

Paul the Apostle - a Vibrant Life (Part 5)

by Denny Kenaston

Paul's ministry was characterized by church planting, establishing churches, and exercising spiritual authority to edify and correct the churches he wrote to.

Duration: 57:17

Topics: "Paul The Apostle"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of Christ-centered preaching balanced with practical living in order to produce solid, mature, and functioning churches. He reflects on his 24 years of church administration and acknowledges the constant struggle between focusing on revival and addressing practical issues within the church. The speaker also discusses the motivation behind discipline within the church, highlighting the importance of love and a redemptive goal for the offending brother. The sermon concludes with a teaching session on Paul's burden to win souls and his commitment to planting churches to ensure the spiritual growth and well-being of new converts.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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These messages are offered to all without charge by the free will offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Yes, Father, we will.

Father, we acknowledge that this morning we are not here filling up our vessels so we can go home. We are here, Lord, preparing to build your kingdom, Lord. We pray that You will help us by Your grace to do that when we go home from here.

There are churches to build. There are churches to establish. There are churches that need to be brought together in unity.

There are churches that need to be sanctified, dear God. There are souls that need to be saved. All these things, Father, You want to do through the men that are in this room, would You bless them and sanctify them, Father, each one of them and send them home, Lord, with a fire burning in their hearts, God.

Lord, that Your kingdom would come on this earth even as it is in heaven where they live. Now bless us, Father, in this last session on the life of the Apostle Paul. Would You come and help us and meet with us one more time and instruct our waiting hearts? Yes, Lord, fill us again with Your grace.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. You may be seated.

Alright, we finished our session yesterday looking at Paul's constraining burden to win souls. And I know I skinned you a bit yesterday on that subject. I don't think I'm going to skin you today, so you can relax a little bit.

This is a bit more of a teaching session. But we ended yesterday with Paul's constraining burden to win souls, seeing very clearly that it is God's burden also, and probably the number one reason why we're still alive and well on planet earth today. Paul knew experientially the power of the gospel to change lives.

This drove him into many difficult circumstances and much suffering. But Paul did not stop at winning souls. However important this is, he didn't stop there, like many of the modern evangelists are doing today.

He was just as concerned about what happened to them after they were born again. And because of this burden, he planted churches wherever he preached the gospel and had converts. Now it's very easy, if you look at the two of those in comparison, it's very easy and exciting and even fun to go win souls to Jesus Christ.

It's not quite so easy to plant a church there to gather those souls, those new souls, those babies, gather them together into a congregation of believers and begin to disciple them and train them and seek out leaders among them and establish those leaders and establish a New Testament congregation. But Paul gave himself to that work. Thus our thirteenth point here this morning is, Paul's ministry, the ministry of planting churches.

Paul was an apostle after the example of the heavenly apostle Jesus Christ. Now if you look at the word apostle, you will not get a lot of insight into what an apostle is just by looking at the word apostle. It is the Greek word apostolos and it simply means a sent one.

That's all. And if you just go by that simple word, there's not a whole lot of meaning in it. Like I told the leaders the other day, you can go to Greece today and walk around in the streets of the cities of Greece and you will see a sign with the word apostle on it.

You will see them everywhere. And this is how it reads. Apostles wanted.

Parentheses. Must have bicycle. And the reason why you see that sign there is because an apostle, apostolos, is one who is sent like a messenger.

Take this, carry it over to this place of business and give it to so and so. By the way, you must have a bicycle in order to be one. Otherwise you'll be doing a lot of walking around.

So we don't get a lot of insight if we just look at the Greek word apostolos. Because it simply means a sent one. But if you look at the life of the Lord Jesus who was the apostle, Hebrews chapter 3 verse 1, then you can get a bit of insight into what an apostle was.

Paul was an apostle. He was sent by God to preach the gospel and establish churches. Just like Christ the apostle, He was a servant of His Father and a servant of the people.

Everywhere He went. Just like Christ the apostle, He was a church planter. Remember what Christ said? On this rock I will build my church.

Christ was sent to establish a church upon the earth. Also, Paul was a church planter. Number three, just like Christ the apostle, Paul evangelized everywhere He went.

Preaching the gospel in every city. Just like Christ the apostle, Paul was busy making disciples. Those who would follow His Father's heart and teachings unreservedly.

This is what Paul did with his life. It doesn't seem right to not look at that which consumed most of his time. Though we glory this morning in the way that he would go from city to city and stand up there and boldly preach the gospel and sometimes get thrown out of the city for it and stoned and all other things, that was not his primary work all the days of his life.

He established churches. Number five, he was busy training leaders for future ministry, just like the Lord Jesus, the chief apostle, did for those three and a half years of his ministry. Isn't that what he did? He preached the gospel to all the people.

He gathered disciples who were willing to come nearer and he also gathered leaders around him and discipled those leaders for future ministry. Paul did the same thing. He delegated authority to those leaders that he trained, just like authority was delegated to him.

And just like Jesus delegated authority to those apostles whom He trained, Paul also delegated authority. Number seven, he stayed in close contact with them, just like Jesus did. Jesus did it through the Holy Spirit.

Paul did it through letters, through many grueling trips and travels, and through other men whom he trained and sent out to those churches to find out how things were going and to carry out some of his instructions. And lastly, here in this list, he also trained future apostles while he was training leaders, elders in those churches. He also trained future apostles or church planters who would also go out and establish other churches.

Paul had a vision of the church which is his body expressing itself in local assemblies all over the world. He had that vision. I don't know if you've ever considered it before, but it was Paul, it was the apostle Paul who saw the vision of a heavenly body, a united body, a living, breathing body of Christ upon this earth.

It was Paul who saw that. You can read it in all of his epistles. That man saw the church.

He saw it in ways that I'm not even sure we see it today as we sit here this morning. But that vision burned inside of his heart and that vision drove him to go to great lengths to see local assemblies springing up everywhere where he went to preach the gospel. He had a vision of the church which is his body, Christ's body, expressing itself in local assemblies all over the world.

Paul knew and believed that the greatest gift that he could give to God and to the city where he had been was a healthy, orderly, functioning New Testament church. There is no greater gift that you could give to any area than that. This is still true today, brethren.

And by the way, the devil knows that too. Amen? You want to find out who the devil is? Start a church where there isn't one. I'm serious.

Where there's no light. Where there's no testimony. Where there's nothing there that people can look at and say, oh, this is the way it's supposed to be.

You go to one of those places and try to start a church and you'll find out who the devil is real fast. That's the last thing he wants. But it is the highest thing that God wants.

And if we think about it, we all know that's true. We all know it's true. And we all know what this is all about, don't we? We've been knocked around.

We've been bumped around. We've bumped each other. We've stepped over each other.

And we've been through all kinds of difficulties. And some of you are wounded even maybe at this day because of attempts to establish these local New Testament churches where Christ can be exalted in a clear and expressed way. You know the enemy is in there trying to stop all of that.

But may I just encourage you this morning, it's worth every sacrifice that you can make. And maybe you're here today and you've got a wounded heart because of it. I would encourage you by the grace of Jesus Christ and for the sake and glory of Christ that you heal the hurts that you have in your heart and get up and keep on going.

Don't let that stop you. It's not about us. And it's not about how we feel about it.

And it's not about how nice it is for us. It's about Jesus Christ and His glory on this earth. Paul saw those things.

And they drove him. He wasn't just a man who had a burden for a soul, though he could go out and win that soul. He was a man who had a burden for a local New Testament church wherever he could put one.

And we should have the same burden. It was not Paul the evangelist that left us all the rich, deep epistles of the New Testament. It was Paul the apostle, the church planter that gave us these solid epistles that we've been looking at.

Isn't that right? It was not Paul the evangelist. It was Paul the church planter with a burden. He would write those epistles with a burden thinking about that little flock over there, the one in Colossae or the one in Corinth or the one in Thessalonica, thinking about that flock over there and the troubles they're having with that burden, with that vision in his heart.

He wrote those epistles. And we've been drinking from the fountain of those epistles for 2,000 years. It was Paul the church planter that wrote those epistles.

In fact, we could add another point to this series very quickly if time would permit. Paul's ministry of writing. Amen? May I just get frank with you? We don't have too many writers among us.

Do we? And we don't have very many readers among us either. And I just want to encourage you on that. I know that some of you are taking a stack of books home with you, but you know you can take that stack of books and you can take it out of your suitcase when you get home on Monday morning and you can put those books on a shelf and they'll sit there for ten years.

Amen? How many ever left those sitting there that long? Let me see your hands. Oh my, we so impulsively owe this and owe that. But brethren, you have to pick them up and read them.

Paul's ministry of writing. Aren't you glad he was a writer? And he had something to write that had some meat in it. The ministry of an apostle.

That's what Paul was. He was a church planter. This took up most of his time and this is most of what his ministry was.

Surely we shall at least take a good look at it here this morning. And may I just interject this in closing this point and moving on to another one. This gifting of an apostle of church planting.

Apostle little A has not passed away. It has not passed away. The need for solid New Testament churches has not passed away.

As long as there are converts, there will be a need for New Testament churches. As long as people are getting born again in a certain locality, there will be a need for a local church to be there. And as long as there is a need for a local church, there will be men gifted by God to go and establish those churches.

And that doesn't make them a Peter, or a John, or a James. As I was thinking about verses here in 2 Corinthians to cover this point, it dawned on me and I stopped and realized the whole book covers this point. Because Paul was writing out of his ministry of apostleship or church planting burden.

Paul the church planter. This ministry of an apostle, now moving on to the next point here this morning, the authority of his ministry. The authority of Paul's ministry.

This ministry of church planting had authority that went along with it. This was both positional authority and it was spiritual authority. And by the way, there is a difference between the two of those.

You may be sitting here this morning and you are a father and a husband. You have a position. And there is authority that goes with that position of being a father or being a husband.

But you may not have any spiritual authority. I would highly recommend to you fathers and husbands that you get the spiritual authority that goes along with your positional authority. It will help your order of your home tremendously.

And many of us in this room have experienced the failures of trying to push our weight around our positional authority without having the spiritual authority to back it up. And I've learned through my own failures that when I have spiritual authority, I don't have to push my positional authority around. Paul had both positional authority in that he went there and planted a church and spiritual authority in that he was a man who walked with God and he was filled with the wisdom of God.

And that gives anybody authority, by the way. In 2 Corinthians, we want to turn there and read. In 2 Corinthians 10 and verse 8, where we just find one of the examples of Paul expressing himself in an authoritative way and about his authority.

He wasn't afraid to say, I have authority in your life. Sometimes I think we're afraid to say that, but he was not afraid to say, I have authority in your life. In 2 Corinthians 10 and verse 8 and following, he says these words, For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification and not for destruction.

And I like that. He clarifies that. God has given me authority, he says, but this authority is not for destruction.

This authority is not so that I can be a policeman or a lawyer. But this authority is given to me for edification. I should not be ashamed, he says, that I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful. But his bodily presence is weak and his speech is contemptible. They were trying to figure this man out.

When he would write a letter, he would write very pointedly, giving direction and even corrections when he wrote to them. But when he was among them, he was weak. He was lonely.

He was a servant. By the way, there are some real secrets in those words if you really want to have spiritual authority. It goes on in verse 11 to say, Let such an one think this, that such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also indeed when we are present.

And in verse 13 he goes on to say, But we will not boast of things without our measure or authority. Line of authority. But according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

Now what Paul is simply saying is, I have some authority in your lives. God has given it to me. I am a wise master builder.

I came to your city and preached the gospel. You have many teachers, but you only have one Father and I am your Father. And because of that, I have some authority in your life.

As you read many of the epistles that Paul wrote, you can see him exercising this authority. There were epistles where he did not exercise any authority. Did you notice which ones they are? Colossians is one.

Romans is another. I don't know if you ever noticed it, but he didn't write any corrections to the Romans, and he wrote no corrections to the Colossians. But did you know that he didn't plant the church at Rome and neither did he plant the church at Colossae? So he had no authority there.

So he just wrote them to edification and he wrote them to inspire them. He wrote them to instruct them. He wrote them out of the spiritual authority of his life and his measure of Christ.

And they were edified by that. But when it came time to write to the Thessalonians or to the Corinthians, oh, very different how he wrote to them, wasn't it? With the Corinthians, Paul exercised his authority in church discipline. 2 Corinthians 2, verse 1. We find a beautiful portion of Scripture there that is good for us to look at here this morning.

Paul believed in church discipline. I do too. The other day I was on the telephone with a friend of mine from my past.

He's a preacher. He's an evangelist. But he's also an elder in his church.

Their structure is a little different than ours, but I was talking to him on the telephone and he said, Brother Denny, do you have a minute? I've got some real problems that I'm working through and I want to know what you think. I said, sure, go ahead. He said, here's what we're facing in our church.

We've got two men in our church that are living immoral lives. They're leaders in our church and they're living in immorality. And he says, what counsel do you have to me? What should we do with these men? I said, brother, you need to deal with them.

That's wrong. That's evil. He said, brother, I don't know what to do, but the pastor, the lead pastor will not do anything about it.

I said, what? He said, he won't do anything about it. I said, why? He said, first of all, this is all new to us. No teaching.

And second of all, one of the men is a lawyer and the church is afraid that the lawyer will sue the church if we excommunicate him. He said, brother, what do you think we should do? I said, well, brother, I don't know about you, but I believe in pure and holy communion. I don't see how I could take communion in that place anymore.

And it got real quiet on the other end of the phone. And I could tell that new thoughts were coming into his mind. Thoughts that he knew were right, but they were new thoughts to him.

Thoughts that had the answer of wisdom in his heart, but they were new thoughts to him. Pure communion? Yes! Communion? Breaking bread with a man who's living in immorality with another woman while he's married? You're right, brother Danny. I don't want to take communion with him either.

Church discipline. Paul exercised his authority. And remember, he's training these churches.

And the Corinthian church did not understand this principle of discipline. But Paul exercised his authority and gave them direction on what to do. And we find all of that written in 1 Corinthians.

And we can't go there today. We don't have time. But here in 2 Corinthians and verse 1 and following, he refers back to that discipline.

And there's some beautiful insight in that discipline as we read in these verses. He begins by saying, but I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. For if I make you sorry, who is He then that maketh me glad but the same which is made sorry by me? And I wrote this same unto you, lest when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice.

And basically what Paul is saying is, I wrote you this letter so that you could make the corrections that need to be made and discipline those who need to be disciplined and find the blessing and the freedom that comes from that, so that when I do come, I don't have to come and handle heavy things, but we can all rejoice in the Lord and the purity of Jesus Christ together. That's what he's saying. Having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all.

And we just see his beautiful shepherd's heart in these words. But look at verse 4. He says, for out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears. Now we're getting insights into church discipline, brethren.

I wrote unto you with anguish of heart and many tears. Not that ye should be grieved. That was not my motivation.

Though you were grieved, but that wasn't my motivation to grieve you. But that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. That was his motivation.

But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in parts, that I may not overcharge you all. Now he begins to refer to this individual who was disciplined. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many, so that contrarywise, ye ought rather to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.

Wherefore, I beseech you, that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive anything, I forgave also.

For if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it for your sakes, forgave I it in the person of Christ. Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices. Now just a few points on this matter of discipline.

First of all, we see the tenderness of his heart. Though he had to deal with issues, and it brought grief to the church, we can see in here very clearly the tenderness of his heart. We also can see the anguish and tears that he wrote with when he wrote to correct them.

He was not a lawyer or a policeman coming down in judgment, but he was a loving shepherd writing to them with a broken heart. It's good that we believe in church discipline. It is a biblical principle.

But let's do it in the right way. We can be a policeman, you know. You can walk into those disciplined situations like a lawyer with a club in your hand.

It doesn't come out right, brethren. He wrote with anguish of heart and many tears. Thirdly, he wrote out of a motivation of love.

Though he wanted a pure church, his heart was moved by love. That was the foundation of what he was doing. Many times I think our foundation is a pure church.

And though that is a very good goal, that is not the bottom line goal of discipline. The bottom line goal of discipline is love. Point number four, he was concerned that it was not to be too strong or too long.

And number five, his goal was redemptive on the part of the offending brother. Oh, we want to see him back in the fold. We want to see him back in the fold.

It seems that was the greatest motivation of Paul's heart there. And you know, that tempers all the other things. We tend to be pretty tough when it's time to deal with something and give discipline and all of that.

We tend to be pretty tough there. But Paul's toughness and Paul's desire for purity and Paul's desire for that which was right was tempered with his love and his redemptive motivation. He wanted to see that brother back in the fold.

And therefore, he was concerned that it not be too hard and that it not be too long. Such words that he would be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Which means you can do that.

Which means you can just weigh somebody down and you can just beat them down until they're swallowed up. And he finishes by saying, recognizing that Satan, who is the accuser, could get an advantage. Imagine that! Such a beautiful motivation to bring discipline and purity into the church and try to redeem someone back to a vibrant relationship with God and a vibrant relationship in their church fellowship that Satan would get an advantage while we are trying to do something right.

And the reason why Satan can get an advantage on this point right here is because he is the accuser of the brethren. And condemnation! Oh, he knows very well how to do that, doesn't he? And every one of us have been smitten by his condemnation many times in our lives. So, Paul uses this example that Satan should get an advantage of us for we are not ignorant of how he accuses and condemns and beats us.

Let's also remember how he accuses and condemns when we bring some discipline when it needs to be done. Let's move on to the next point. The warfare of Paul's ministry.

In 2 Corinthians, in chapter 10, we find these beautiful words. Chapter 10, verse 3 through 6. He says, For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled, or a readiness to revenge all disobedience with obedience.

Just simplifying those words there. Paul was a warrior. He believed in fighting.

He was not a pacifist. He clearly declares himself about fighting carnally. He would not use his hands against any man.

But he believed in fighting. Brethren, I am not a pacifist. I do not believe in pacifism.

Like the Peace Church, which I guess is pretty much liberal Mennonites today, I do not believe their position. God's people are fighters. We are supposed to be warriors.

We are supposed to be more engaged in war than any physical war on the face of the earth. We are not pacifists. Paul was not.

Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh, Paul said. He did not fight with these hands, but he did fight. The warfare of his ministry.

He clearly declares himself about fighting carnally. However, he equally declares that there is a spiritual war, and he is in it. It is a different kind of war, brethren, with different weapons, with a different enemy, and with different rules.

In Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 11 and 12, Paul says these words. He admonishes us in light of this war which we are in, whether we like it or not. Amen? This is not a war that has a local battlefield.

You can't just say, OK, I'm not going to war and sit home and do nothing. This war is a different kind of war. And whether you want to acknowledge it or not, you are in the war.

And probably if you are not fighting, you are a fatality already. So, this is not a local battlefield over there somewhere where you can just sit back and say, I don't think I'll go to war for the next month, and we'll let somebody else fight the battle. No, this war is not in a locality anywhere.

It is everywhere. It is a different kind of war. So, Paul admonishes us to put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Then he says, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood. There it is again. He recognizes the idea that there's two kinds of wars going on in this world.

There is a physical war going on and there is a spiritual war going on. And brethren, why should we waste our time with a physical war when we can be involved in a spiritual war? One that lasts. The results of it last for all of eternity.

I'd rather die of malaria than blow my leg off on a battlefield any day. But he goes on to say, we wrestle not against flesh and blood. Watch! We do wrestle.

We do wrestle, brethren. We wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Now, you want to be a soldier? There's your enemy.

This is a different kind of war. You fight an enemy that you cannot see with your eyes. That means you have to be in tune spiritually.

And if you're not in tune spiritually, you may get hit in the side of the head and not even know where it came from. Because remember, this thing doesn't get fought in a locality somewhere. You can be sitting in your living room all by yourself relaxing with a cup of iced tea and get hit broadside by the enemy.

Amen? So, it's good to have your armor on. Amen? And recognize that the war is going on and there are bullets flying around all the time called fiery darts. Just a few thoughts on this different kind of war.

We have a spiritual enemy. Though we may many times deal with things in our real physical world, we know that there is spiritual enemies behind these physical difficulties. It's not just a spiritual war.

It happens in real life, in reality, in real physical things. I mean, sometimes Paul found himself strapped to a post somewhere and they were whipping him with a whip. He didn't see that as a physical war.

Though he was receiving physical pain. He saw a spiritual war going on behind the scenes creating physical pain on his back. But he saw that it was a spiritual enemy.

But not only that, they also engage us in battle. The spirits engage us in battle through accusations, through lies, through temptations, through trying to frustrate us. They engage us in battle.

You say, Brother Denny, you're making this thing a little bit spooky. Well, I didn't write those words. Paul did.

And brethren, if there wasn't the reality of the spiritual side of the war, Paul would not have given us a whole long list of spiritual armor and weapons to fight with. If it's all on the physical side, why does he mention all the spiritual armory? It is because it is a spiritual war. Number two, we have spiritual weapons and armor.

Prayer. The sword of the Spirit. The Spirit.

The Truth. And all the armor mentioned there in Ephesians 6. This is our weaponry in this spiritual war. Number three, we have spiritual strategies.

Spiritual strategies. It's a different way to fight. You don't fight this war the same way.

See? Spiritual strategies like humility, brokenness, obedience, a clear and a holy life. These are the strategies of this spiritual war. You want to be a soldier? Here's your sword.

Do you know how to use it? Do you know it? This is your sword. You want to fight? You need to prepare. Young men, you'll never have more time than you do now in your life.

Don't you waste your time frittering it away on nonsense. Polishing your wheels on your truck, boy. Don't waste your time on that.

Don't you realize there is an enemy and He's real? And He's going to punch you along the side of the head sometime and you won't even know what hit you. Because you were busy polishing those chrome wheels on your truck when you should have been in the Word of God. And that just doesn't apply to the young men, does it? There are spiritual strategies in this war.

Sorry, I told you I wasn't going to skin you. But I mean, it's a war. And we can fight this war.

But we have to learn how to fight this war. It's different. You fight with humility.

That's very different, isn't it? When the battle gets hot, you drop on your knees and cry to God with all your heart, soul and strength. That's how you fight this war. You guard your heart when you fight this war.

You keep that shield of faith up there. You keep your heart full of the Word of God so that when the battle is hot and it's going on, the Word is right there to stop things and strengthen you and give you guidance and counsel. That's how you fight this war.

You fight this war through obedience. By obeying what you see in the Word of God. That's how you fight this war.

Meekness and humility. You fight this war with a clear and a holy light. In fact, you want to put your armor on? Just keep your conscience clear and your heart full of the Word of God and you've got your armor on, brethren.

Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof. These are the strategies of this war. Anybody want to enlist? When we get busy in this kind of war, strongholds come tumbling down.

Paul went from city to city attacking the strongholds of those cities with these weapons. The results? Souls were getting saved. Believers were going on to maturity.

And churches were being planted and established in every city. And that is victory! Souls are getting saved. Believers are being established.

And churches are being planted. Beautiful testimonies that rise up and shine to the glory of God like cities set on a hill that cannot be hid. That's what happens.

Paul knew. The weapons of our warfare, they are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. And Paul went from city to city and saw strongholds come tumbling down.

Alright, let's move on to the last point. The theology of his ministry. Paul's theology.

It was deeply spiritual, yet clearly practical. It was deeply spiritual, yet it was clearly practical. He would make statements like, Christ liveth in me.

And statements like, Christ in you, the hope of glory. And statements like, ye are complete in Him in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He would make statements like that.

That's pure, deep theology. But at the same time, he'd turn right around and admonish them about practical things like coverings and going to law and getting back to work. And if you don't work, you don't eat.

You need to imagine such shallow things that he dealt with. His theology was deeply spiritual, and yet clearly practical. And I would encourage you just to read through the epistles just with this one thought in mind and go down through there and you'll see it over and over again.

It was the proper balance of law and grace. Law meaning principles of practical, holy living. We've been so distorted about that word law that we're afraid to use it.

It is in the Bible, by the way. But the evangelicals have taken and distorted it to such a terrible degree that we're afraid to use the word. But Paul had a beautiful, proper balance of law and grace.

One time he's speaking about the principles of the Word of God. In the next minute, he's speaking about the power of God. And then he's back to another issue in somebody's life.

And then he's speaking about Christ and the glory of His Kingdom. And he's back over here telling them you need to get to work, those of you that used to steal. And then he's back over here speaking about the wonders of Christ and the depth of the reality and the mystery of godliness and all those things.

And you find both of those beautifully intertwined all the way through all of his epistles. Paul understood the way that God makes men righteous. He understood how this process takes place.

That it's a proper balance of Christocentric theology and practical holy living. Paul saw that. And you see it all the way through the epistles.

Back and forth, back and forth. I mean, look at 1 Corinthians. What a beautiful example.

With all the problems they had there, surely he should have just told them, this is wrong, this is wrong. Don't do this. You should have done this.

You know, with all the issues they had there, it seems he should have filled this epistle with all of that. But he didn't. He did do that.

But at the same time, he said words like this, in Him is your sanctification, your redemption, your wisdom, your righteousness. You know, if you don't understand what's going on here, those almost seem contradictory. In one place he says, don't do this.

In another place he says, Christ is your righteousness. But if you go a little bit deeper, you'll realize that the one brings the other. Christ is our righteousness.

He is our sanctification, our redemption, and our wisdom. But we also have to have a willing heart that says, yes, Lord, I see Your heart here and I will not go to law with my brethren. Or whatever other practical issue it may be.

He had a proper balance of law and grace. Number three, he taught the doctrines, yet he gave experiential examples from his own life on how he lived those doctrines. Someone said a couple of days ago in the leader's session, you know, you have to be careful.

Doctrine will dry up the church. And I agree with that. If that's all you do is just give doctrine, doctrine, doctrine.

But brethren, doctrine is not dry. Not if you're living it. It is one of the most exciting things that you can give.

Lively, vibrant doctrine that you're living in your own life. And that's the way Paul did it. Have you ever noticed that sometimes there in the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, sometimes it says the people marveled at what Jesus said.

And at other times, they saw something that He did and it says in there they were amazed at His doctrine. I didn't know He said anything. He didn't say anything.

He did something. You know, He's standing in the synagogue and some demon-possessed man cries out right in the middle of the service and He just stops the meeting and says, Hey! You devil! Come out of him right now! Gone. And the people sat back and said, Wow! We've never seen any doctrine like this.

You get the point? That's the way Paul taught doctrine. That's the way we need to teach doctrine. Doctrine is not dry.

It's exciting. It's the principles of the Word of God. They work.

They're beautiful. They sanctify. They lead us into freedom.

More freedom and more freedom. But I agree. I agree with the statement if all you're going to do is just give a bunch of doctrines, we've got to cover the doctrine of non-resistance and we better cover the doctrine of separation from the world and if we're just going to hammer away on doctrines and not live a vibrant, holy life, yeah, it'll dry up the church.

It will. But Paul didn't dry up his churches because he didn't teach dry doctrines. He lived them and taught them.

And point number four, and I think I probably already said this, got ahead of myself. While his theology was very practical, it was Christocentric at the same time. Christ-centered preaching balanced with practical living was the secret of producing solid, mature, functioning churches.

Let me say that one again. Christ-centered preaching balanced with practical living was the secret of producing solid, mature, functioning churches. And it's still the same today.

May God help us to stay right down the center of those two. And as I look back over 24 years of church administration, I just see us going like this down the road for 24 years. Revival.

Let's get to practical. Revival. What about these issues in our church? Christ.

How beautiful He is. What about this issue? We've just been going right like that for 24 years. Just right like that.

Back. May God help us to stay right there on that path, brethren. If you get too far on this side or too far on this side, it won't come out right.

It won't come out right. Okay. I think that's enough.

Time fails me of the many other aspects of Paul's life. He is a deep river of example and instruction to all of us. His life is theology taught by example.

Just like A.T. Pearson said, as I quoted him to you in the beginning of these sessions. Paul is pure theology walking in human flesh. Study his life.

You will never be sorry. Alright. God bless you.

Thank you for your time.

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