

# David Rossi

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Preacher: David Rossi

[ 0 : 00 ] It is a great pleasure to be here. It is an honor, actually, to be here and fellowshiping with you in the Word. My history goes back to about 45 years ago when I was a member here at Grace Bible Church.

And some of you I remember and some of you I don't remember, and a lot of them are gone home to be with the Lord. Happy for them. Sad for us.

But I remember the first time I came here, I was attending Cedarville College at the time, and I sat over here in one of these rows on the side here on a Sunday evening.

Came in and I saw this window up on the wall there. It's not there anymore. I thought, well, that's kind of strange. Anybody remember what the window was for? Yeah, everybody does, don't they? And it still continues to this day. There was a room back there where they recorded everything on a reel-to-reel recorder back in the old days.

[ 1 : 02 ] And I think Marv had a cassette player up here at the front, too. It was a backup system, I guess. And when I saw that, I realized that this is home.

It was good to have been here. He was studying the Gospel of Mark at the time. And I came from a church in Dearborn, Michigan that was very similar and that the pastor taught verse by verse, line upon line, precept upon precept.

And Marv has done the same thing for, I think it's about 48 years now, if I'm not mistaken. I remember seeing a cassette years ago that Marv recorded when he was candidating for this pulpit. And it was called, If I Were Your Pastor. And it was dated February 14, 1971. So that's probably about 48 years ago then.

A little over 48. You're very fortunate to have a man of God of Marv's caliber here in this pulpit. I hear an amen, right?

[ 2 : 18 ] Amen. I'm here today, as I said, very pleased to be with you. My wife is here with me, Cheryl. Take a moment to say hello to her.

I want you to know that Cheryl is a saint. I know you're thinking, yeah, we're all saints that believe in Christ, right? But wherever I worked, all the people would say when they met her, you must be a saint to have to live with this man.

But she's a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother, and now a great-grandmother a week ago this past Friday.

And we're also expecting another grandchild here in the next, who knows, few days, few weeks, who knows? So, again, thank you for allowing me a space here in your pulpit.

And I pray that we will have an enjoyable experience in studying your word, the word of God. Open to the word of God this morning to Acts chapter 20.

[ 3 : 32 ] Acts chapter 20. Luke, our wonderful first century physician, wrote Luke, the gospel, and also the book of Acts.

And in chapter 20, he records how Paul's third missionary's journey has just about ended. He is on his way back to Jerusalem.

He wants to be there by Pentecost. And he is thinking at this point that he doesn't want to stop at any place else, especially in Asia.

And I think he means Ephesus. He had a bad experience in Ephesus in chapter 19. And he didn't want to confront those obstacles one more time.

And so he wanted to give it a pass. But he did want to talk to the elders of the assemblies that were there. And when he stopped at Miletus, he called for those pastors to come and meet with him at Miletus.

[ 4 : 47 ] So it's a 30-mile distance between Miletus and Ephesus. And I don't know how. I mean, they didn't get on a Maserati camel or something and make it there in 30 minutes like we could.

So the logistics of those men having to come those 30 miles and the message getting to them to begin with is not explained by Luke.

But it's got to be very time consuming. He had a very tender heart for these men that he put into a position of teaching and admonishing those in Ephesus with the gospel of the grace of God.

And so he wanted to see them for the last time. And it also demonstrates that these men that came, these 30 miles, it demonstrates the great foundation that he laid within their hearts.

That they would come and take that time off to come and hear his last message to them. Or what would be their last message from him. And as we look at verse 18, we see that Luke records the last message of Paul at this point in time to these elders.

[ 6 : 07 ] And that is part of the reason I picked this because the Apostle Paul had a lot of teaching.

And this is intact teaching of the Apostle Paul at this time in his life. And it's very important what he has to tell them. And it's applicable to us today.

Verse 18, he begins, Can we say that?

That we are humble? Doesn't that sound proud? But no, it's not really. I mean, Paul didn't write that book, you know, Humility and How I Attained It. You know, I don't know who wrote that book, but somebody did.

But Paul did not do that. This idea of being humble means that you don't feel that you are better than other people.

[ 7 : 13 ] That you're not holier than thou. That you don't speak down to them. And I'm sorry that I'm up here and I'm kind of speaking down, but that's not the idea. Paul didn't do any of those type of things.

Paul looked at these people as equals. Yes, he had an authority over them, but he didn't lord over them. And that's the humility that he's talking about. And it's a fact.

He was a very humble man when it came to this. He said he served the Lord with humility and with tears. I wondered about Paul whether or not at times when he was trying to sleep in one of the tents that he made at night, if he actually had crocodile tears for those men and women who reject the gospel, the free gift of eternal life.

And it's probably true. He had nothing else in his life that was more important than to get that word out. So he did it with tears. But he also had trials.

And they came upon me, he said, through the plots of the Jews. It could have been the Judaizers who were new Christians themselves, and yet they thought and felt and believed that all the new Christians that were Jewish had to maintain the legal system of Moses.

[ 8 : 38 ] You remember all this from the study of the book of Acts? And not only that, they need to be circumcised. They need to follow everybody into the synagogue and to offer sacrifices and so forth.

These are the trials that he had to overcome because if he didn't preach this the way they wanted him to, there were false accusations, imprisonments, and so forth that he had to endure.

Verse 20, he goes on and says, How I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable and teaching you publicly and from house to house.

Not only in the town square, but he also went house to house. Now notice that phrase, house to house. I think there are some denominations who misunderstand that as far as a preacher.

I mean, you don't expect Marv to go from house to house here to your houses. You know, like once a year, twice a year, surprise visits or whatever.

[ 9 : 45 ] I mean, that's not his job to do that. His job is to study. And I believe that's his office over there where he studies. He studies. And he comes in and he studies some more.

And he keeps on studying. He beats his brains out to get into the word so that he can do what his job is. And that his job is to provide you with the word, to provide you with encouragement in the midst of all the problems of your daily lives.

He provides you with the challenge that is necessary to go forth every single day and to be an effective witness for Christ. And finally, to equip you for the service of the work, Ephesians chapter 4.

That's what Marv does. And that's what any pastor of a local church ought to be doing, not going door to door. That's for the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Devil's Witnesses, whatever you want to call

them.

Going on in verse 21, he says that I solemnly testified to both Jews and Greeks of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

[10:58] He did not swerve from teaching the whole counsel of God. Verse 22, And now behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.

Although he has a foreboding feeling, an ominous feeling that something's going to happen because, as he says, that the Holy Spirit in verse 23 solemnly testifies to me in every city saying that bonds and afflictions await me.

When he gets to Jerusalem, he may be up against some false accusations again. Imprisonment, whatever. Paul is understanding of the point that he is not going to have it easy.

He's not going to be, it's not going to be smooth cruising for him. He goes on in verse 24, he says, But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself.

It's interesting that he says something like this. Because I think we miss something that he's saying here. He is saying that I have prioritized my life.

[12:08] I have put something in the proper order in my life. And I might mention here that I do have a book that I've published.

There are some in this hallway as you leave. If you have not picked one up, pick one up. It's a basic Bible study. So maybe you won't need it.

Maybe you know somebody that will. I don't know. It's been around because I gave Marv some books a couple years ago to pass out. But I have some more. They're almost gone. I don't charge for them because I believed, just like Marv and a lot of other good ministries, that it's a grace ministry.

And I've been giving these away. I've not made, what, maybe five sales on them at all. They're on Amazon and some other places. But I don't push it to sell.

So they're free. If you want them signed and autographed, it's a dollar. No, no, I'm kidding. I'm kidding, no. But they're there. And on this subject of prioritizing your life, I have a section in there that has some pie charts.

[13:21] And to give you an example of what Paul was doing, I have it in there in the book, so you might want to look at it. But the traditional person without Christ, their pie chart looks like a regular pie chart with the different sections.

But in the center is the word self. I'm at the beginning. I'm at the center of my life. And everything around it is sectioned off into work and sleep and entertainment and family and so forth.

So, you know, traditional things like that. And all too often when Christians accept Christ as their Savior, they change that pie chart.

Did you ever notice that, that they would change it? In my book, I show that sometimes what they do is that they make a little sliver in there someplace, and it says Christ in that sliver.

And they still have self in the middle. Paul says, I didn't do that. I didn't count myself at the center. Christ is at the center.

[14:30] And that's, I think we miss that when we see this verse here, that he prioritized his life. He says, I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I might finish my course.

And the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus to testify, solemnly testify, of the gospel of the grace of God.

Verse 25, he goes on and he says, And behold, I know that all of you among whom I went about preaching the kingdom will no longer see my face.

And this may have been a heartbreaking moment for these men. If you've said goodbye to a loved one, as I have, and I'm sure a lot of you have, it's heartbreaking.

To think that you're not going to see their face again. Not just their face, but everything about them. But of course, we're happy to know that as believers, we will be as they are, face to face with Jesus at the day we pass.

[15:43] But still, it is something to think about and to know that these men probably had the same feeling as we would when we lose someone that we love.

He says, In other words, the death of people that go to hell, he is innocent of that because they made that decision to reject Christ.

That's the idea here that he's talking about. He said in verse 27, For I did not shrink from declaring you the whole purpose of God.

And we often wonder, what is the purpose of God? In this world that seems to be going out of control at times, what is the whole purpose of God?

And I remember years ago, here, hearing for the first time, and unfortunately, I have to say, it was for the first time.

[16:47] Because Marv said, the whole purpose of God is redemption. I never thought about that. Redemption? Even from Genesis?

Yes. From Genesis? Yes. All the way through? God's purpose is redemption. And the reason it's redemption and restoration of his creatures is because he is the creator.

And we are his creatures. There is a continuity there of discontent, I guess you might want to call it, that we are creatures of the creator.

And we should never forget about that. Our culture wants to let us think that we are on the same level as God. But we're not. We are not. We're his creatures.

And from the very beginning, from the beginning of Adam and Eve's fall from grace, it was, let's go, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and provide redemption for mankind so that we can restore them to us in our fellowship.

[17:54] Peter writes in 2 Peter, the Lord is not slow about his promise as some who count slowness as something to be other than wanted.

That is, he was patient towards us, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. That's his purpose.

Paul wrote about 30 years after this experience here in Acts 20, he wrote to Timothy that God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

That's his purpose, restoration, redemption. And we should never forget that. Never. Verse 28, he says, and this is what I wanted to really zero in on.

He says, be on guard. Be on guard. He's telling these men from Ephesus to be on guard. Wait a minute.

[19:04] What do you mean be on guard? What does it mean to be on guard? What does it take? It takes perspicacity, for one. Ability to concentrate.

You know, and a lot of people think to be on guard means I should have a gun. You know? Well, yeah, maybe, but that's not what it's talking about here. Paul's not saying, have a big stick.

No, he's saying, mentally alert. Be on guard. Look around you and see what's going on around you, gentlemen. Be on guard for yourselves, he says.

And there is an advantage here that is hidden within the original languages. There is an advantage for them to be on guard for themselves. And it's because he doesn't want them to have the wool pulled over their eyes by Judaizers, anybody else.

Demonic activity that was probably prevalent during this time. But also, he says, be on guard not only for yourself, but for all the flock.

[20:15] Now he's going to bring in a metaphor of shepherding. The flock. Not, it is the word for a lamb. Okay? But he's not talking about lambs, obviously.

I think we know that. But it is the idea that these people are under their care, their watchful care.

And there's an advantage, again, for them to be on guard for the flock.

Because what would happen, what could happen to a flock? I mean, one of the worst things is that they get eaten, right, by a predator.

Or they might get lost, right? Or heaven forbid that somebody fire a gun and they're all scattered, right? So there's a lot of things that could happen.

And the advantage for them is that they would, if that were to happen, they would be without that person who is their shepherd, who is giving them, as Marv does you, the encouragement, the feeding that you need every single day.

[21:28] So he says, be on guard for yourselves and for the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. This is great because Paul is not saying that I made you pastors of these churches.

He's saying that the Holy Spirit did it. He's not taking credit for that, for what God has done. And that's great. We should never take credit for what we do either.

The Holy Spirit made you overseers. We get the word bishop usually from this Greek word, episkopos.

We usually get the word bishop, which is an overseer, somebody that sees over, obviously, and watches over those who are in their care.

He says overseers to shepherd, and that's a purpose there. That's what he's supposed to be doing. He's supposed to be shepherding them. And they are the church of God, which is, which he purchased with his own blood.

[ 22 : 38 ] Now you might want to notice something here. He mentions the Holy Spirit. He mentions God. And he also mentions being purchased by his own blood, Jesus Christ.

We have the Trinity right here in this passage. The Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Paul knows his Bible.

Paul knows his God. And that's a great thing to realize. Then he goes on, verse 29, he says, he begins and says, I know. I know.

Now, Paul has that prescient ability to know what's going on around him. He can see the winds of change in the culture that he's living in.

So should we. We should have this same ability. But he says, I know that after my departure, and notice that after his departure, we're talking about cowards.

[ 23 : 38 ] They're going to wait until Paul's gone. Right? We don't want Paul to see us do this. Or, you know, Paul interfere with what we're trying to do or what we're going to do to scatter the flock.

So Paul knows that. After my departure, he says, savage wolves will come in among you. Savage wolves. Interesting that we talk about savage wolves here.

And this word savage. We think of, you know, when I first look at this passage, and I think savage wolves, I see teeth and flesh being ripped and everything else.

Really, that's not what the word savage really means. That's, it's being used more of a metaphor here of somebody that is oppressive.

Somebody that causes suffering. Somebody that uses significant power over somebody else. And there are wolves, again, metaphorically speaking.

[ 24 : 41 ] Not real wolves, but people who are like them. Who, as a wolf, would overpower a sheep or another animal. These people are going to try to overpower you.

Not just philosophically, but also with mental cruelties and things like that. You're going to be ostracized from the culture because you have faith in Christ.

And that's what they're going to try to do. Is to separate you from the open culture. Jesus warned right at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7, 15.

He warned even the Jewish people back then. He said, beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing. But inwardly are ravenous wolves. And Peter talks about Satan, right?

The devil. As a roaring lion, seeking about who he can devour. That's what they're talking about here. Demonic activities that are meant to disrupt the process of teaching the whole gospel of the grace of God.

[ 25 : 58 ] He said, they will come. This reminds me of a phrase that our son used and uses.

He served two tours in Iraq. And after the last time coming back, we noticed a change in a lot of ways that if we were out with a family, he would be behind us as we were walking.

And it was because he was guarding us. He told us some of the things that went on over there, how there was a lot of violence.

There was a lot of subterfuge against the American soldiers. And, of course, the Islamic terrorists were prevalent everywhere.

The IUDs and so forth. The bombs that they would spread out there. Kids on the road to try to stop them. The tanks and so forth moving through.

[ 26 : 58 ] And he came back and I asked him, why are you doing this? Why are you protecting us like that? And he said, it's coming here.

It's coming here. And you know it is here. Not just 9-11 a few years ago. But it's coming here and it's characterized in a number of different ways.

Islamic insurgents aren't the only thing that's affecting our culture. But the anarchy that's in our culture. The social unrest that's played out by demonstrations in Ferguson.

In Portland. This group Antifa. You're all familiar with that. Recent gun violence in schools and a cinema. Las Vegas.

El Paso. And then just down the road here in Dayton. A few weeks back, right? So it's coming. No, it's not coming. It's here.

[ 27 : 58 ] Ladies and gentlemen. It's here. It's among us. As he says here. These are coming. And they're going to be among you. Not sparing the flock.

Not sparing the flock. It's interesting that word sparing right there. The Greek word means treat with tenderness. That's what sparing means.

Treat with tenderness. Obviously not. They're not going to treat you with tenderness. I don't know if you thought about not sparing. What sparing means. They're not going to be tender.

They're not going to be gentle with you. That's what Paul is saying. Over 1900 years ago. Paul forecasted that an oppressive force would come from within the infant church.

Little did he know that it would later be called the church at Rome. Think about that. And I think your pastor has talked about this before too. that a lot of opposition to biblical Christianity has come about after the second and third centuries.

[ 29 : 07 ] Because of the church at Rome. Verse 30 he goes on and says, And from among your own selves men will arise. And this is sad, right?

To think this. But if you were standing there, if you were one of these men. And Paul says, from among you, right? You know. I don't know if he really meant that right there.

But maybe from the parishioners that they had, maybe. But it almost reminded me back at the Last Supper.

Do you remember when Jesus said, I'm going to take the sop and he who takes it will betray me? And what did the disciples say? Anybody remember what they were saying?

Was it me? Is he talking about me? I'm wondering if these men were sitting there thinking, Is he talking about me? Or if one of them was the one that was coming from within.

[ 30 : 10 ] Kind of snickered. I got him fooled. Oh wait, no I don't. From among your own selves men, plural, will arise.

Speaking perverse things. It's interesting this word perverse. Comes to your mind first. Perverts, right?

Sexual perverts. Well, I think we've put a sexual connotation to that word. And it's not really what it means. It means in the original, it means to be twisting or distorting.

And that's what he's talking about. They're going to bring twisted and distorted things to draw them away from the disciples. To draw them away.

False doctrines is what he's talking about. False teaching. The Judaizers were great at it. If I might say so. Therefore, he says in verse 31, Be on the alert.

[ 31 : 12 ] Different word than be on guard. Be on the alert. Same type of, it's more of a synonym. Synonym, I'm sorry. For being on guard. He says, be on alert.

Refrain from sleep. That's the idea here. Don't go to sleep. Don't fall asleep on the job. If you did that in your job at work, they'd probably show you the exit sign.

So you don't want to do that in God's work either. And he goes on in verse 32, And now I commend you to God. This is an interesting phrase. I commend you. I lay and trust you to God.

I'm committing you to him. In other words, I can't do anything more. I can't be there for you. So I'm going to go to the one who is all powerful.

And I'm going to commend him. Commend you to him. God. He is the powerful one. Not only him, but he says to the word of God. And why?

[ 32 : 19 ] Why the word of God? What's that going to do? I mean, in this day, all he had was the Old Testament, right? He didn't have any of the other.

But he knew that eventually he would be writing books. In fact, he had written some already that these men would be able to read them and to learn more doctrine that will do the thing that the word of God is supposed to do.

And that is to build you up. It is the power of God. Not just for salvation, the initial point of salvation, but for salvation as you progress through life.

And I'm sure you've all been taught that there are three stages of salvation. The initial salvation by the grace of God, accepting Christ as your Savior.

And then there is this progressive salvation. And your salvation isn't complete until the third step. And that is when you are gone from here and face to face with Christ.

[ 33 : 30 ] Your salvation is complete at that time. So he says, Therefore, be alert. Remember that night and day for a period of three years.

I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

All those who are sanctified. Big word, sanctified. All those who are saints. Who are separated from the sin of the world.

Because of Christ. Because of that power that he gives. And I mentioned that before. Cheryl's a saint. So is everybody else. That's what the word sanctified is about.

It's the word saint. It's the word separation. And separated for a purpose. And as Paul would like us to know that his purpose was to place Christ at the center of our lives.

[ 34 : 45 ] And our lives reflect whatever we do, Christ and his glory. Now, if you hadn't noticed, we're at a juncture in our time and in our culture.

It is a crisis mode that we're involved in. We, the church of Jesus Christ, are entangled right in the middle of this crisis in our culture.

The wolves are still coming. They're here. And they are right here in our midst. Not here. Not here. Not here. I'm sorry. Not here at Faith Bible.

Or Grace Bible. Faith Bible is my church. Not there either. They're right in our midst. We are contending with a culture and the perverse forces within the church of Jesus Christ, unfortunately. Forty years ago, Dr. Francis Schaeffer, anybody know who Dr. Francis Schaeffer was? He's now with the Lord. Over 40 years ago, he preached about the evils of postmodernism.

[ 35 : 53 ] He stated at that time that Judeo-Christianity was becoming a distant memory. Those are his words. And man, was he right.

Forty years ago, today, still right, is becoming a distant memory to some people, even our age, unfortunately.

Postmodernism is a cultural movement back in the 20th century characterized by broad skepticism, subjectivism, relativism, and a general suspicion of reason.

These acolytes of postmodernism asserted that there is no such thing as absolute truth. Throw away your Bible. Hopefully, we all here believe that the Bible contains absolute truth.

And I believe Marv has done well at making that known and asserted. Anarchy is their end game. They don't want absolute truth because then they have to live by it.

[ 37 : 04 ] And they don't want that. They want to assert that it's not there. The success of postmodernism is that we are now living in a post-Christian world. I heard an amen.

And that's right. We are. Remember, the philosophy systematically poisoned the masses to the reality of God and his redemptive plan.

We don't need redemption. That's what they say. We don't need redemption. We can do it on our own. They want to replace eternal hope.

And they have done this. They've replaced eternal hope with doom and despair and anarchy. And this is the same thing as what communism does.

And that's what they would like is something of that nature. Be aware. The wolves we face today are within our own camp.

[ 38 : 02 ] And it's called apostasy. The more is the pity. The turning away from sound doctrine, which Paul described as the word of his grace. And that word of his grace means that infallible, inerrant, authoritative source of absolute truth.

It's true truth, as Dr. Schaeffer would always mention in his teachings. The evil within our culture has mastitized into Christian denominations, unfortunately.

These wolves have mesmerized, hypnotized, and lulled believers to sleep today. Convincing them that whichever way the cultural winds blow, it must be okay.

It's all right. Culture says it's okay. It's evidenced by their twisting and distorting of scripture. Notice that verse 30 of our text, the perverse things.

That's what it's talking about. They do this by syncretization of the Bible with cultural dictates. Such things as infanticide, euthanasia, same-sex marriage, gender manipulations.

[ 39 : 15 ] All in order to fit their narrative. And usually one that espouses love or truly committed to trump, and pardon the expression, as a trump card in order to outmaneuver those who maintain biblical Christianity.

This is not the time for Operation Head in the Sands. In polite company, don't discuss religion or politics.

That's what I mean. Don't put your head in the sand. To me, that phrase, don't discuss politics and religion in polite company, is part of the doctrines of demons.

Belial 318. We must know the wolves. We must determine their strategies and their end game and to develop strategic forethought.

And you might ask yourself, well, how in the world do we do that? You know? If you're like me, I'm retired. A lot of you, you're not in the ministry that is like Marv or Mission Field, you know?

[ 40 : 37 ] And I think we've been beaten down for many years. I mean, even at Cedarville, there was, you know, what's the will of God in my life? What's it going to be? Am I going to be a preacher or am I going to be in the mission field?

And that was where the choices that it seemed Cedarville College at that time was espousing. And yet, no matter what you do, you're in full-time Christian service.

So whatever you do, Christ at the center reflects everything you do in some way, some manner.

And if we don't do that as a group, not just here, but individually and as a unit of Christianity, we will lose our culture.

We will lose our culture. How do we do it? Hebrews 12, chapter 12, verse 1 and 2.

[ 41 : 42 ] Many of you probably know these verses quite well. Therefore, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, and the writer of Hebrews is talking about chapter 11 and all the heroes of the faith that he goes through, those are the clouds of witnesses.

They're up there, and what they have left was a heritage for us to draw upon so that we too could become a hero of the faith.

He says, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, every weight, every burden, every handicap that we might have, pride, doubt, sloth, anything.

And the worst of all is indifference. We've got to lay those things aside. We can't be that way in the midst of this culture today.

He said, and the sin which easily entangles us. We've got to get rid of that. And that's easy, isn't it? What do we use? 1 John 1, 9, right?

[ 42 : 55 ] If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And we can't do that.

We shouldn't do that. When we lay down in bed at night and go to sleep, before we go to sleep and say, God, let's see, what did I do wrong today? No, my friends, keep short accounts with God.

The more you know about God's Word, the more realization you will have as to when I sin, and at that moment confess it so that you can be used by God, by the Holy Spirit empowering you.

These are doctrines of our faith explained by men from years back. Lewis Berry Chafer, who started Dallas Theological Seminary.

If you ever get up, get one of his books and it's called, He That Is Spiritual. It is the definite, distinctive study on spirituality.

[ 44 : 00 ] And he goes into depth in this situation with sin clouding us from being used by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

What else can we do? 2 Timothy chapter 3. Again, Paul writing maybe 33 years after this event in Acts chapter 20.

Paul writes to Timothy beginning at verse 10, chapter 3. He says, now you followed my teaching. Let's look at this content that he goes through of what Timothy went through.

He says, now you followed my teaching, my conduct, my purpose, my faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me in Antioch, in Iconium, and at Lystra.

What persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me. He says, Timothy, you saw this. I ain't exaggerating.

[ 45 : 09 ] You saw this, that God can rescue us in the midst of the trials and testings. Verse 12, he says, indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Oh my, wait a minute. You just said he could take care of us. But now you're saying we're going to get persecuted. Well, such is the life, right?

When we are fighting against the evil principalities of this world. And I don't mean flesh and blood, as he will go on to say, but against the evil one himself and his minions.

I'm not sure that the evil one, Satan, is going to be the one that comes to you and challenges you. It's going to be his minions. We're not important enough for Satan to fool with.

His minions are, though. He said, but evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of knowing from whom you have learned them.

[ 46 : 23 ] Me, he's saying. You learned them from me. And then, and also that from childhood you have known the sacred writings. Timothy had it better than most.

He had a mother and a grandmother who taught him the word of God. And if you're a mother or a grandmother now, teach. Teach your children.

Teach all of them. Teach as many as you can. He said, the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads you to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

And again, that idea of lead you to salvation is not just to salvation from eternal damnation, but salvation here in the now while you are a believer in Christ.

And we all know the last two verses, 16 and 17, that all scripture is given by God. It is inspired, profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction in the training of righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

[ 47 : 33 ] What about Ephesians chapter 6? You know this one too about the whole armor of God. You know this one too about the whole armor of God.

Because Paul writes in verse 12, For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

There is an angelic conflict going on. And it's between believers and the demon angels that are out there.

And that how the demons influence people, Marvin and I were discussing that the last time I saw him. It's very difficult to really pin it down.

But I believe that demons do infiltrate non-Christians. And that's where a lot of the negativity towards Christianity and the divisiveness that is in our culture is coming from.

[ 48 : 45 ] But he also says in verse 17, To take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. I looked at that, the helmet of salvation.

You know, put that helmet on. What did the helmet do in the old days when they were fighting? You know, it protected their brain, right?

You know, that's where the information from the Bible goes, is up there. You want to protect it as much as possible. And yet, pick up that sword of the Spirit.

And maintain the Word of God for your life. Now, you might say to yourself, At this point, I can't do it by myself.

I can't change the world by myself. And sometimes I think we get that way. We think that it's all up to me. You know, it's all up to me.

[ 49 : 43 ] But you're right, you can't. You can't do it. But it takes all of us to stand together as believers in Jesus Christ. Not just here at Grace Bible. But it takes faith, Bible, fellowship, and Marian.

And any of the other churches that are Bible-believing. Now, I mentioned my book out there. Hindsight is always 20-20.

And I think I wrote it about eight years ago. Published it. I hate the title of it. I want to re-edit it and put a new title on it.

And the new title is going to be One Lord and One Faith. Because that was the idea that I wanted to get that we need the unity of the faith with all believers.

And it's basic doctrines of the Bible that if you're Presbyterian or Lutheran or whatever, we ought to all have these same basic doctrines to go by and live by.

[ 50 : 48 ] So again, those are free out there. Please help yourself avail yourselves to them. And what I'm going to do now is a real leap of faith.

Okay? Because apparently the floor is always open to questions and answers. So I'm going to open the floor to questions and answers at this time.

If you have any questions. If you have any comments, that would be fine, a comment. And I'm not going to be afraid to say, I don't know. Yeah? That's, you know, I don't know everything.

So I only know some things. And my wife says, you know, very few. So anybody? Anybody have a comment?

Way in the back there. Have you and Marv kept kind of communicating through the years? Tell us a little bit about your church up there, too, if you wouldn't mind.

[ 51 : 52 ] Well, Marv and I, well, let me back up to when I was at Cedarville. The last year at Cedarville, I had a pastoral internship program that Marv sponsored.

He was my mentor during that. And so I learned a lot of things from Marv at that point in time. He was gracious enough to work with me and to get that accomplished.

But outside of the years afterwards, I don't think we, I don't think I came that many times. The 25th anniversary of graduation, I think we came up with some friends of ours from Michigan, which would have been in 93 maybe, something like that.

And then in 2001, sometime early in the year, we came up with a contingency from Marion because I was interested in, well, not just myself, but another couple.

We were interested in starting a church. And I said, let's go to Grace Bible. I want you to see, you know, what a Grace Church is all about.

[ 53 : 08 ] And we came up, and it ended up only being two couples, myself and my wife and another couple. And spent some time afterwards at Bill Knapps, which is Collier's now, I guess, with Marv and Barb at that time, and Paul Pontus and his wife.

And we hashed out what church ought to be, what a Grace Church ought to be. It wasn't until, I'm trying to think, there was another time after that, and very sparse did we meet.

I met with Marv maybe about three weeks ago, four weeks ago, for lunch also. But Faith Bible Fellowship is, we started out relatively large.

We had about 50 in attendance. We had some children. But when it comes to teaching, they were interested in, I think the younger group was interested in making sure that there was a youth program for the young kids they left.

The older ones, a lot of them died. We are down to six couples. And one of the couples is our niece and nephew. And they're his child.

[ 54 : 30 ] And so we're very, very small. And we've always rented someplace to worship. So that's what Faith Bible Fellowship is all about. Any other questions or comments or disagreements?

That's fine, too. Let's get it all out. That's all right. Maybe I didn't make it clear. Yeah. I like to discuss. Yeah. Well then, let's be dismissed with prayer.

Our Heavenly Father, we are indeed grateful that you have provided us with a sure salvation and a word of God that is able to provide every necessity of life so that we might be enabled to do something that is superhuman, and that is to reflect the glory of Christ.

May your Holy Spirit help us this day and in the days ahead to be ensured that your word is what we need every day and that we take the time, the effort to confess our sins, to stay in fellowship with you, and to be effective witnesses for Christ.

For it is in his name and for his glory we ask these things. Amen.