

"WE PREACH CHRIST!"

I Corinthians 1:20-31

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Dr. Paul L. Walker

Reading of scripture and prayer.

Chuck Colson is probably a household word and name to most of us who follow anything to do with current events. In a recent periodical called "The Inpromis" which is a periodical of a college in our country, he made the statement -

That for the past thirty years we have been secularizing America. We have been trying desperately to build the city of man without the city of God. And because that we have failed to continue to build the city of God and we have tried as a society to build the city of man we are now in the post-Christian era.

From his standpoint we are now passed Christianity as the prime power in the United States of America. And we find ourselves in what is often referred to as a pagan nation.

The interesting thing for us this evening is that Satan uses many different faces. He uses many different dresses. And he uses many different ways to deceive us and to cause us to lose the very essence and the power of the gospel.

What we have to understand is that for everything that God has, Satan has a counterfeit. For everything that God does Satan imitates. For everything that God is, Satan tries to be. What he is definitely trying to get us to do is to turn away from the centrality of Jesus Christ as Lord of everything.

That being the case, when we talk about the Church from the standpoint of Matthew 16:18, when Jesus Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," we understand that we are fighting literally against the gates of hell.

What Satan often uses in our time is intellectualism. He uses philosophy even various types of theology, various types of psychology -- all of the various disciplines of man to get us to lose the fact that at the very bottom of the well and at the very foundation of everything that man knows should be Jesus Christ. But, when we lose the sight of Jesus Christ as the central power of all that there is then we come to the city of man without the cit of God.

That offers for us some significant challenges for the church in the Twentieth Century moving into the Twenty-first Century world.

Each one of us tonight is being influenced in a special way by certain things that are happening in our society. First of all,

there is being preached today more than ever before the doctrine of universalism. The fact that all roads lead to God.

In most liberal denominational settings where liberal theology is the order of the day, universalism is the guise that is being preached.

It was interesting - I ran across an article that I think is important for us to read. It says -

Christianity still claims nearly nine/tenths of the populous according to a city university of New York surveyed 113,000 Americans. But talk of a Christian nation from the likes of Pat Buchanan, a Mississippi governor, Kurt Fordice, is interestingly misplaced.

Most accurately the country's traditional consensus faith is Biblical Monotheism which comfortably includes Judaism. Now, however, (and note this carefully) there is a major new flair - Islam. The third great mono-theistic faith is expanding through both immigration and the conversion of African/Americans and is bidding to supplant Judaism as America's second largest faith.

In 1978 the inter-faith conference of Metropolitan Washington became the first major inter-faith organization to include Muslims alongside the Catholics, Protestants and Jews. It has since admitted Mormons and Sheiks. Hindus will probably be next. Other prospects -- Buddhists and Bahai's. Mapping such widening diversity is a goal at Harvard University's pluralism project run by religion professor, Diana Ek.

Students have located (note this carefully) among other things seven Buddhist temples in Salt Lake City (if you can believe that), two Sheik guardvarms in Phoenix, Arizona, a Taeiwist temple in Denver, a Jaei Center in Blairstown, New Jersey, and five Oklahoma City Mosques.

The project estimates that nation-wide there are 1,139 houses of worship for Muslims. One thousand five hundred and fifteen for Buddhists and 412 for Hindus.

Now you say - does that really impact us? Well, note this.

There is a new era, the U.S.A. Today says for girl scouts.

The official girl scout promise will no longer include a reference to the God of the Bible. Instead members will pledge their services to Allah, Buddha, God or any other spiritual power or skip a religious reference all together.

The change came in October at the Girl Scout National Convention in Minneapolis.

At another conference in San Diego, California...

Now, note where our society has gone - we are talking about young people twelve probably to fifteen and maybe younger.

the emphasis of meetings was on (now we are talking about Girl Scouts) dealing with depression, molestation, AIDS, date rape, incest, gangs and suicides.

Are you getting the point?

Do you understand what is happening in our world very subtly? The challenge that is coming our way through universalism that takes away the exclusivism of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Second of all we are challenged with what we often refer to as paganism. Paganism was a word that was originally used for any person who was not a Christian. It then began to be utilized in a broader way - any person who was not a Christian or who was not a Jewish person or who was not a member of Islam. Now it has begun to mean any person who is not a member of any of the five major religions which add Hinduism and Buddhism.

But in reality paganism refers to the revival of the mythology of the Greeks and the mythology of the Romans and there is in our country right now a revival of worship of idolatry, of Greek Mythology and of Roman Mythology. And right now there is a move on to make those become acceptable forms of religion negating everything that we know about the Judeo-Christian principles and about the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the God of the New Testament and the God of Jesus Christ.

The third great challenge that comes before us after universalism and paganism is secularism.

Secularism is the thing that has invaded our society and leaves us with the kind of difficulties we now have.

It is the reason that we violent crime has increased over 500 percent. It is the reason why divorce is up 400%. It is the reason illegitimate births are up 400%. It is the reason that

teenage suicide is up 200% over the last thirty years. It is the reason that child-abuse is up 360%.

Because secularism says - God is the power of the spirit of our own human being because man is the measure of all things. Therefore, God is the power within us.

Secularism says that faith is the result of human experience. Secularism says to us that heaven is a myth and hell is an old wives tale and there is no life after death. Secularism says that Jesus Christ was nothing more than a prophet who made an impact on society. Secularism says there is no such thing as the divine or the supernatural. If you can't put it in a test tube and test it, if you can't see it and touch it and hear it and feel it and smell it has not reality.

But in the midst of all that the President of the United States would say - "We are in a spiritual crisis and there is a crisis of the spirit in America." And why is there a crisis of the spirit in America? Because we have forgotten there is only one great Spirit and that is the Spirit of the living God who is the creator of the universe, who has made Himself known in Christ and in Jesus Christ we have to learn to live and to move and to have our being. Amen, amen and amen. Hallelujah be to God.

So we are challenged tonight by universalism. We are challenged by paganism. We are challenged by secularism.

But we are challenged tonight by a fourth thing. We are challenged tonight by narcissism or selfishness.

Now I have been in the ministry with you here for thirty-three years. I have been in the ministry now for forty-two or forty-three years now having started in reality in an official ministry in about 1950. During that period of time I have watched as mankind and his personalty and his human nature has changed so drastically. Anybody who doesn't believe in original sin does not ever look at the television set. Anybody who thinks that man is basically good never reads a newspaper.

The truth of the matter -- man is born in sin. And until he is redeemed he is not worth very much. And we see what is happening now.

The great need today is to bring man into the understanding of what Jesus Christ can do in his life.

We live in what is often referred to as a narcissistic age. The grandiose ideas of our own importance. The over-exaggeration of our own abilities, accomplishments and achievements. An over-emphasis on such things as brilliance and status and power and materialism and money. The idea that we push ourselves at the expense of other people. The lack of empathy. The idea that we have a manic-depressive - sometimes real high, sometimes real low. That's exactly the way people in society go today.

The statisticians tell us that one out of every four people in America suffer from some sort of clinical depression. The statisticians tell us that one out of every ten people in America suffer from a clinically diagnosed phobia. One out of twenty people in America suffer from Acrophobia which is the fear of the marketplace, having an anxiety attack around crowds because of the over-stimulation of our day.

The fifth thing that we face tonight is what is often referred to as Satanism. Satan is alive and well right here in the United States in case you did not know it. He is alive and well on the planet earth. There is a Satanic church right there in town and has the name of Paul Walker and the Mount Paran Church at the top of the list praying that the devil would come in and break us apart and praying that our families would break apart and praying that we would lose the fervor and the enthusiasm of knowing Jesus Christ.

In the midst of that Paul the Apostle says there is only one answer to this problem -- we have got to preach Christ crucified. We have got to preach Christ resurrected. We have got to preach Christ at the right hand of the Father. We have got to preach Christ coming to earth again. Amen, amen and amen. To set up an eternal kingdom. Praise God forever more. Well, let the people of the Lord praise the Lord.

We have got to preach John 14 and 6 - for Christ said

I am the way, the truth and the life. No man
comes to the Father but by me.

We have got to preach Hebrews 13 and 8 -

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and
forever.

We have got to preach John 1 and 1 -

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was
with God and the Word was God. The same was
in the beginning with God. All things were
made by Him and without Him there was nothing
made that was made. And in Him was life and
the that life was the light of man.

We've got to preach that

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And
we beheld His glory and the glory of the only
begotten of the Father full of grace and full
of truth.

We've got to preach that Jesus Christ is coming back to earth
again and the question is, will He find faith when He comes back to
earth? And the answer is there will be a multitude that no man can
number that will transcend everything in this world because our God
is still on the throne. Amen, amen and amen.

Then the question becomes, how do we really preach and how do we really preach it?

It is interesting that Paul would write this to the Corinthian Church - he would say to them - what you've got to learn. You've got to learn what the cross really is. You've got to learn that the centrality of your faith is Jesus.

Now the Corinthian Church was made up of all kinds of people. Corinth at that particular time was a blowing, going town. It was the center of the crossroads. It was the great center of all the cultures converging. And so in the Corinthian Church you have all types of people. There was a great influx of Gentiles; a great influx of pagans. There was a great influx of Jews and all of them to come together around Christ.

But all of them brought with them their own philosophies and they brought with them their own theologies. They got into big trouble.

A lot of error with things like marriage, things like Christian liberty and things like communion and things like morality and things like the spiritual gifts. And when you read through the First and Second letters to the Church at Corinth you understand that these were people having a hard time really focusing in on what following Jesus Christ really meant.

It is interesting that every error that we find in the New Testament and all of the things that the New Testament talks about - everything from Jezebelism to Judaism to Anthonomianism to Nostiscism to legalism to all of those things -- we find the counterpart in the Church today just like they found it then.

Human nature has not changed much through the years. However, through the centuries we have known that we have become more sophisticated in our ability to understand the Word. But just understanding the Word doesn't really amount to much. You've got to come to that place where the understanding takes hold in your everyday life so you live out this Word in word and deed every day of your natural life.

How many of you believe that?

Well - praise Him in this place.

JOKE

One of our elders told me a story this morning that I think fits in real well here -- about the three men who came from Eastern Europe and immigrated to the United States and they had very difficult names to pronounce and to write. So the immigration officer just gave them arbitrary names. He called one "Gold." He called one "Silver" and he called one "Taylor."

Well the three men scattered out in the United States and didn't see each other for about twenty-five years.

One day they had a reunion in New York City and Gold and Silver and Taylor met. They inquired of how they were doing.

Gold said - well, I've done real well. I've gotten into the gold market and I've been wise and I've made a lot of money.

Silver said - well, you know I've done real well. I've gotten into the silver market and I've been very wise and I've made a lot of money.

Taylor said, well I got in the tailoring business but I didn't do well. Said - I went bankrupt and then I started the second time and I went bankrupt and because I was in such destitute position I didn't have any money - I didn't have any friends and I didn't have anywhere to turn I turned to God. Said, when I turned to God things began to turn around.

They said - is that right? Does God really help you?

He said, sure. You've heard of Lord and Taylor haven't you? You've heard of Lord and Taylor?

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Ya'll are just about to wake up. You're just about to that point. Now I know it has been a great, gloomy day. And I know you have had the sags all day long. And you've just been moping around in this whole foggy day, but now is the time to mope; it is celebration time because Jesus Christ is Lord. Amen, amen and amen....

Well, you know that is the problem with most people. They don't really understand the Lord and Taylor. It is a terrible story but I just had to tell it. You understand.

So Paul was trying to get these Corinthians exactly where I am trying to get us. To understand the centrality of what is going on so they do not get side-tracked with all of these philosophies.

So Paul said - now look you Corinthians. I want you to understand about these divisions in your church. Here is where the centrality has to come.

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.

If people are not believers they don't get excited about the cross. Have you noticed that?

But to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written - (and he quotes Isaiah 29 and 24) 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise. The intelligent I will frustrate.

That's why the media has such a hard time with Christianity - never have gotten it yet. They never have figured it out. I listen to them and they try to give some idea about what

Christianity is all about - the gospel is all about and they use theological terms and they are out to lunch. They don't understand what God is doing.

The greatest thing that they can ever report about is right under their nose and they do not get it. God is doing a great thing across this world and He is raising up a Church and He is raising up a Church without spot and He is raising up a Church without wrinkle and you will never hear about it in the media but you are going to hear about it through the power of the Spirit that will let you know that we are part of the great army of God.

Well where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age?

Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For sense in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know Him.

You can't come to God through worldly wisdom. You can go to all the schools you want to. You can go to all the seminaries you want to. Now this will blow your mind. I even took New Testament one time from a man teaching in the seminary teaching New Testament who was an avowed agnostic and thought he probably was an Atheist and yet he is teaching the New Testament. Can you believe that? Hello.

And God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save however those who believed.

Because when you get saved you believe what this Word comes. And it is contradictory to everything you read about or hear about in the world. Therefore, it sounds like foolishness.

Now the Jews said we would believe that but we want to have miraculous signs. The Greeks said - we want to have wisdom but Paul says - we have to understand that miraculous signs and wisdom and any other philosophy has nothing to say unless Jesus Christ is preached as crucified, as the power of God and as the wisdom of God because when He is preached things happen -- signs and wonders tickle our ears but that does not make things happen.

Intellectualism does not make things happen. The only thing that makes things happen is when we encounter a crucified Christ who died for our sins and accept Him as Lord and to accept Him as Lord then the power of God moves and we become new creations in Him. Amen, amen and amen.

What are you doing Pastor Walker? I'm making a case for old fashion, new born experience of God when you get saved -- it straightens you up and makes you fly right. Hallelujah - that's what I'm talking about.

It will make you be condemned by the way you've been living and it will make you want to change because you don't want to walk in darkness because you have seen a great light. Amen, amen and amen. Does anybody know what I'm talking about?

So we preach Christ crucified. Why is that important? We preach Christ crucified because that is the only way we can have our sins forgiven. That's the very heart of man. There is a need in every person who has created in this world. That's why I don't care where you go, what society and how primitive it may be, the Anthropologists who have studied civilizations who are just discovering have always found in every civilization there is some kind of a religion. Why? Why? Why? Why is that the case? It is the case because within every man there is the need - One - to be redeemed and Two - to be reconciled and Three - to have an ongoing relationship with God. That's why people turn to so many different cults and to many different isms and cisms and turn to so many different ideologies because they are wanting to fill that need. But it never gets completely filled. There is only one way that can happen.

There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from
Immanuel's veins. And sinners plunge beneath that flood
loose all their guilty stains.
Hallelujah be to God.

We preach Christ and Him crucified.

Amen, amen and amen.

But that's what Romans 5 and 9 says -

Therefore, being justified through His blood
we are saved from wrath through Him. We are
justified through His crucifixion.

That's what Hebrews 13 and 12 says -

Christ suffered for us outside of the city
walls, outside of the city gate that we might
be sanctified through His blood.

We are justified and sanctified.

First Peter 1 and 18 says that we are

redeemed not with fleshly things, not with
perishable things such as silver and gold but
with the precious blood of Jesus Christ who is
a lamb without spot and without wrinkle.

That's what we hear in Ephesians 2 and 13 that

All of us who are afar off have been made
neigh; we have been reconciled by the blood of
Jesus Christ.

That's what Colossians 1 and 20 tells us -

Having made peace through the blood of His
cross and having made peace through the blood

of His cross - so that we know that Christ is crucified.

And through that crucifixion we are justified. We are sanctified. We are redeemed. We are reconciled. We have peace. And you never have true peace until you fulfill that need in your very heart. That's why one of the highest suicide rates is among the jet sets and the Hollywood setters that try to get their thrills out of pills; they try to get their thrills out of bottles and they try to get their thrills out of weeds; they try to get their thrills out of illicit affairs; they try to get their thrills out of big houses and big cars and big parties. But they always wind up losing because there is only one place where you can have genuine peace and that is at the cross of Jesus Christ.

Well Paul goes on and we preach Christ crucified.

Now He is a stumbling block to the Jews. And He is foolishness to the Gentiles. But to those whom God has called, those whom God has called, those who have received the convicting presence of the Holy Spirit and claim Jesus Christ as Lord -- both Jews and Greeks - those who have been become Christians, those who have become disciples, God calls everyone, but the called ones are those who accept the call. Did you get that? God calls everybody in the world. He convicts every person at some time in their lives. This is Walker Theology - right here. This is

"Walkerology." You don't have to buy this. You don't have to believe it. You don't like it, it is like buying clothes -- if it doesn't fit, hang it back on the rack; walk out of the store.

Here is what I believe -- I believe that God confronts every person in the world with Himself as redeemer in that person's category. If that person worships a tree - He has never heard anything but a tree, then God presents Himself to that person in that tree worship and that person comes to know and has the opportunity to accept Him as redeemer.

We are held accountable for the life that we have. The more life we have the more accountability we have. That's why so much of the world stands accountable before God. There is no excuse. Amen, amen and amen.

That's pretty good preaching.

But to those whom God has called - those Jews and Greeks - Christ is the power of God. We preach Christ is the power of God and this word "power" is a tremendous word. The word dunamous in the New Testament. That's the word from which we get dynamite. We preach the dynamite of God.

The power of God can only do some things that need to be done. The power of God - this word dunamous refers to the inherent nature of God. His nature is power. It refers to the works of God, His miracles and great works. It refers to the morality of God - His

righteousness and holiness which are power. It refers to the providential care - He lifts up kings; He puts down kings; He is in charge.

You say - well, I wish He would do things a little bit differently. But you have to understand He is not building His kingdom here. Hello.

He is not trying to build a kingdom here. This is not His kingdom. Satan is the Prince of the Power of the Air. Satan is referred to in the Bible as the King of the earth.

What God is doing is working beyond and past Satan for a kingdom that is where? Luke 17:21 - "The kingdom is within you."

Now He wants to give you power so that you can get the most out of this life that you can get. He wants you to get as much joy in this life as you can get. But this life is never going to be heaven. I hate to disillusion you that way.

Tape Is Turned Over

... there will never be justice; there will never be peace; there will never be true love. We are going to have to fight it until the day that God looks over to Jesus Christ and says - It is enough; It is time for you to go. It has all been finished.

And Christ is going to come down to the horizon and He is going to set up His kingdom in Jerusalem and we are going to rule

and reign with Him forever because we will have a new body; we will have a new life.

The power of God. We preach the power of God.

And you know what the miracles are. They are signs of that world to come.

Now here is something else that will be hard for you to fathom. The miracle is not the rule; it is the exception to the rule.

Are you still there?

If the miracle were the rule, then we would already be in heaven. Hello. The miracle is the exception to the rule. The miracle gives us insight to the power of God. And God says - I'm giving you insight here and there. I'm performing miracles in a way that is bringing out about my great plan. I want you to push the buttons; I want you to trust me; I want you to believe me and I'm going to give you miracles but the miracles belong to God; they don't belong to us.

If we understood a miracle then it would no longer be a miracle. If somebody says - you know, I understand miracles then it is no longer a miracle.

Are you all still here?

A miracle is God working in a way that we don't understand.

Now - as long as we are in this human body, we are going to have some problems because it wears out. Have you noticed that? If you haven't look in the mirror and then check your high school pictures.

I went back to my Fortieth High School Reunion. They made me a member of their Hall of Fame. I went back and saw some of my classmates and I saw - I hate to say this - some girls that I dated in high school. I said, "Thank you God for Carmelita." I mean some of those women had lived hard in the last forty years - I mean hard. They had lived hard.

I don't know what that has to do with anything, but...

The power of God comes in miracles and the power comes in maintenance. Now - we opt for the miracle but if we don't get the miracle then we live in the maintenance.

Are you all still here?

So then we say with Job -

Though God slay me yet shall I trust Him.
Though the skinworms eat my body yet in my
flesh I shall see God. I know my Redeemer
liveth and at the last day He will stand on
the earth. I, myself, will see Him with my
own eyes. I and not another. My heart yearns
for me to see God.

...is what Job really said sitting in the middle of the ash pile and Job had maintenance power.

Now listen to me very closely.

The power of God manifests itself just as greatly in the maintenance of saints who live under adversity and pain and keep the shining armor of faith because that is the kind of faith that convinces people and makes them know that our God is a real God. Amen, amen and amen.

Now the maintenance is the meat. The miracle is the desert. It is the frosting. And when we get a miracle we rejoice. But a miracle is designed to make the person who is the recipient of the miracle to stand and having done all stand.

The miracle is not just to put somebody on t.v. or to write a book or to put out a pamphlet. A miracle is to glorify a God who said - I've got power in heaven and earth and when you get a glorified body you are going to live constantly in the miracle.

Is this alright?

We preach Christ crucified. We preach Him as the power of God.

But we preach Christ, Paul said, as the wisdom of God. Now - wisdom is an important word in our society. And if you were to ask me today - what do Christians need today more than anything else in

the world? I would say, wisdom. Wisdom to discriminate between right and wrong. So much grey today. Hello.

Wisdom to discriminate between truth and error. Wisdom to discriminate between the spirit and form. The Spirit and the flesh. Between carnality and spirituality. The wisdom to make all of those necessary decisions that we are called on everyday.

Parents today more than anything else to rear children in this society when the rearing has been taken away from us and given to the government -- did you hear me? We are not rearing our children today. You got to fight to rear your children today. Did you hear me? You've got to fight to rear your children today. Because there are so many impinging forces that it is going to be hard for you to counteract them. And the truth of the matter is - we can't counteract them. The only way they can be counteracted is when Jesus Christ becomes the head of our homes. Amen, amen and amen.

That's the wisdom of God.

The wisdom of God comes from the word sophia. That word means "to have insight." It means "to have spiritual discernment" of the circumstances and the way the devil works. When you have wisdom you have insight into what the devil is doing so that you meet him at the pass instead of him meeting you at the pass.

Hello. Are you all still there?

So when you have wisdom you are a step ahead of the devil. Amen. there are so many people that are two steps behind the devil. He is always there waiting on them. But it is time that we, as Christians, rose up and we said with the Word of God -

Give no place for the devil. Get thee behind me Satan. You are a defeated foe. You are nothing but a deceiver. You don't have any power and I have all power in heaven and earth through the Christ that is in me.

Amen, amen and amen. Well praise God in this. Well praise Him. The wisdom of God.

It means to give us the ability to act appropriately at the appropriate time in the appropriate way.

Now when you really look at what Paul has to say about this -
- If you really look at it very carefully, you go on down. He says -

For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. Brothers, think of what you were when you were called - (what you were before you become a Christian) - not many of you were wise by human standards. Not many of

you were influential. Not many of you were noble birth.

In other words, before you got saved you weren't any great shakes.

Hello. That's the Walker version of this. But God chose people like you and me -

the foolish things of the world - to shame the wise. He chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of the world and the despised things and the things that are not to nullify the things that are.

That's what the Church keeps doing. It just keeps putting a monkey wrench in all the works.

Hello.

It is because of Him so that no one may boast before Him because He has to get the glory.

It is because of Him that you reign Christ Jesus who has become for us (now - note this) wisdom from God.

That is -- what is the wisdom of God? Our righteousness. Our holiness and our redemption and the wisdom of God through

righteousness, holiness and redemption gives to us the ability to discern in the world how that we are to live.

And what we need more than anything else today is the spiritual radar so that when you get up every morning and you go to do whatever you do most everyday that radar is a standard before you that test the reality and says -

This is the way; walk in it.

Because when you walk in my way, I am with you every step of the way, God says. Amen, amen and amen.

So what do we preach? We preach Christ crucified. We preach Christ as the power of God. We preach Christ as the wisdom of God.

Now it is amazing to see the wisdom of God work. This building and this whole property is the wisdom of God.

We were getting ready to build the sanctuary at Central as perhaps many of you will remember.

We went down to try and get the permit and because we couldn't go through all the hoops -- I knew when we went down there even though we had 300 or 400 strong that we just blew the place out - that we were in the wrong place at the wrong time and it wasn't the wisdom of God. Because we could have never done the kinds of things the Lord has allowed us and helped us to do here.

As we sat there this property then was tied up in all kinds of problems. With the IRS, with the CIA, with the city, with the

county, with the State and there were at least eight different liens against it because there had been a lot of difficulties.

I thought there is no way that this property would ever get clear so that anybody could buy it.

In a matter of just days - as we were sitting there downtown in the City Hall in the courthouse building or wherever you go - it was brought to my attention by the man we had out of our congregation working on this to see if it would ever come available -- walked up and said, "You know it is a miracle. Just heard today that that property is unencumbered and it is ready for sale." And, we are sitting down there trying to get zoning and trying to get the necessary permit to build a sanctuary at Central.

That wasn't God's wisdom. That wasn't God's timing and he checked us and He brought us out here where our school could triple in size. Where we would have room to expand and God gives us the opportunity here now.

Central -- the times have changed and it won't be too long before Central is probably going to build that sanctuary. Did you hear me?

God's timing and God's wisdom. God's timing and God's wisdom.

Mark is here tonight. God's wisdom. Mark was in business. Mark was doing well in business. He had been reared in a

preacher's home. He always said like all preachers kids do and I said - I'll never preach the gospel.

When I grew up I said - "Lord, there is one thing - don't ever call me to preach. I'll never preach."

Never say never. That's not in the Bible. It's not James Bond 101.

The Holy Spirit began to deal with Mark and Mark said - Dad, I feel like the Lord is calling me in the ministry. I have a promotion that they are going to give me at work and it is going to be a good promotion, but that means I've got to stay with that business probably a long time.

But I feel called to preach and I feel like the Lord has raised me up to help you to do what needs to be done at North. So we gave him that opportunity to help us build this.

Then the wisdom of God told him it was time to leave and go somewhere else. And the wisdom of God brought him back.

Well, you say - will that happen in my life? Yes it will happen in your life.

Because we preach the wisdom of God. That's what Christ is - the wisdom of God. Well, how do I know the wisdom of God?

You start first of all with the Word. If it is not in the Word then - if it violates the Word then it is not the wisdom of God.

Secondly, it is what the leading you feel in your heart because you can trust your heart if you have done your homework.

First the Word - second the facts, third - the feeling in your heart. Feeling in your heart.

Fourth - the corroboration of trusted believers. I said - trusted believers not so-called self-styled prophets. Hello. Trusted believers. Trusted believers. And then fifth - common sense. God has omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence and common sense. One of His great attributes. It is not common sense that God is calling you to be a music minister if you can't carry a tune and you are a monotone. It is not common sense if God is going to call you to preach the gospel if every time you make a public speech you throw up.

God is not wanting to embarrass you. God is not wanting you to do something stupid and something that you are not qualified for. Some people think that God's will is only when I am hurting. I must be in God's will - I have so much pain.

God's will is that you use your gifts, your abilities and your talents to the very best thing you are suited for and if you can be the President of the Company bless God, be the President of the Company.

Now if you can't be the President of the Company and all you can be is the number one floor sweeper in the company, be the

number one floor sweeper in the company. God knows you are needed worse than the President of the Company is needed. Hello. Hello. Hello.

When we have total staff meetings I constantly tell our Operational people - you got a tough job but you are doing it for the glory of God. Every time you move a hymn book and every time you put in bulletins, every time you clean upon the building, every time you make a repair, every time you make over the 200 set ups that we have every week at Central and North not counting East and West - you are doing it for the glory of God.

I believe that. I believe every time I get in my car and come out here to preach or to be involved I'm doing it for the glory of God. Every phone call I get in the middle of the night I'm doing it for the glory of God.

See - if you don't see that then you are not going to have any fun with what you are doing.

I'm trying to quit, honest.

I said to myself before I started - I will be short tonight. I ought never to say that to myself. I ought to say I will preach long and then I preach short.

But see that is the wisdom of God.

You see - God knows what you are struggling with tonight because He has numbered the very hairs of your head. He knows the

problems that you have. He knows the difficulties that you are going through and he wants to help you with those difficulties but you have to give him something to work with. He is not going to take a sledge hammer and hit you right between the eyes.

The Holy Spirit is gentle. The Holy Spirit is wooing. The Holy Spirit is calling, you see. You've got to give him some raw material to work with. You've got to say - here Lord, here is what I've got. It's kind of messed up; but you take it. Because little is much when God is in it. Got a few loaves and a few fishes here -- and the Lord says - Okay - I'll take it. And I'll feed a multitude with it.

He wants to do that in your life whatever your need may be, whatever you are struggling with.

We are going to pray in just a minute and I'm going to call the elders down and we are going to anoint you with oil and I want to pray with you and your struggles.

I want to preach Christ to you so that you leave here knowing that He is crucified, He is power, He is wisdom. So that when you walk out of here the wisdom of God will be yours and you can make the kind of decisions you need to make so that your life is filled with some joy and some peace and some happiness and some power. There is nothing worse than a depressed Pentecostal. That's the worse thing that can ever happen in anybody's life. Now a

depressed Baptist you can handle, but a depressed Pentecostal -- that is tough.

Claim so much; practice so little. Because you try to make earthly life eternal life and it isn't going to work. Just about the time you get it all together you are going to die. And that's when the fun starts. Hello. Hello. Hello. You all do know where you are going don't you. You do know where you are going don't you. Are you planning on going there? I think some of you figure you are going to "miss the boat." You better have your asbestos suit ready.

As our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed -

End of Service