't give to me if I don't keep myself in that place where God, in consistency with his nature, can go ahead and give to me.

So, from the positive sense, it is to keep yourself in that place where God can show you the love that he has for you. Now, as we go back in our text, he warns us about those who, he tells us that we must earnestly contend for the faith, once delivered, for there are certain men who have not done this. They are men who have turned the grace of our God into lasciviousness.

They've denied God and our Lord Jesus Christ. They're filthy dreamers. They defile the flesh and so forth.

Now, he gives us an illustration of some of these people who failed to keep themselves in the love of God. First of all, he gives us illustrations of those who did not keep themselves in love of God. First illustration, children of Israel, verse 5. Notice that God delivered them out of Egypt, but afterwards they perished in the wilderness.

Now, when God delivered them out of Egypt, God, in his love, wanted to bring them where? Into the promised land. Now, they came out of bondage, but they never did enter into the full blessing of God's love. Can you see it? They perished in the wilderness.

They experienced the first work of God in their life, deliverance from bondage, but they never experienced the last work of God's life, coming into the glorious life that God wanted them to live in the promised land. Why? What was their failure? Why did they not enter in? All right. So, we have unbelief as the reason for their failure.

Now, God has delivered you from the bondage of darkness, from the power of the enemy. He brought you out of Egypt, but are you living in that full, rich life of blessing that God wants you to have, the overcoming life of victory in Christ, you see? And what's holding you back? Unbelief. What's the second example that we have? Verse 6, angels which kept not their first estate.

These created beings of God lived in the very presence of God. They heard the glorious praises there in the heavenly kingdom, and yet they rebelled against God. Guard against unbelief.

Guard against rebellion. It's possible for you to lose out that place of the nearness of God. As the angels once experienced, it's possible for you to be drawn away from that place by a rebellious heart against the Lord.

Be careful about rebellion. Third example, Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah, now he doesn't really tell us too much about that, except they gave themselves over to fornication going after strange flesh, and they're an example of those who suffer the vengeance of the eternal fire.

Now, Sodom and Gomorrah were a beautiful place to live. That's why Lot chose the valley of the plains. Pitches 10 towards Sodom, hey, that's pretty country down there.

That's Hawaii like. That's tropical. And the plains were well watered and green and verdant, and Lot chose the plains.

They had glorious natural advantages, but they went after the flesh, and they started living after the flesh. Instead of just really appreciating the natural advantages that God had given them and enjoying the beauties of God around them, they began to go after the flesh. And when you go after the flesh, you're moving yourself out of the place of God's blessing.

We have another example. Now, those are sort of corporate examples. You see, the first three are corporate examples, but the next three examples are individual examples, beginning with verse 11.

The first example that we have is Cain. Why do you suppose Cain was removed? He's given as an example of those who didn't keep themselves in God's love. What was Cain's failing? And envy, jealousy, hatred.

Why did he kill his brother? Because he hated him. Be careful about allowing hatred to master you, because if you allow hatred to master your life, you are moving yourself out of the place of God's blessing. God can't do for you what he's wanting to do when hatred is mastering your life.

You don't know what God wants to do. He loves you so much, and he's wanting to do so much for you, but he can't do that which he is wanting to do, because you've allowed hatred to master your life. You've put yourself out of the place of God's blessing.

There used to be a song they sang down in the South. Gail would know this one. They sang it in the Assembly of God churches.

I'm under the spout where the glory comes out. It's sort of quaint and homespun kind of stuff, but in a sense there's a truth to that. There is a place that you can live, a place of God's continual blessing, and that's what Jude is exhorting us to live in that place of God's blessing.

Live in that place where God's blessings can just flow, God's love can just flow unhindered, because you're not stopping them because hatred has mastered you. The second example, Balaam, and of course he tells us what Balaam's problem was. Greed.

Now I'm not really trying to put out these, you know, one, two, three, but you develop this, you know, we're just giving you bare, bare bones. Balaam allowed greed to master him. When he saw the reward that the king had offered, this doctrine of Balaam, or the error of Balaam here, for reward, his, and of course in your broad study you're going to have to go back and study Balaam.

You're going to have to go back and study Korah. You're going to have to go back and study Cain. These stories, their references in the scriptures, so that you'll be able to give the illustration in its fullness.

But he allowed greed to master his life. When he saw the reward that King Balak had offered, if he would just curse the people, he could not curse them directly. And so he said to the king, look, I can't curse them.

There's no divine, divining enchantment or whatever that I can bring against these people. They're God's blessed people. But I'll tell you what, the God that they serve is a holy, righteous, and a jealous God.

And you can bring a curse upon them by sending your young girls down there and let them flirt with the guys, get them all hot, and then invite them into the tents. And when they come into the tents, then let them bring out their little gods or goddesses of fertility and say to them, let us show you how we worship our gods. And led them into the worship of the goddess of fertility.

And so these girls from Edom came on down into the camp of Israel. They began to flirt with these young guys and all got them all stirred up and took them into the tents and brought out their little gods and said, hey, how would you like to see how we worship our gods? And began to introduce them to idolatry. And it was correct.

God began to smite Israel with a plague and they began to drop off like flies as a result of this evil doctrine of Balaam. But the error of Balaam was to think that God would just wipe them out completely. God judged and didn't wipe them out completely.

Balaam was ultimately wiped out. But greed, oh, be careful. The moment you allow greed to master your life, your heart, you're going to put yourself outside of God's blessing.

God can't do for you what he's wanting to do because you've allowed greed to take over. And the last example that he gives us is that of Korah. Now what was Korah's problem? Jealousy.

Jealousy. Also, there was a bit of rebellion with Korah, too, wasn't there? In other words, he gathered together a group of men. He got around a group of fellows and he said, look, that Moses is taking too much on himself.

You know, he's put Aaron, his brother, in there as high priest. We're Levites. We ought to be able to offer the sacrifices just as well with him, you know.

And he began to bring sedition, division. And so they came to Moses. Hey, you take too much on yourself, man.

We're Levites. Be careful of seditious movements. Be careful of jealousy.

You can just put yourself outside of God's blessing. Now, final point. What are the questions we ask? How? How do I keep myself in the love of God? All right.

Let's go right to our text. Verse 21. But let's go just before.

What does he say? But you, beloved. What? First of all, building up yourselves in the most holy faith. How do you do that? You see, I'm asking questions again.

How? How? How? You've got to ask yourself why? Where? When? How? How do you build yourself up in the most holy faith? Well, the word of God is really the way by which faith comes by hearing, heard by the word of God. How can you trust somebody you don't know? How can you have faith in someone you don't really know? Illustrate. Think of an illustration of the difficulty of trusting somebody you don't know

contrasted with trusting somebody you do know.

So, you go upstairs. Somebody comes up to you. It's a perfect stranger.

Never seen him before. And the guy says, hey, I find out that I'm broke. Could you loan me \$20 and I'll meet you here next year and give it back to you when we come back next year, you know? Who are you, man? I don't know you.

You know, how can I give you 20 bucks? I don't know you. Hard to trust somebody you don't know. But if Greg Laurie or one of these guys, you know, come up and say, hey, you know, I found out that I left my wallet home.

Can you loan me 20 bucks and give me your car and I'll send it to you just as I get back, you know? Sure, Greg. You know, it's an honor to loan Greg money. After all, he passed his roots.

I don't care if he sends it back or not, you know. He's big stuff. I know him.

I know he's trustworthy. I'm not worried about loaning him money. All right.

Now, how can you trust God if you don't know him? A person comes up and says, oh, I have such a hard time trusting God. What is he telling you? He's telling you, I don't know God very well. So, you've got to build up yourself in the most holy of faith.

You've got to know God. And how can you know him? There's only one place you can know God. God has revealed himself in his word.

So, it involves the study in the word of God. What's the second way to keep yourself in the love of God? Praying. How? Praying in the spirit.

What does it mean? I'm asking questions, you notice. What does it mean to pray in the spirit? Or another question, how to pray in the spirit? See how questions develop your sermon? How do you pray in the spirit? Well, you can ask the spirit to direct your prayers. Now, Lord, I don't know how to pray on this situation.

So, let your spirit just direct my prayer now. Inspire my mind, Lord, with your thoughts that I might pray according to your will in this situation. I just pray, trusting the spirit to guide my prayer.

Or I can groan, according to Paul in Romans chapter 8. Because I don't know how to pray as I ought, so I can just groan and the spirit will make intercession through groanings, which I can't utter. Or I can pray in tongues. For when I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prays, my understanding is unfruitful.

So, you can't limit it to just praying in tongues or to just groaning. You can pray in the spirit in English. I believe that many of our prayers in English are directed by the spirit.

I ask the spirit to direct my prayers and I have faith that he does. Praying in the spirit. All right, then the exhortation, the basic exhortation is keep yourself in the love of God.

So, we jump that to right beyond it, looking for the mercy of our Jesus Christ. The third way to keep yourself in the love of God is by looking for the return of the Lord. The mercy at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, actually.

So, looking for the return. How does looking for the return of Jesus Christ keep your life straight? You see, you already know, don't you? It keeps you in the proper perspective, doesn't it? If you really realize and really believe that the Lord could be coming tomorrow, what a difference that makes in my attitude towards that material thing that, oh, I've just got to have. It's not nearly so important if the Lord is coming tomorrow.

So, this keeps me in the proper perspective as I'm looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. It keeps me in proper perspective. So, how does it keep me in proper? You develop this by asking the questions again, all the way along, the how or the why or the when, and keep asking these questions as you develop your text on down.

Because these are questions that the people subconsciously are going to be asking, and you're answering them before they have the time, the opportunity to ask them. Now, looking at the book of Jude in the hole, as again, he introduces the book. Who is he writing to? The saints who are what? Preserved in Jesus Christ.

What does the word preserving mean? You know, you're being kept in Jesus Christ. So, he's writing to these saints who are being preserved by Jesus Christ. And he closes, that's the opening of the epistle.

He closes the epistle by saying, Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling. He's talking about being kept. You're being kept.

You're being preserved by Jesus Christ. And he's able to keep you from falling. But what's he saying to you? You just keep yourself there in the love of Jesus Christ.

The Lord will do his part. You do your part. You just keep yourself in that place where God will and can do for you that which he wants to do for you because he loves you so much.

And so, you see how that you can take the book of Jude and develop your message right out of that book of Jude using, and this is what is known as expository preaching. In both cases, the expository preaching is where you take your major points and your sub points right out of the text and its context. If you use a reference like in, say, the king was heeding to ungodly counsel.

So, you have a great scripture for that. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly nor stands in the way of sinners. You don't then develop Psalm 1. You use it to illustrate it.

You quote it and you show how that it is appropriately applied here, but then you don't get into an exposition of Psalm 1. It's only used as a backup and not to be then enlarged upon. So, you use the other scriptures but then guard against expounding the other scripture. You just are using them but not expounding on them because you're finding your major points and your sub points right within the text itself.

This is known as expository preaching. Now, there is topical preaching. Now, that's where you can pick three texts from across the Bible.

You know, as I'm topically preaching, then I jump all over and I'm expounding texts from all over because I'm dealing with a topic. But in expository preaching, you're dealing with just the teaching of the scripture, the context or the text within its context, and drawing all of your materials, your major points and sub points right from that area. And I feel that the greatest need in the church today is expository preaching.

I feel that there is too much topical preaching and that doesn't really feed the flock nearly as much as does expository preaching. I have developed outlines on the First Epistle of John that are in the printers right now. And I'm going to have a booklet, it's for pastors only really, on how to spend a year in First John expository preaching.

And I have basically, step by step, how to approach the book, how to introduce the book, how to discover the major points of the book. And then I have a year's expository outlines in First John. So you can spend a whole year without having to search all over the Bible for a text.

You can go right through First John. But when you do, when you're through, the exciting thing is your people are going to have a good, solid, consistent growth because they've been in one area of the scripture. They're going to know First John, but not only are they going to know First John, but they're going to have greater joy than they've ever experienced in their Christian life before.

They're going to have a greater power over sin than they've ever known before. And they're also going to have a greater assurance of their salvation than they've ever had before because that's why John wrote it and God's word doesn't return void. So you see the word of God is doing its work in the hearts of the people.

And God is taking it from the left side of the brain into the right side of the brain. And it's becoming just a part of their life and it subconsciously is having its effect in them. And without them knowing it, they're having a greater joy as their fellowship with God is really developed.

They're having a greater power over sin as the word of God is beginning to do its work within their lives. And they're having a greater assurance of their salvation as the word of God is teaching them of the faithfulness of God. As they're coming to really know God and they know the faithfulness of God.

So I've developed a whole year. And once you go through 1 John, doing expository preaching out of 1 John, you've got it. A pattern has then developed in your own mind subconsciously.

And whenever you go to any text, you'll begin to see it in an expository outline. You'll begin to pick out the expository outline of anywhere in the Bible. You've got the model, you've got your mindset and the mind mapping.

And thus you just go to any portion of the Bible and you begin to look for these things. You begin to automatically develop these things out of and you become an expository preacher. And I think that that is really one of the each one of the fellows that are really developing in the ministry are those who are the expository preachers because that's the greatest need in the church today.

Consistent teaching, expository preaching, going right straight through where the people then are developing consistently in their understanding and knowledge of God. So hopefully I'll have these ready by the end of the summer. They're in the printers now.

And by end of summer, write to me or we'll probably send a letter out and tell you that these books are now available. But they're for pastors only. And it's not, I'm not writing it for the Book Club of America.

It's just really to help pastors to develop expository preaching because I feel that this is so great a need. Expository preaching is such a tremendous need. I want to develop all of you into real expositors of the Word of God.

And so, as I say, you get this book down, go through 1 John and you got it made from then on. It's just you've developed a pattern and wherever you go in the scripture, your pattern is developed and you've learned how to look. Now, I don't recommend that you just take and say, all right, I don't even have to outline anymore, you know, just photocopy and take it into the pulpit with you.

I'm giving you suggestions, but it's important that you so assimilate it that it becomes you. Don't preach Chuck Smith. You got to preach out of your own heart to the people, but so study it and assimilate it.

And I'm just giving you the guidelines, seed thoughts, things to look for, but let it become so a part of you before you try and give it that when it comes forth, it is something that is coming now out of your own heart. Else you will find yourself like the young prophet who turned to Elisha when the axe head fell in the river and said, alas, master, for it was borrowed. It's been a good time.

The Lord has really been good to us and we just rejoice in that, which he has done within our hearts, within our churches in this last year, just this opportunity of gathering together again. And who knows, this could be the last time that we'll be gathering.

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