

"Thoughts That Go Bump In The Night"

Holiness

Review of 1 and 2 Peter

The Rev. Ted Wood

April 15, 2016

Ted: Don and Lou, could you take us to the throne of grace? *(Music.)*

Heavenly Father, You say in Your word that You gave to us apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ. We thank You for this calling that You've given brother Bruce Bickel. We thank You for the way that You've instructed his heart and given him wisdom, given him understanding, a heart for knowledge and research. And we thank You that You've given him a gift whereby he can convey that and share that with us so that we might understand unto salvation and sanctification. And we pray this and thank You for his life in Jesus' name. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Ted: I wanted to focus on Bruce because the handout—and I hope you grab the handout because it will be important in what I'm teaching today—the handout looks like —*(Handouts are passed out.)* That was pretty good! That sailed through the air and *(unclear.)* I could try that a thousand times and it wouldn't have happened.

But what I did was that I took about a year and a half of Bruce's teaching on 1 and 2 Peter. And that involved 108 pages of notes, 'cause I'm a note taker. I've learned that with clients it's always important when they start talking to take notes, even though you just kind of go like this because it shows that you're paying attention to what they're saying. *(Laughter.)* I take notes on every sermon and I often will ball up the notes and throw them away at the end, because it helps me concentrate and organize my thoughts.

But nonetheless, I didn't throw any of Bruce's talk away. And I took 108 pages of notes. And when Bruce asked me to take over today and teach, he said, "You can teach on anything. I'm wrapping up 1 and 2 Peter."

I said, "Okay. Well, that's good. I'm going to take 108 pages of notes and distill them down to four pages." So what I did is that I went through the notes. And I've come up, as you've seen, with two pages, front and back, four pages of key thoughts that struck me and really resonated with me and spoke to my heart. And I want this to be an interactive session that we have together, whereby I talk about the things that touched me, and you can respond to those.

The name of the talk is "Thoughts That Go Bump In the Night." And I'm just wondering if any of you understand that I'm probably plagiarizing from Robert Burns, *(spoken with a mock Scottish brogue.)* On Robert Burns Day you all have haggis, which is oatmeal—

Participant: Don't you wish?

Ted: Yes. Cat's gut.

Participant: How do you spell haggis?

Ted: H-a-g-g-i-s, or something like that.

Participant: For transcription purposes.

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Ted: Oh well, I'm sorry. *(Laughter.)* That's not even in my notes. *(Laughter.)* I didn't even plan that. *(Laughter.)* But thoughts that go bump in the night? Do any of you know where that comes from? I'm stealing that as the title for the talk.

You don't know this?

Participant: No.

Ted: You don't know the Scottish prayer that goes, "From ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties, and things that go bump in the night, good Lord, deliver us." You know that? "From ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties, and things that go bump in the night, good Lord, deliver us."

Men: Amen.

Ted: One of the reasons to have cats is that they make noises in the middle of the night, and you can always say to your wife, "Did you hear that?"

She says, "Yes. That's the cats." And then you go back to sleep. *(Laughter.)* I mean, if any of you have cats, you understand that.

But the thought I had was, when Bruce asked me, I took it from things that go bump in the night to thoughts that go bump in the night. And Bruce has certainly given me enough to think about, and all of us to think about. We'll wake up in the middle of the night and the thought bumps right into us. It hits us between the eyes. Or it may not even be in the middle of the night. We have agitating, disturbing, and sometimes shocking and shaking thoughts as we sit down and begin to think about some of the things we've learned in this class. I know that one of the brothers here—I'm looking to see if he's here today. No, he's not.

He said that when Bruce first started talking about the doctrines of grace and election and predestination, it just shocked him because he had never heard anything like that before. He said that he was deeply disturbed. Then in time he came to see that this was a sound doctrine.

It's interesting that in Proverbs, the twentieth chapter and the thirtieth verse, it says, *"Blows that wound cleanse away evil; strokes make clean the innermost parts."* So when we're struck, when God strikes a blow to us, it's a wound that's meant to cleanse us from evil and a stroke that makes us clean in the inward parts. So being agitated, being upset about the things of the faith, is a good thing, because it leads us to greater clarification.

So what I've done here is that I've taken this 108 pages of notes, and I've kind of put them under categories. The #1 category is *God's Sovereignty and Submission*. #2 is *Gospel*. #3 is *The Church, The Body of Christ*. #4 is *The Christian, the World, the Flesh and the Devil*. #5 is *Maturing in Christ*. #6 is *Suffering, Persecution and Opposition*. #7 is *Humility*, 8 is *Witnessing*, and 9 is *God's Will*.

Just to be a little more selective, I'm not going to get through all of these, or even most of them. Those of you who have your sheets, why don't you just take a moment to look through what I've handed out. Look through it and see if something doesn't strike a blow in you or go *thump* in your thoughts that you can respond to as we go. Just take a moment. I'm going to give you a moment to think about that.

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(**Transcriber's Note:** The men take a few minutes to read the handout, which can be found at the Brave Men's website under our current series on Holiness.

www.bravemen.org)

You get kind of a feel. There are some amazing things in there, aren't there?

Participant: Yes.

Ted: I mean, just simply extracting those thoughts and those teachings built me up and gave me joy this last week as I was traveling up in northwest Pennsylvania, to sit down at the Bed and Breakfast and just begin to pull these things out. And it was strange, because I did not know why I was feeling joyful. At once I realized that it was so much good teaching that was in these. And you can see where I dated the days he taught us that. There is even more, because there were a number of dates that I couldn't be here for business reasons to take those notes.

But the first one I talked about was *God's Sovereignty and Our Submission*. And that has got to be a key to all of Bruce's teaching—the sovereignty of God and our submission to that sovereignty, that rule. He says there—and I've numbered them—1.1. The sovereignty of God is His right to rule. He is sovereign for His glory and for our good. God is sovereign for His glory and our good.

There are three applications. And I would say that the first two applications are comforting and the third is disturbing.

And the first two applications, which is that God rules for His glory and our good, the first one is that God is in control of world events and can be trusted. So when people say, "Oh, my gosh, the political situation! Oh, this really scares me! I'm really scared about what's happening to this country!" God is in control of the world's events, and can be trusted.

Participant: Amen.

Ted: I'm trusting in God, but I'm scared about politics. (*Laughter.*)

Participant: They don't go together.

Ted: Okay. I think that's very comforting. All hell is breaking loose in the world. All hell is breaking loose in your family. God is in control and He can be trusted—God's sovereignty.

The second application is also comforting. *We can rest in God's timing*. God knows the best time to send help.

As I've shared with you, my 42-year-old son is a Baptist minister. He also can't make ends meet in that small town of Virginia that he lives in—population 800. He can't make enough from the Baptist church, although they're paying him more than they've paid any pastor in their 170-year history. He can't make enough to make ends meet.

He's very good at sales, but he's not been able to get a job. So he is mowing grass at twelve bucks an hour. And he has developed severe pain in his elbow from doing that.

And he went in and saw the doctor. And the doctor said, "We're going to have to put you on steroids because you're developing tennis elbow because of the vibration of the big machine.

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He says, "Dad, my body is falling apart. I can't do this much longer." And I'd been praying day after day, every day without fail, "Lord, get Dale a job that can pay the expenses of his family."

And the other day he got a call. He went in for an interview for a sales position, selling building products in the building and construction industry. And after the owner of the company said, "I need to consult with my partners, but we're going to take you on. We need you. And here's a nice salary. Here's a bonus, a nice bonus. Here are the benefits."

It's been over a year that I've been praying. We can rest in God's timing. God knows the best time. God knows the best time to send help.

I mean, think about Bruce. Isn't that a profound statement? I mean, that just cuts right to the heart and to the quick.

Now those are very comforting about God's rule. But here's something that's disturbing—the third application. *Obedience is the evidence of our trust in God.* Do you find that application disturbing? Do you? I do. Yes, go ahead.

Participant: Sig, I guess—

Ted: Yes, we both think alike.

Participant: (*Laughter.*) I feel that it's disturbing. But in answer to Sig's question to me about how my brother's wife is on the loss of her mother and husband, that is the answer to his wife's behavior. She is a person of faith. She has accepted, and she has an obedience to trust in God.

Ted: That's right.

Participant: And so I find that encouraging.

Ted: It's encouraging evidence, isn't it?

Participant: Yes.

Ted: But does the lack of obedience mean that we don't trust God and don't think that God can be trusted? When we're not obeying God, are we basically in fact saying, "I don't think God can be trusted?" God says that this is the way to do it. "Move ahead in this direction. I've laid it out in Scripture. I've given lots of examples throughout history and in the Scriptures. Now move ahead, Ted. I can be trusted, right? My timing is always right."

"Oh yes, Lord, it is."

"I can be trusted with the things of the universe and in your life, too?"

"Yes, I believe that, Lord."

"Now just go ahead and do it. Obey Me. Just do it." And what that means is that it throws us back on relying on Him all the more to do the great work. Yes?

Participant: In relation to that, the one that caught my attention was 8.1.

Ted: Yes, 8.1.

Participant: That last little part. Holiness is a sign of your life.

Ted: Yes. The most compelling argument in 8.1 is a holy life. Others may disagree with the argument. But they can't criticize your life.

Participant: He talked about his sister-in-law and the faith that she's showing, and that's awesome. And there are more times in my life when I haven't lived a life that shows that faith in our Savior.

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Ted: Right. It forces us to be constantly, as we lay in the middle of the night and hear the bumps in our brains, it forces us to say, "If Christ is not my Savior, I have no hope."

Participant: Amen.

Ted: If He doesn't deliver me, there is no deliverance. If He doesn't heal me, there is no healing.

Participant: Well, and those times of conflict in life, too.

Ted: Yes, sure.

Participant: I'm sure there is something that gets under your skin.

Ted: Yup.

Participant: And we ought to respond in a way that shows our faith.

Ted: Right. I may have told you the story. I was driving immediately outside of our neighborhood, and the speed limit was 30 miles an hour. And the young woman behind me was going way too fast. And she was so close that I could not see her headlights at thirty miles an hour. So I touched the break. *(Laughter.)* And I could see her car jack up in the back as she hit the break.

So she gives me the one finger salute. *(Laughter.)* And I had to decide what to do at that point. I apologize if I've told this story.

So I'm driving. I'm looking at her in the back. And so she gives me the salute and I give her the sign of the cross. And she gives me the salute again. And I give her the sign of the cross, and she gives me the salute again. And the third time she made another gesture. So I felt that was a godly thing. *(Laughter.)* She was cursing me; I was blessing her. Did I want to curse her?

Absolutely. Did I want the policemen to be there to pick her up? Yes. But God gave me grace to bless her. And she finally gave up to the blessing. Yes, Don?

Don: Ted, it is disturbing when we are told that obedience is the evidence of our faith. But it's comforting to me to know that we're certainly not alone. I mean, look at Abraham. Look at David. Look at Peter. Look at even the apostle Paul, who said that *"the good that I want to do I don't do,"* and *"the evil that I do I don't want to do. This I keep on doing."* You know, we're not alone in this. It's been the dilemma of all believers throughout history.

Ted: And it describes the reality, versus some other reality that would say, "Once you get saved, everything's fine." In my early Christian life in college, I was part of the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. And part of our group went over and began to have Bible studies with a woman named Addie. And it was called Addie's Group. And Addie taught that after you became saved it was possible for you not to sin anymore. And I went to the Bible study a couple of times. And Addie sat there and told all of us young college students, who were enraptured with her teaching,—she was almost like a guru type—she said, "It's been six months since I last sinned."

Participant: Oh, my!

Ted: So there is that sense that we think that once we get saved that things are just going to get hunky-dory. And the Lord says, "Okay. You quit smokin' and chewin' and goin' with girls that do. You've accomplished that. But what about this other obedience?"

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In fact, 1.3 right underneath that speaks of meekness and living under the power of God. Submitting to others means that we are ultimately submitting to God, *"entrusting to Him who judges."* And 1.5. Jesus entrusted Himself to God but submitted Himself to men. And probably one of the most difficult submissions, one of the most difficult obediences, is entrusting to God and submitting to men. And we submit to men. That is the hard part, because we think that those men are going to have the final say.

But what we forget is that, backing up to 1.1, that God is in control of the world events and can be trusted. You can rest in God's timing.

So we have difficulty submitting to men because we think that that man or that power or that boss is out of God's control. And that's where we have the challenge. Trust God. He's sovereign. He's in charge. And we can submit ourselves to others.

Bruce has done a fantastic job when he worked at PNC of submitting himself to people who were leaders. And I know those leaders because I was involved in fund raising. I went with them for gifts and this kind of thing. Those are very secular people, and Bruce was always in jeopardy. But God gave Bruce the grace to entrust himself to God and submit to the people who were over him. He is an extraordinary example of that.

In my own mind I think about ways to get back and put the squeeze to people who have done me in in business. And, in fact, I had an interesting experience of that in 2012. I had an awkward client relationship, the only client I ever had to hire a lawyer of over two hundred clients that I've worked with in thirty-some years. It was the only time I had to have a lawyer brought in to deal with this client.

And the agreement, as we separated, was that either one of us could cancel the contract. I canceled it. It was the first one I ever canceled in my thirty-some year career. I canceled the contract. And the agreement was that they would pay all charges up to the cancellation of the contract.

I sent in a bill. They ignored it. I sent in another bill. This client ignored it. And then I had to say, "What am I going to do?" The attorney that I hired said, "Well, you can sue them. But it's going to cost three times as much to win that back payment as it is to—

Participant: Than to be denied the payment.

Ted: Thank you very much. So I put that aside for four years. And I won't go into all the details. But in the end, that CEO was fired. And in the end I met with his replacement.

And in the end, out of the blue, I get a call from the CEO and he says, "I'm a member of the board. First of all, the board wants to apologize for what you went through." That blew me away. "They've authorized me to apologize to you for what we put you through. And secondly, I'm paying your bill right now."

That money was all gone. That was thousands of dollars. It was gone. And I was tempted in that process, sorely tempted, to pursue it in a fleshly fashion. But I read something in the Sermon On the Mount, where Jesus said, "If someone takes something from you, don't insist on getting it back."

And I read that, and I said, "All right, Lord. I'm ready to insist. I've got the old guy buying. I've got the new guy in. I can really press this."

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And the Lord says, "Okay. Now wait a second. Now let's go over this again. I am in control of the universe. And I can make things happen and my timing is right. Are you going to trust me for that??"

And I said, "Okay, Lord. I will. I don't like doing it. I'd rather do it my way. But I'll trust you."

And then that call came in, out of the blue. I'm driving down the road from Erie to Pittsburgh, and the call comes in, saying, "Hi. This is the new CEO. I've been authorized first of all to apologize." That was astounding!

Participant: Yes.

Ted: And you know what? The money that I got in the check is the money I needed at that time.

Men: Wow!

Ted: Because another client had followed through. I needed that money. So that has to do with the way God works. But it's a matter of trusting Him in obedience.

Let's move on to the next one. #2. *The Gospel*. Is this okay, guys, doing it this way?

Men: Yes.

Ted: I mean, you can take these sheets home, and there are just huge amounts of stuff to mine.

Participant: Oh, the outline is very nice. It's well organized.

Ted: Thank you. Well, that's the way my mind works. It's no credit to me. It's just that I can't help myself. (*Laughter.*) You know, if we get complimented for stuff, we can't help it! (*Laughter.*) "You're doing a great job!" Well, I just do that naturally. I mean, if they were to say to me, "What a great job you're doing with math!", I'd say, "Well, that's all my work, because I don't know any math at all."

But the gospel--#2.3. Whoever begins with God's grace ends with God's glory.

Participant: There you go.

Ted: Oh my gosh, is that potent! Whoever begins with God's grace ends with God's glory! And I thought of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church, and Article #17 on predestination and election. And it says, "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He has chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation."

Okay, that's the introduction. Now remember, grace to glory. "Wherefore, they which He has endued", (that means God has given), "so excellent a benefit be called. They are the ones whom God has called according to His purpose, that they through grace obey the calling, they be justified freely, they be made sons of God by adoption, they be made like the image of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. They walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity." That means to everlasting life.

So Point B is that when God picks you up before the foundation of the world, He's got a plan, and He's going to take you every step of the way through that process. And it says here that those whom God has given this excellence of benefits—those whom God has chosen—when He gives you that benefit, He's going to call you. You're going to obey that calling. You're going to be justified. You're going to be adopted. You're going to be

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made into the image of the Son of God. You're going to walk in good works. And then at length, you'll come to be with Him forever.

That's a tremendous career path for all of us, isn't it? And for that reason, none of that, in the end, depends on how well I'm doing. And that's good news for me. Maybe not for you, but it's good news for me. Any thoughts about that? It's the gospel.

Participant: When you describe part 3 of 1.1, the key to all of that is obedience.

Ted: Yes.

Participant: He's got it for you. you have to receive it.

Ted: Okay. Now do you want to say that again? Because I want to ask you if you think that's true. He's got it for you, but you have to obey to receive it.

Participant: No, you obey because you did receive it.

Ted: Okay, thank you. That's important, because there are too many groups that say that you don't get all this benefit, which the Book of Common Prayer calls "so excellent a benefit" unless you obey. You don't get this "excellence of benefits" as a result of your obedience. God causes you to obey Him.

Participant: Right.

Ted: He changes the desire of your heart.

Participant: It's grace.

Ted: It's all grace. It begins in God's grace. It ends in His glory.

I was having breakfast the other day with a fellow who is the head of a city mission. And we got to talking about this. And he said to me, "Oh, then it's all about choice."

And I said, "Yes, and it's about choice that comes from desire, a changed desire, because you will not choose the things of God until God gives you the desire to choose the things of God. It has got to begin with a changed desire, because the natural man does not desire the things of God.

Participant: That's true.

Ted: It's not a matter of having a lot of folks out there who have neutral feelings about the Lord and the things of God.

Participant: Amen.

Ted: The people out there,--the unbelievers, those who have not come to know Christ,--they're sitting out there, hostile to God. They do not like the things of God. And it's not so much that they hate them. They find them irrelevant.

I have family members who find the things of God irrelevant. "Ted, it's good that you're into that. I'm so glad you're into religious things and it makes you a better person." What did James Taylor say? "If it makes you sleep easier, it's all right with me." What was that song? You know that song I'm talking about.

"Good night and moonlight, ladies.

Rockabye, sweet baby James."

This kind of thing. It's good for you if it makes you feel better. That's what the world says. I mean, it's good for you if it makes you feel better. But in the end, it's no more important than your personal feelings.

And we say, "No, that's not true! That's not true at all." It has to do with the whole universe, and reality. The providence and the control and the sovereignty of God have to

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do with everything. It's not about my feelings. I'm just the happy beneficiary of it. Don, I'm going to let the bishop go first, okay, because what position do you hold in the church?

Don: Elder. *(Laughter.)*

Ted: Elder.

Don: Elder and bishop are the same thing. *(Laughter.)*

Ted: Okay. He says that elder and bishop is the same thing. That's his way of exalting himself. *(Laughter.)* Go ahead, Bishop.

Bishop Rodgers: Ted, when you say that to some people, they would say back to you, if they aren't in the Lord, "Don't lay your trip on me."

Ted: Right.

Bishop Rodgers: Good for you, but no way!

Ted: Yes, that's fine. Okay. So that's why the family members we pray for, the work associates, the clients I work with—I just know that their lives would be so much better and happier if they came to know the Lord. But that, of course, is a secondary issue. The primary issue is that I know they would be saved and be with Jesus for eternity if they came to know the Lord. And then, as a result of that, they would be happier. But the fact of the matter is, I can see that they know that something is missing, especially as they get older. They know that something is missing and they just don't know how to fill it in. And when I try to talk to them, they come up with, "Well, uh." But it's not there. But by the grace of God it will be, for some folks.

Okay, that's the gospel.

Participant: You forgot Don.

Ted: Oh yes, I'm sorry. I just got overridden again.

Bishop Rodgers: In your summary of the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, and the Person and work of Christ, you forgot to add repentance and faith.

Ted: Well, you're right. I should have put that in, but it was because I didn't have it in my notes. I'm not saying that Bruce didn't say it. I just didn't write fast enough.

Bishop Rodgers: It's just part of that slowness.

Ted: Yes, that's it. Do it again, Bishop.

Bishop Rodgers: You got it right—the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the Person and work of Christ, and repentance and faith. It's by the grace of God.

Ted: It's by the grace of God that we repent and have faith. People must repent and put their faith in Christ. That's all there is to it. Yes, Don?

Don: You and Bruce have both said this, that we're so surprised at the way things are in this country, how people are so hostile to us now, particularly about moral issues and everything like that. But it shouldn't surprise us because that's their nature.

Ted: Yes. They can't help themselves.

Don: They can't help themselves. These things are foolishness to the natural man.

Ted: That's right. And without God's hand on our lives, every single minute, we would be just like that.

Don: Right.

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Ted: It has nothing to do with the fact that I'm doing a better job than the guy next door to me. He may be doing a much better job than I. But he does not know the Savior. That knowledge is supernaturally given. I mean, there's no way around it. Yes?

Participant: I think too, even with what you're saying there, I mean I think it's very important for us to realize that we were once just like that.

Ted: Yeah.

Participant: We were. And in regard to obedience and being disturbed by obedience, the Bible says that we walk in the Spirit of God. And do you mind if I read a verse?

Ted: Uh, okay. *(Laughter.)* Just joking!

Participant: It's from Romans 8. It says, *"And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin."*

Ted: Yes.

Participant: *"But the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."* And it says, *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."* And just in regard to believers, we're led by the Spirit. There's no in between. So whenever we're disobedient to God, we sin. And then the Bible says that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us of all unrighteousness, and then the slate is clean. So when we have that, we're walking in the Spirit. We have peace and joy.

Ted: Right.

Participant: So then, whenever we do sin, we should be remorseful. It's that constant tension that we have as believers until we're home with the Lord.

Ted: Yes. And God has given us many wonderful aids in staying on track—the Word, our kind of mystical, private relationship with Christ, and also the body of Christ to minister to us.

And actually, that's what I'd like to go into next. I'm going to jump over to #4—the *Christian, the World, The Flesh and the Devil*.

4.1. *You are born a slave of Satan, and bound to him by your birth.* The cutest little baby in the crib is born a slave of Satan and bound to him by birth. Give that baby enough time and he will demonstrate that fact.

You are reborn as a slave of Christ. Now you belong to God, and you no longer have rights, but responsibilities. Now that would take a whole session to unpack that statement.

4.6. *Being different is the consequence of regeneration.* We're different because we've been born again. We're different in our innermost being, where we begin to act differently.

Being different may lead to persecution. In America we're opposed, not persecuted. We aren't persecuted because we're not different.

Participant: It's getting there. It's started.

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Ted: It's getting there. We're going in that direction. Thank God!

And #4.8, following up on that. *Satan goes after the weak, the young, and the separated.* Oh, that's good! Satan goes after the young, the weak and the separated.

If you're young in the faith, just like anything else in life, if you're young in the faith, if you're young at your job, you're vulnerable. If you're weak in your faith, you're vulnerable. And if you're separated in your faith, you're vulnerable too.

What does that separation mean? Well, you could say that separation might mean that you don't spend enough time with God. We're not cultivating a relationship with Him. But I think it also speaks to the reality—and this is one of the reasons that we're not different from the world, because in America the greatest good is individual fulfillment. It's satisfaction, pleasure, those things. And we find those and we exercise those in our Christian lives as well.

We tend to be individualistic. So people can say to me, as they have, "That person is born again. I know they're going to heaven when they die. But they haven't been in church for six years."

"Well, why haven't they been in church?"

"Well, because they didn't like the pastor." Or "they didn't like the music." Or "somebody said something to them." They're separated from the body of Christ! And we encourage that in our Christian culture—to go out and find satisfaction if we're not being satisfied and our needs are not being met.

"I don't like what that church is teaching. I'm going to another church." You become a free and independent agent, bouncing around from place to place. That does not satisfy God at all. The separated—the exaltation of the individual Christian above the body of Christians—makes one a stray sheep, disconnected from the protection of the Shepherd.

Jesus protects you in the sheepfold. That sheepfold is His church. Inside that you are protected. Yet people go astray and leave that. You're disconnected from the protection of the Shepherd who guards the sheep, the sheepfold, (that is, the place where Christ holds His sheep), and the herd itself. Those are all the things you're disconnected from.

"He who enters by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep." John 10. "To Him the gatekeeper opens, the sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. When He has brought out all of His own, He goes before them and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice. I am the Good Shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me, just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father. I lay down My life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, that they may listen to My voice, so that there is one flock and one Shepherd."

One flock and one Shepherd. And yet today what we see is the multiplication of flocks, not the unification of flocks.

I picked up this book. I'm always picking up books at yard sales. It's called "The Handbook of Denominations." It was printed in 1985. I think they even reprinted it into the 1990s. I can't find a more recent copy.

Jesus says in John 17, *"that they may all be one, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me."* Jesus wants all of His followers to be one *"so that the world will believe that You have sent Me."* The Father has sent Him. He goes on to say, *"that they*

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may be perfectly one, so that the world may know that You have sent Me and love them as I loved you."

Ephesians 4. *"Be eager to maintain the unity—one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism."* Yet today, in the United States, there are probably about six to seven thousand different denominations, plus countless thousands of independent churches.

Participant: Yes.

Ted: The Church of God. You've heard of the Church of God? At that time—1985—as separate denominations from the Church of God, there was The Church of God, Huntsville, Ala., The Church of God the Original, The Church of God Anderson, Ind.,-- that's Anderson College and the Gaithers—Church of God, Cleveland, Tn., Church of God Seventh Day, Church of God and Saints of Christ, Church of God by Faith, Church of God in Christ, Church of God in Christ International, Church of God of Prophecy. All of these are separate groups that sprung and then separated from this original Church of God, which in turn separated.

Now you would think that the Methodist Church, which tends to be hierarchical, with bishops and superintendents—you would think that they would all be one. Well, outside of the United Methodist Church, there's the African Methodist/Episcopal Church. There's the African Methodist/Episcopal Church Zion. There's the African Union First Colored Methodist Protestant Church Inc. There is the Christian Methodist/Episcopal Church. There is the Congregational Methodist Church. There is the Evangelical Methodist Church, The First Congregational Methodist Church of the U.S.A., The First Methodist Church of North America, The New Congregational Methodist Church, The Picas Methodist Church, The Primitive Methodist Church, The Reformed Methodist Church Union Episcopal, The Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church, The Southern Methodist Church, and the Union American Methodist/Episcopal Church. Those are all in 1985. I'm sure there are many more today.

You know, I think that the whole idea of the unit of the body of Christ, the oneness of the body, is the evangelical church's blind spot. In the fourth century the church had a blind spot. And that blind spot was who is Jesus? There were lots of church leaders in the fourth century who said, "Yes, Jesus is the Son of God, but that makes Him less than God. He's kind of God's right hand helper."

And at that time, all the leadership of the church got together at a place called Nicea, and they said, "No! This is incorrect. We were wrong in thinking that Jesus could be God's subordinate in terms of who He is, and God's equal, the Son and the Father being One." That was a clarification. That was a blind spot in the first century.

During the 1500s, the church had a blind spot in terms of what it meant to be made right with God. Are you made right with Him by your works and efforts, or are you made right with Him by grace through faith? And they cleared up that blind spot.

In 1900 the church had a blind spot about the work of the Holy Spirit. You never heard people talk about the Holy Spirit. They began to talk about the Holy Spirit and His work.

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Today it seems to me that the blind spot in our evangelical church is that we don't think about the unity of the body of Christ. And yet it's written right through Scripture, beginning with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

I'm just posing this as a problem. We have no problem kind of going out and setting up our own independent churches willy-nilly, with no thought as to how this contributes to making us one, as Jesus indeed said that we were to be one.

So I think that kind of leads to the statement there that Christians find themselves vulnerable when they are weak, young and separated. That happens with individuals and that happens with bodies of Christians as well.

I've run out of time at this point. I mean, we could go through each one of these. Any reaction? Any response to any of that? Yes, Bill?

Bill: Going through the list of the denominations in this country, do you think that's probably the fault of being Americans?

Ted: Okay. Bill asked, "Do you think that the number of denominations is partly the fault of being Americans?" I think it very much is. Do you know what the largest Protestant group in this country that makes up one-third of all the Protestants in this country is?

Participant: Southern Baptist?

Ted: The Baptists generally, the Baptists. And the Baptists have always emphasized independence and Congregationalism. The congregation is kind of doing its thing and that's where it happens. I would say that's true, but in a sense not in any way significantly connected. I think the Baptists are eluding at this point. I'm sorry. *(Laughter.)*

But I think that's America. I think it's a product of us Americans. We think as individuals. We think the greatest glory is to go off and do your own thing. What did Daniel Boone say? He said, "I knew it was time to move my cabin when I found that someone else was living ten miles of me." *(Laughter.)* Anything else?

Participant: Ted, I just have one thought about part 3 in 3.2, when it talks about Satan attacking the church corporately by denominational divisions, arguing over the truth.

Ted: Yeah.

Participant: But isn't that what split the Anglican Church? Isn't that what split the Presbyterian church?

Second Participant: Right!

Ted: Exactly. And there always will be splits. I would just advise that we do it very cautiously, that we take great time to do it right. And that's exactly what happened with the Episcopalians and the Anglicans. The first problem came with Bishop Pike, who denied the essentials of the faith. He denied the Trinity. He denied the resurrection of the dead. And it took forty or fifty years of arguing, debating, talking about it, bringing back the councils again and again. And they finally said, "Okay. There is no way out of this. We've been working at it for fifty years."

But that's different from somebody saying, "You know, they don't have enough Holy Ghost in this church. We need to start a new church with more Holy Ghost in it. So what we're going to do is we're going to start a new church. And we've got about forty or fifty

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people who are unhappy with the current church because there is not enough Holy Ghost, and we're going to start a new Holy Ghost church." And that's what they do.

Now wait! I mean, Do they think *"that they all may be one?"* Do they think about that? Or is that not even on the agenda? And I'm afraid that's the problem. Kerry, very quickly, and then we've got to go.

Kerry: Ted, I struggle with the merge point. There's a merge point out there. And we've got to merge. And in 5.6, and I'm going to read the end of it, it says, *"Without faith you will not be obedient."* And we all have this merge point. And we can make all the new churches, or go to all the different Bible studies we want.

Ted: Yes.

Kerry: And there is a merge point in everybody's life. If we think it's going to come together, it's not.

Ted: That's what we pray for.

Kerry: I learned this and I learned that in this denomination here. In the end, it all comes down to merging.

Ted: I mean, Bruce teaches very adequately on this, about the need for obedience and submitting to each other. I mean, that's a key factor. And when we begin to split apart, we begin to say, "I'm not going to submit to that other brother. I'm going to trust God, but I'm not going to submit to that other brother," for whatever reason. They have a lot of good reasons. We always have a lot of good reasons for everything we do.

Let's close in prayer. Once again, Lord, we are thankful beyond words for the great work being done by Bruce among us. Let us never take what he shares, what he's learned, his admonitions and encouragements, all from the word of God—let us never take them lightly, or be cavalier or dismissive. But give us obedient hearts so that we may submit to each other, and bring about the oneness that You said is always in Christ. And we pray this in Your name. Amen.

Men: Amen. *(Applause.)*