

THE FORMATION AND FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

Taught by Ted Wood

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O God the Eternal King, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning, drive far from us all wrong desires. Incline our hearts to keep your Law, and guide our feet into the way of peace, that having done your will with cheerfulness during the day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

It's a great prayer. Struck by the passage in Romans 8:26 where it says, "Likewise the spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."

I guess I'm struck by that passage where it says, "we don't know what to pray for as we ought." I'm struck with that. I don't know if that strikes you. I hate the pressure of saying, "Ted, we've got the family Thanksgiving," ninety percent of the people there are unregenerate, "Now would you please say the prayer because you're the religious guy." {LAUGHTER} Then you're under this huge pressure as to what to pray for. How do you do it so that they can hear it? What do you say, except, "Thanks Lord," or "Lord we're gathered together here, we're so thankful for this Thanksgiving meal. We know that ninety percent of the people here sitting are going to hell," {LAUGHTER} "so we pray that you'd convict them through this prayer and bring them into eternal life. Amen." But we don't say that kind of thing.

I hate the pressure of having to come up with a prayer because so much of it is hackneyed and overused and just lots of nice words. So I really appreciate what Paul says in Romans 8:27, and he says that the spirit will pray for us, the spirit that is in us is always praying. I mean, that's the great confidence I have that even when I don't know what to pray, I get on my knees every morning and pray—pray for my wife and my daughter, my older daughter and my son and my grandkids and various other folks, the church and things like that.

But I often find that the words don't have much oomph to them, they don't seem, so I'm just in that, I have to take the spotlight off me and put it on what the Lord is doing, and within me, the spirit within me is praying perfectly to the Heavenly Father because spirit is praying to spirit. They're completely simpatico in terms of that.

Another way I've found to deal with this issue of not knowing how to pray is to pray Scripture. If you come to the adult class I teach, I always begin and end the class with a Scripture that's put into a prayer. I was struck, therefore, with what Bruce talked about, several times, about this prayer that's found in Colossians 1:9-12. I'm going to talk about that today. He suggested I do that. What I had done with that prayer, is I took it and I actually made it into a prayer that you can pray. I've set it up. I changed some of the grammar slightly so it all fit, but a way that you can pray. I put it on this card.

This prayer is a prayer that Bruce says is always right for you to pray for other believers. I've really enjoyed this and thinking about it and getting into this prayer. Let me just go through it. It's at the top of that handout that I gave you. In Colossians, Paul writes, and I put in blanks there for the name that you want to insert. And I guess I'll pray for my wife this morning, Diana. I said, "We have not ceased to pray for Diane, asking that she may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, that she may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, that she may bear fruit in every good work, that she may increase in the knowledge of God, that she may be strengthened with all power according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, that she may give thanks to the Father, who has qualified her to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. In Jesus' Name, amen.

That's a powerful prayer, isn't it? Before I get started talking, Dick said that's your memory prayer, and I've been trying to commit this to memory. What I've done is there's just, Paul can be quite verbose, and sometimes a lot of the words get in the way of understanding, so you have to break it out. If he has one sentence, you can't always just grasp the meaning in that one sentence; you have to break it into clauses to really grasp everything he's saying.

What I did with this prayer is I put in bold, to me, what were the key thoughts in that prayer. When I'm praying, I pray, whether it's my children or the pastor or another believer, I pray that they be filled with the knowledge of God's will, that they will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, that they will bear fruit in every good work, that they will be strengthened with all power, and that they will give thanks to the Father.

As I read that, I thought about it and there's so much to meditate on this prayer. I put it in a card form. I've actually taped it into my journal. When I get down on my knees, not every morning, because sometimes I pray in different ways, but I will put this in front of me and I'll go through every person I'm praying for. It doesn't take that long to do. But really, it's an eye opener as you do it.

What I wanted to do is dig into this and pull out some of the parts of it that struck me as very interesting about this prayer and kind of zero in on it. Do you all have any thoughts or questions up to this point?

***Audience Member:** Did Paul intend it, I know he says we have not ceased to pray, so he intended it as a prayer.*

I think what...he's saying these are the things that I'm praying for. I think what Bruce would say is these are the things we should pray for, for other believers.

The first thing we have here is "be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." I focused in there on the words "spiritual wisdom and understanding." It's interesting that the Greek word for understanding is made up of two Greek words that mean running together. If you want to know what does it mean to understand something, it's when you run things or pull things together. That's what understanding...and so much what we need is we need wisdom. If I were praying for Dick, for instance, I would want Dick to have wisdom and be able to pull things together, run them together in his life so he could begin to grasp what that will was.

Those things that are pulled together, those things that are wisdom, are spiritual in nature. That does not mean they are fleshly or human. It's not based on human logic; it's based on supernatural wisdom and understanding. Paul writes about this in 1 Corinthians, "the things freely given us by God...we impart." The things that Paul has received, he's going to give out, "in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:12-14.)

The true statements about the sovereignty of God and the depravity of man is that the natural man—that means the man as you were born, before you were regenerated, before you were born again—the natural man is not able; he does not have the power to understand the things of God.

My daughter, 21-year old daughter, is dating. She's really in her first very serious relationship in her life with a guy named Andrew. Andrew comes from a very good family. They're good church-going folks. But I don't think Andrew knows the Lord, and I'm not too sure my daughter wants to know him at this point in her life. God can kind of be inconvenient, you know, the way you want to live your life. I

wanted to talk, from the very beginning, I wanted to let Andrew know where I stood on things, because she was very serious. I mean, this relationship is very hot right at this point, which causes her old man {LAUGHTER}, I mean, you just... So I said to Andrew, "You know, the Christian faith, the Gospel of Jesus, is not about doing what God tells you to do. It's about knowing God, personally." He looked at me and he says, "I don't understand what you mean," and I said, "I know you don't. But you may." I don't know when God is going to reveal himself to Andrew. Now that doesn't mean I don't talk to him, but he does not have the ability to understand anything but the Law. He understands...

***Audience Member:** That's why you have to pray this prayer for him.*

Well, yeah, I want him to be regenerate first before I pray that prayer, but Brother Bruce can probably correct me on that issue. But the thing is, he is not able to understand that it's not about being a good person and meeting certain criteria. He doesn't understand that. He is not able to understand that. I think you don't begin to understand that until you understand that the consequences of not achieving that, because the natural man, he has the Law, he says, "I'm trying to do the best I can. Boys will be boys. Girls will be girls. Humans will be humans. I'm allowed a few mistakes in life. Right God? There are some loopholes. I'm sure that I've been better than others. I mean, I'm not Adolf Hitler or Joseph Stalin." The natural man goes through all these things in the face of the Law. He sees the Law. He knows the requirements. But he thinks he can satisfy them in some fashion. And perhaps the first wisdom that comes with regeneration is the consequences are, as Cane said, "The burden is greater than I can bear." Natural man, when he's regenerated, begins, his eyes start to open. He sees he cannot bear the consequences of what the Law requires. And then you begin to say, "There must be a better way because there are not enough loopholes, there's not enough comparisons in the world to satisfy what God requires." Up to that point, you're deceiving yourself, and Andrew is at present as well, and my daughter is just ignoring God.

***Audience Member:** When you say it's about relationship and obedience, can you say that again?*

Andrew thinks that being a Christian, or being religious, is about following God's rules. He does not know that he's meant to have this relationship, to know Christ. As Paul says, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, the fellowship to sharing in his suffering." That's what you have when you... when you're born again, you're not born again to be a better person. You are born again as a child of God, and therefore, at that point, the primary thing, as it is with our own children, is not that we follow our parent's rules, but that we have a relationship with them, and a privileged relationship that nobody else can have.

***Audience Member:** I just want to challenge all of us that that is correct, but so often, we especially as men, go, "Well, I have this relationship so I'm covered under grace, and Paul talks about that [UNCLEAR] abound in grace [UNCLEAR], but the real challenge is for us to change that motivation of why am I obeying. Out of fear or wrath, this and that, versus because of this relationship I'm so struck with awe of the grace that I've been given, the gift that I've been given, that I want to desperately obey. I think that's what we, obedience is definitely there [UNCLEAR] so often that it's the relationship.*

Let me ask you this question. Can you make yourself want to obey?

***Audience Member:** After you're regenerate? Absolutely.*

You can make yourself want to obey. I have doubts about that. I think with regeneration comes the want to.

***Audience Member:** And that's what I just said.*

Yeah, I mean, I think that's very critical because otherwise, you're always trying to crank up some kind of, gin up some kind of desire on your part. Either you have the desire or you don't have the desire.

I liken it very similar to when I began courting and having a relationship with Diana. I did not have to gin up my desire for her or the desire to please her. It came naturally. I could not suppress it; it just...now there are certain things Diane would have to do to keep me on the straight and narrow in terms of being pleasing to her, of course, and that's part of our fallen nature, but nonetheless, the desire comes first. I think the first gift at regeneration is the desire.

Audience Member: I'm not disagreeing with that.

And that desire drives everything. That's what I'm saying. That desire drives everything in the Christian life. I'm still not...I'm missing you point, aren't I?

Audience Member: No. I guess we're saying the same things.

Well good, then let's go on to the next question. {LAUGHTER}

Bishop Rogers: I think what he's saying is you can use the language of a relationship and not really have one.

Thank you, brother. That's exactly right.

Audience Member: Could you say that again over here?

That's all we...Bishop only speaks once. {LAUGHTER} And that should be enough. The correct response is, "Yes, Bishop."

Bishop Rogers: I just said I think the point he was making is that you can use the language of a relationship with Christ without having one.

Right. Thanks.

Audience Member: Explain that a little further, Ted.

That's an excellent point. What I think that often in evangelical circles, we talk so much about, "Do you know Jesus personally? Do you have a personal..." We talk so much about that, we sometimes cheapen it because they're, "What does that mean? What does it mean to have a personal relationship?" Then we start to agonize, "Do I really have a personal..." and we start to fret about too much versus letting it flow naturally. Well, I mean, either you will feel attached to the Lord or you'll feel not attached. However your attachment is, it can't be measured by someone else's attachment. Someone else is very emotional about an attachment.

"Diana is so wonderful. I love her all the time. Little Twinkie, I love you. You're so..." I mean, some people are like that and others, "Good morning, hon." But it's the same thing. It just is experienced differently. Sometimes when people talk about having a personal relationship with Christ, they are kind of mirroring it off somebody else's experience. You don't have to gin up; in the Christian life, you don't have to pump up your relationship with God. You work on it and you grow in it, but if you're not feeling anything, that's basically God's issue, I mean, "Lord, I would like to feel more enamored with you, more connected. Please give that to me," and I think he'll answer your prayer. Maybe not today, maybe

not in a week, maybe not in three years, but he'll answer, because God is faithful.

Audience Member: I was just going to...

Agree with me.

Audience Member: [UNCLEAR]...the Scripture, in John he says that the Lord draws us to him.

Right.

Audience Member: He plants that desire in us. It's not something that you...

Manufacture.

Audience Member: Exactly.

Right. Especially the human, the natural man, is totally unable to manufacture anything like that. I think when I first came to know the Lord, I was struck by the fact that it was true. I just was...the one day it just struck me that what Steve was telling me was absolutely true. From that point on, I could not live any other way if it was true. I was compelled by the truth of God. Jesus said, "The truth will set you free." That's exactly what he meant. The truth is absolutely compelling. When the truth goes out, when the preaching of the Gospel goes out, the truth goes out, and God opens the heart, that person has to respond, whether they say, "Come forward, just as I am without one plea," prayer counselors, whether it's that way or it's simply in your seat. You're struck by the fact that this is what life is all about.

Audience Member: We can do nothing to enhance or improve our desire for Christ. Is it also true we can do nothing to change it?

I would say that would be true, ultimately. I mean, there are things we can do. It says don't quench the spirit. I'll tell you, what I have found is that when I've not been responsive to Diana, in time, she lets me know in uncomfortable ways. God is the same way. If I'm not being responsive in our relationship because of the flesh that's still within me, I'm struggling with, God lets me know. He puts me into a situation. I know many of you have been in that situation, "Oh, life is great. The job is great," and then all at once, you get whacked, out of the blue, by something, and you say, "Gosh! Where have I been, Lord?" and he brings you back to where you need to be.

The painful issues and traumas of our life, the failures, are God's way of getting us where he wants us to be. Often I hear people say is they're praying that these things will be taken away from them when they're God's very means of making you who he wants you to be. This understanding of pain and failure and god awful events is so radically different than what the world talks about. The world says, you get cancer, "Oh Lord, let's pray for the healing and deliverance." Yeah. Okay. I'm really treading on a sensitive area here, but that very cancer has a way of bringing that person to place God wants them to be. Would you want that cancer to be taken away and that person to lose that compulsion through the pain to get where they need to be?

We used to say in sports, "No pain, no gain. More push-ups. Run anything 170 yard runs back and forth." "Gosh, coach. It's just too painful. I can't do it." "No pain, no gain." We believed it when we were 18, but we don't believe it now.

Carl: *I believe that what you said here, you said the natural person does not accept the things of the spirit of God, and I agree with that because you're basically saying that we're born in sin and iniquity,*

so from the very beginning, we're kind of behind the eight ball. But we have to come to the realization of is that we're not a natural man having a spiritual experience, we're a spiritual man having a natural experience.

Okay, after regeneration.

Carl: After regeneration...[UNCLEAR] [OVERLAPPING]...having a natural [UNCLEAR].

Absolutely. Excellent way of saying that.

Carl: In order to walk worthy of the call that God has placed on us, we've got to recognize that he is in us as a result of him choosing us.

Right. Good. Excellent.

Audience Member: In Acts 1:8, Jesus is telling the disciples to wait in Jerusalem because then they will get great power from the Holy Spirit. It's magnetism [UNCLEAR] with electricity, and this is all heavenly power. When you put magnetism to a magnet, it draws, and then [UNCLEAR]...

That's good. That's an excellent analogy.

Audience Member: And then we become batteries, and we come here as the battery charging [UNCLEAR]...get out here and hook it up to whatever God wants you to hook into, everybody is ordained to do [UNCLEAR]...they all need just batteries.

Excellent. I think about, the image I got as you were talking, it's kind of like we come into this meeting room every Friday. I don't come in saying, "Well, I'm here. I'm doing a good job. I hope God recognizes I'm here." We don't do that. I'm drawn to come here because I want to know what God wants to give me and to give the group. I want to be with you all because of that. That's the drawing, the power, that supernatural power. Everything in the Christian life only accomplished supernaturally. It's in opposition and contrary to everything that world says works.

Jesus, if you want to have a new religion, you've obviously got to do more than having such a measly bunch of followers {LAUGHTER}, and you've got to do much better than being arrested by the Romans and not getting along with the religious authorities, and you've got to do much better than dying on a cross. We can really set you up for this...(phone ringing)...interesting, must be the Lord. {LAUGHTER} Just joking. He only calls me occasionally. {LAUGHTER} I'll put it on silence. I didn't mean that Lord.

Audience Member: What I see in what you're saying, Ted, is you're turning everything around, in my mind, to the point where I see that I can fool myself, but when I'm in the company of other men...my wife points out to me better than most men do, that I'm in denial, that I think everything is okay, and I really don't want to face the crap I've got to get through because it seems okay; I can deal with it. But the reality is there is pain out there. I don't want to face the pain. But then I hear what you're saying it's almost like Jesus would say, "Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth." Well, okay, I'll be meek. I'll try real hard to be meek. I think what you're really saying is no, God will let me meek.

He'll make you meek. He will. Yeah, he will. He'll do it. right.

Audience Member: Because I can't be meek. I can't be a peacemaker. I can't show mercy.

Right. You're incapable, in your own flesh, to do it. I've told this story before. The day I got fired from Pitt, and I was walking out...this was in '95...I was walking out with my box. I've shared this story, so I apologize. I hate retelling stories. When they fire you now, they make you sit down and they go through your desk and you put your paper clips and Pitt's paper clips in separate piles, so I could only walk out with things that are verifiably belonging to Ted and everything else, the paper clips, the stapler, and the papers, they go back to Pitt. So I'm going out with my box.

The woman that was the number two person in HR at Pitt was a very strong Christian believer, a good-sized woman. She's walking out the door. She has to escort me out. We're going down. This is very humiliating. I said, "Carol," knowing that she's a Christian, I said, "Carol," as I got out the door, "the only thing I worry about is just being able to support my family," because you know, I was gone. Three months' severance and that's it. She starts laughing at me. Now I'm in great pain. This is an awful event.

They fired me two weeks after the severance agreement lapsed, so they waited till it lapsed and then they fired me, but then we negotiated because Pitt doesn't like to be sued. But I wouldn't have done that, but I'm just saying. I said, "Carol, I feel so bad. I'm not going to be able to support my family." And Carol starts laughing. Do you remember what she said? She said, "Who do you think's been supporting your family all these years anyway?" I mean, I wanted to say, "Shut up woman!" {LAUGHTER} I mean, I don't want to hear that right now. I'm in pain. I want a little sympathy, but instead Carol told me the truth, because the truth was God had been doing that, and I'd been taking the credit.

Now to get that point across, was it worth it for God to see me fired? It really was. It began to reshape the way I looked at this kind of thing. That pain and hopelessness was a God-inspired act to get me to a better place.

***Audience Member:** Philippians 4:19...*

Which says, Philippians 4:19...

***Audience Member:** It says, "My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." I had a similar situation and I was tested on a Sunday afternoon on my son's birthday. Some supposed believers, they said, "What are you going to do?" because I was called on Sunday and told, "You're no longer with us." I said, "We're going to have this birthday party and then I'm going in that bedroom and I'm going to pray because God's going to provide, and he has, from that day on."*

Well you're more faithful than I am because I was ready to curse God at that point, and also curse Carol.

***Bill:** So often we forget the Scripture that says, "Whom God loves he disciplines." We don't like to hear the discipline part.*

No, we don't. But I think the positive side of all of all of this is that's why we have the body of Christ. That's why we have each other. My calling is to remind you of the truths of God, in a loving way. I can do it different ways. I can say, "Dick, I'm sorry. God loves you," or I can say, "Dick, who do you think's been taking care of your family all of these years anyway?" There's different ways, but I'm saying that God uses the body of Christ, other regenerate people, to build us up and to get us in the right place, and he does through the proclamation of the truth. The truth will set you free. I was in bondage to the belief that I had to take care of my family. That was a lie. I couldn't take care of them, but God could. That was the truth. Carol gave me the truth with a big guffaw, which made, humiliated, I mean, a woman laughing at me. Anyway, we won't drive that into the ground.

There you go. That's the first line. The knowledge of his will. We're praying that the person that we're

praying for has all the spiritual wisdom and understanding, the things that only the spirit can instruct, the spirit that's within us.

To walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. The Greek word, *aksíōs*, which means worthy, has a sense of it matches the value of the thing. We're to walk and conduct our lives in a way that matches the value of what God has done in our lives. Now, does that make you feel good when I tell you walk in a manner worthy of the Lord? How does that make you feel?

Audience Member: Intimidated.

Intimidated. Okay. How else does it make you feel?

Audience Member: Unworthy.

Audience Member: Convicted.

Convicted. Okay. What else?

Audience Member: I can't do that.

Yeah, I can't do that. Does it make you feel condemned? I mean, is that inspiring? "Oh, Praise the Lord! I'm going to walk in a manner worthy of him." I don't feel that way. I feel very condemned when I hear that, because I know how my walk is. My walk is abysmal compared to the worthiness of Christ. I'm just telling you... maybe some of you have a much better walk than I do and you can come up here and teach how you can be, your walk is worthy of the Lord. This is the encouragement I get. Let's look at 2 Thessalonians...

Audience Member: I was just going to say that it's also, I think of it as being privileged, too.

Of course it is. Yes.

Audience Member: So, I mean, I can't live up to it, but it's a privilege, there's a dignity in being called to walk in a way that is worthy of the Lord.

That's good.

Audience Member: For instance, here I am on fire, and I'm going to walk in a way that is worthy of the Lord because he is my life, not my job.

Right. That's true. I just want... I don't want to make more of what I produced because I did not produce that attitude when I was told that.

Audience Member: You didn't produce the attitude, Ted, but you [UNCLEAR] God in you, and that's why [UNCLEAR] about Christ.

That's right. That's why I'm trying to get to 2 Thessalonians 1:5. That's good. No, these are good comments. 2 Thessalonians 1:5... and that is not it. It's where he talks about our worthiness comes from the Lord. Worthiness comes from the Lord. Well anyway, I'll just make it up. {LAUGHTER} Second opinions. The passage I'm trying to find says that the worthiness comes from the Lord. If I look at my own worthiness, my ability to, what does it say, match up the value of the thing, that my behavior matches the value of Christ. I, on my own, that's an impossible task. That will do nothing but discourage

me. The truth is, is that my worthiness comes from the Lord. It's what he's given me, and that's the only basis of my rejoicing.

Audience Member: *Not the filthy rags.*

Not the filthy rags. It's not everything. Right. Once again, to even perceive that even our goods deeds are as filthy rags, even to perceive that is supernaturally perceived. We don't get naturally. The natural man does not perceive that. They cannot see it. The Lord has to give us that conviction. You finally say, "Gee whiz, I've messed it up so badly. Lord, if you want to send me to hell go ahead and do it. You've got every right to send me to hell because of my behavior. So either send me to hell or redeem me. One or the other." That's what the Lord is in the business of doing. I mean those are the only options left.

Audience Member: *It's 1:11.*

Thank you, brother—2 Thessalonians 1:11, "To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power." Wow! "So that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you." What is the author of all of this? What is the author of this worthiness, of this fulfilling? Read it here. "And to this end, we always pray for you." This is what Paul is saying to the Thessalonians, "I'm always praying for you that God may make you worthy of his calling and that he, that God may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith." It's the only hope I have. If God is not the one who's always compelling me and pressing me through this life, to chase after him, to follow after him, to seek him, there is no hope. When I look at my own behavior, I despair. When I look at what he's doing, I have great hope. Does that make some of you a little uncomfortable, what I've said? Does it seem to kind of...?

Audience Member: *I think we can inject another Scripture reference that fits in there. I've been kind of looking at it. 2 Timothy 1:12-14, where Paul says, "I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that he is able to guard," and it goes on. He's convinced that God is able to guard what's been entrusted to him. In verse 14, it talks about the Holy Spirit dwells within us.*

In 2 Timothy what?

Audience Member: *2 Timothy 1:12-14*

Could you read that once again please?

Audience Member: *Well, let me read the whole passage, "¹²But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. ¹³Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you."*

He says, "I'm convinced." Right?

Audience Member: *Right. "I am convinced that he is able."*

I am convinced that he is able. What happens when you're not convinced that he is able? Do you every find yourself not convinced that he is able, in fact?

Audience Member: *A lot.*

A lot. Thank you.

Audience Member: *I think too often, Ted, we may be convinced that he is able, but we may have a doubt that he will actually do it. God is able to do anything that he wants to do. He capable of doing it. Sometimes our fault is that we believe that statement, but we don't know that he necessarily will do it.*

The problem when you're not convinced, when you don't feel that you're convinced, the problem is not that you need to be convinced. The problem is you've got to believe the truth. That becomes the issue once again. Is God telling the truth? Or isn't he? Let's just keep going back. And every time we say, "I'm not convinced." Okay, let's come back to this point. Is God tell the truth or isn't he? "Okay, he's telling the truth, but I'm not convinced. I'm not..." Okay, let's start all over again. Is God telling the truth or not? I mean, you always have to keep coming back to the point. If God is telling the truth, and you believe that's true, then everything else flows from that.

Audience Member: *He is the truth.*

Because he is the truth.

Audience Member: *Was it Elijah that said that he was the only righteous man left? God opened his and his servant's eyes and what? Thirty thousand angels or whatever. He knew...he knew God, that he needed a little convincing. You seek God and [UNCLEAR].*

Yeah. Right. I want to tell you, you always have to come back to the core issue. If you deal with secondary issues, you're going miss the core issue. The core issue is the truth. The truth will set you free. I am the way, the truth and the life.

Audience Member: *Ted, you said in the beginning, you were convinced because you realized it was true. I think what we're saying, I think, or what Paul seems to go back to, is the truth of the event of the cross, that if this happened, if Christ really atoned for the sin of the world, then everything else flows from that. I think if we don't have a solid understanding that it was a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, that covers everything, all of our failings and shortcomings, then we start to get nervous that maybe I have to add to it or whatever.*

And you know, I would...and I don't want to get into it today, but I would expand it beyond that. When we get Christ, we don't get simply his atoning death; we get all of him. We get his life, burial and resurrection and ascension. We get all those elements. We get all of those elements. That's the thing to begin to meditate on. What do you get in Christ? Oh he died for my sins. Yes, that's true, but there's more to it than that. You get his life, you get his burial (Romans 6), you get his resurrection, you're resurrected with him, and you're made to sit with him in the heavenlies. You get all of that. And the spirit is the thing that, as Bruce says, what the Father ordains, the Son accomplishes and the Holy Spirit applies. That's the application. In fact, the whole Christian life is really about the application of the life of Christ in your life. That is really what the whole Christian life is about—the application and the experience of the life of Christ in your life. All of it.

Bill: *This brings about a big dilemma, though.*

Uh oh. Limited atonement.

Bill: *[UNCLEAR] here and we understand and then we go to church on Sunday morning and we hear a sermon that it's about us and what we can do, not all about Christ and what he's done.*

Audience Member: *Change churches. {LAUGHTER}*

There's always application that has to do with us, but I understand...I think that the pressure to, the natural carnal pressure to want to be able to do something about it is unrelenting. Therefore, the job as the preacher is to tell you what you need to do, whether it's what you need to do to be sanctified or what you need to do to be saved. We fear that if we don't tell people what to do, they won't do it. That's the natural way. You give instructions and people follow the instructions. The supernatural way is God changes the heart and gives a new desire. If the person does not have the desire, I wonder if they've been born again. That's the question I want to ask.

Bishop Rogers: *If the person has the desire, does the person not need to be instructed as to how to live out that [UNCLEAR]?*

Sure. Absolutely. Thank you. I withdraw everything I just said. But that's part of the...the Bishop said if the person has the desire do they not need to be instructed in it? But once again, that's related to the initial desire. The desire will lead you to want to know. When you were courting your wife, you wanted to know everything about her. That same thing flows.

Walk in a manner fully pleasing to him. That wonderful verse, number three, Matthew 17:5, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased." When we're adopted as the sons of God, God is pleased with us. That's the only basis of God's pleasure in me, that I am his son and the life of his son is in me. When he looks upon me, he sees his son. He sees his son mirrored back to him. God is well pleased with me because of the Son of God that is within me.

To bear fruit in every good work. This verse is from Isaiah 45:8 "Shower O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness; let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit; let the earth cause them both to sprout; I the LORD have created it." The fruit that we're living into is what God has already created beforehand for us to walk into. That fruit bearing, a key element of that is dying, "... unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12:24. See also John 15:2.) The whole idea is that if you're going to bear fruit, you're going to have to die.

In essence, in truth, you already are dead, because you've been crucified with him. But you haven't experienced that. It's God's joy to make you experience the death that he has already given you. You've already been put to death in Christ. We've been crucified with him. We've been buried with him. That's a true statement. That's the truth. Now have you experienced that yet? God has the pleasure of letting you experience that. The seed grows into the ground and dies and then it bears fruit. No fruit bearing takes place unless there's death in the first place. You need to die and God will be good enough to cause you to die to yourself in many ways. You can holler all the way to bank on that. "God it's just not fair. It's just not fair," but he's unconcerned about fairness.

Frank: *That point two and the rest of the points, it's all doing, I mean.*

Well, it's...yes, we're praying, but yeah, it's doing. We're praying that God will cause those things to happen in that other person. We pray that God, that that person will increase in the knowledge of God. It's God's doing. That's the point I want to bring about. You don't like that, Frank, do you?

Frank: *We have to respond to that.*

Okay, we have a response, but the response only comes from the desire. That's what I want to get to. I think a response is a secondary step. The primary step is the desire. Unless you're driven by...all your responses are of the flesh, unless there's the desire. That's why we always need to check, do I have the

desire. Well, I don't think I really do. Well do I believe the truth? Is he telling the truth or he is he not. Those are the issues.

I sense a fair amount of restlessness in the crowd.

Audience Member: Keep going brother.

Thank you. I was waiting for you to say that. {LAUGHTER} Finally, the bearing fruit really comes in the abiding. "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me," and the Greek word there is meno—it's a wonderful word; it means set up your tent or abide or to rest in, "whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) That's a huge, huge subject, the abiding in Jesus. It's really the critical activity of the Christian. The most important activity of the Christian is to abide in Jesus, is to stake their tent in Jesus, is to rest in him. Everything flows out of that. I wish I had more time.

We also pray to increase in the knowledge of God, that we're praying that the others may increase in the knowledge of God. I like that. The Greek word means to grow or to enlarge in the sense that your knowledge of God will be increased in size. My verse, my life verse, is from Philippians 3:10, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of sharing in his suffering, becoming like him in his death so that somehow I may attain to the resurrection of the dead." That's my life verse. I want to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection. Also, not only the good stuff, but the fellowship of sharing in his suffering, becoming like him in his death so that somehow I may attain to the resurrection of the dead. This, to me, is what the Christian life is all about. And increasing in the knowledge of God has to do with those very things.

Then on to "strengthened with all power... for all endurance and patience with joy." The word hypomen, which get the word earlier for remain, meno. It's an intensifying of remaining, to endure is just to remain. It's to keep going on in the faith. "The one who endures to the end will be saved." (Matthew 24:13) It is a false teaching to say that when somebody raises their hand and says the sinner's prayer they're saved. That is simply not true. Jesus says, "he who endures," Hupomeno, keeps abiding, keeps abiding in Jesus. What does that mean? It means to endure in the faith. It means not only to continue in your personal and private relationship with Jesus, but also to abide with his body. Paul talks about completing the race. We're called to stay in the race. The only people I worry about are the ones who get off the track and fall out of the race. "Oh, I'm not doing a very spectacular job in my Christian life. I mean, I'm really not shining for Jesus." Okay, but are you in the race? The minute you drop out of the race, you've quit enduring. You have to keep abiding. We abide...just to show up in church and be with the brethren and to be here is a way of abiding. And God does great things. When we abide in him, great things happen.

With patience and joy. I'm not going to get into that, but it's interesting that we'll be strengthened with power. I like this because he's strengthened with power for what purpose? So that you will be a stronger business person, a better father, a better parent, a better husband. Is that the reason we're to be strengthened with all power? No. The purpose of strengthening us with power is for endurance and patience with joy, so you're in the race. "I'm getting tired, Lord. Keep me running. Keep me in the race. Let me be patient. I'm in pain now. I've got a stitch in my side, but I'm going to work it out. I'll just keep moving along. And I'm going to be joyful in the midst of that."

Finally, to "...give thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light." I looked at that passage in Luke where it says, "Do not rejoice... that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20) So often, when our thanks become focused on the things of this world, where we say, "Lord, I'm thankful for this food. I'm thankful for my

family. I'm thankful for my job." All those are good, but they're very secondary and tertiary, compared to the greatest thankfulness, which is that I've been made, what does it say here, it says, "I've been made to share in the inheritance of the saints in light." That is my great..thank you, Lord. If everything else fails me in this world, my family, my job, my money, my health, everything else goes, thank you, Lord, for allowing me to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Compared to this life, that which is to come, the age to come, the new heaven and the new earth, the New Jerusalem, is incomparable, and it's everything we ever hoped for, that this life can never produce.

***Audience Member:** How do you share that inheritance?*

I share it by telling the truth. That's what I have to do in every opportunity I have. You're talking about evangelism in a sense?

***Audience Member:** No, I'm just talking about doing.*

We keep coming back to this doing. Well, do you want to do...

Bishop Rogers: You share it by dying and being raised up. That's how you share it.

I will deal with that head on next time I talk.

Bishop Rogers: Share here doesn't mean something you do, it means something you receive [UNCLEAR]...

Sharing is not what you do, but what you receive.

***Audience Member:** You receive an inheritance.*

I'll also talk next time about the limited atonement and women clergy. {LAUGHTER}

***Audience Member:** I just wanted to tell [UNCLEAR]...when Bruce Bickel talked about these particular verses, when I went to Africa and didn't know how to pray for people over there, these are the verses that I committed to memory just the thought or the idea and I would pray with everybody that would accept the fact that I would pray for them. This is what I prayed. I didn't know to pray.*

Great. It's a great prayer, isn't it.

***Audience Member:** [UNCLEAR]...*

We don't know how to pray.

***Audience Member:** It's unbelievable.*

Let us pray. Lord God, in your Word, you have told us a true statement, that we do not know how to pray as we ought, but we trust that your Holy Spirit living within us is praying, and that you've given us words in your Word to pray, that are totally satisfying and effective in our lives. In Jesus' name...Amen.