

Sunday 10/27/2024

Psalms 14:1 - Questions Fools Will Ask #20 - #21

I. Review

Last week we looked at another question that a fool will ask you about God or the Bible. Let me take a moment to explain where we're at with this for anyone just joining us. We've been coming through the book of Psalms, and we got to Psalm 14:1 which says, *the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God*. Now, we are a church that is filled with men and women who help me in the ministry, and we work with people. I want my people to understand that fools can be saved fools or unsaved fools. **Fools are simply people who don't have any understanding.** It doesn't mean that they're bad people; it just means they've been fooled. It's just that simple. They've picked up some bad information somewhere along the way. On our Saturday sessions, **I'm taking the patterns of human nature found in the word of God and systematically walking my people through problems that people get into, thereby helping them get a better understanding of how to help people because the ministry is people. I want you to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.**

➤ Drinking & the Supposed Justification of it Among God's People

Our question last week was based on the passage in John 2 where Jesus turned the water into wine. Many Christians think today, because of passages like that, that it's okay to consume alcoholic beverages. A fellow from our church told me about a conversation he had with a friend of his who is a Christian and is convinced it's okay to drink alcohol. He laid it all out for his friend Biblically but concluded that no matter what he would have said to him, he wanted to believe what he wanted to believe. **That will define the mindset of the Laodicean church and Laodicean Christianity. The idea today is, "Don't confuse me with a lot of facts!" or "Don't confuse me with the truth!"**

I gave you undeniable truths that you simply cannot ignore. The definitive chapter is Deuteronomy 32. If you want to study it all out, this is where it really begins. **I showed you the key word in Deuteronomy 32, with Israel as well as in Christianity today, and it's the word compromise. Israel got compromised, and in that chapter, he tells them that there are two rocks, two vines, and two wines.** I showed you very clearly what the difference is between the two. I took you to I Corinthians 10:21 which says, *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.* A great question to ask somebody who is adamant about it would be to have them define what the devil's cup is. Is it drinking anti-freeze? Yet it is obvious when you go to the Bible.

History itself is probably the greatest witness. You had men like Billy Sunday and J. Frank Norris that, in the early part of the 20th century up until the 1950s, preached revival after revival.

Billy Sunday literally brought in prohibition and preached on the sin of alcoholism and how it destroys people's lives. It was all based out of Deuteronomy 32.

II. A Question asked by Fools

My goal is for you to have the ability to understand these questions and to use your Bible to help people. Now, this is one you hear all the time.

Question 20: Can a person who commits suicide go to heaven?

I get this one more than any other, and if you deal with people long enough, it's going to come up for you, too. What I want to do today is give you the information to be able to understand it and to help people by laying out several reasons why they think that way. Many times, to understand a problem, you've got to get inside the "think tank" of the problem. You've got to get into somebody's mind and understand where they're coming from and why they say what they say and believe what they believe. Most people without any understanding, saved or lost, are going to take this position and think this way.

I want you to see first how this idea got started and why folks believe it today. It gives you the mindset behind this way of thinking. I want to show you from the Bible how this thing really lays out. This is probably the most important question so far because this is the one you're going to get into with people over and over again.

➤ The Roman Catholic Church and the History of How this Idea got Started

Those of you who know history are not under any false premise about the Roman Catholic Church. We know down through history they have displayed corruption in everything, and it's a very political organization. It's an incredible system which holds the world through the idea of religion. **When you look at the Roman Catholic Church, we can debate back and forth doctrines and all those things, but if you know anything about history, the greatest witness against the Catholic church will be history itself.** I have no axe to grind with Catholics or the Catholic church. You can go to the public library and get all the information you need, to see what you're dealing with, written by men who have no dog in the fight religiously. They just record the facts as you find them. **Fundamentally, this idea that a person who commits suicide could never go to heaven starts with them. I want you to see that, and I want to develop that for you so you can understand it.**

It goes back to what I said Thursday night (Bible Study on 10/24/2024), the impact of the Roman Catholic Church in a worldwide format is incredible. For 1,000 years during the Dark Ages, she ruled the world and put her tentacles into every political and religious system except for the Bible believing line. When she couldn't compromise the Bible believers, she tried to kill them. Just read *Fox's Book of Martyrs*. The impact that she has is incredible.

➤ All Roads Lead to Rome

In medieval history, and it's a term that we hear today, you hear the phrase *All roads lead to Rome*. Most people don't know what that means, but in medieval times the Roman Catholic Church ran the world (Europe at that point in time). The phrase *All roads lead to Rome* was based on the fact that the Roman Catholic Church had control of every country in Europe, and everything that was done by a king, queen, etc. all went back to Rome. So the phrase became a legitimate saying because it was actually true. Today, we can say the same thing spiritually. **Everything you see going on around us, including the idea that if somebody commits suicide they can't go to heaven, goes back to *All Roads lead to Rome*. It started with them.**

➤ The Catholic Church: Mortal Sins and A State of Grace

The Roman Catholic Church will tell you that suicide is a mortal sin. I told you a couple of weeks ago that the Catholic Church breaks their sins into two types—big and little ones. A mortal sin will send you to hell. This is why, at the time of death, they call for a priest to come into your hospital room or bedroom. **As you're lying there gasping your last breath, he will give you the last rites. When he performs it on you, based on the Catholic church's teaching, he has put you into a state of grace.** Now when you die, because you're in a state of grace, you will most likely go to heaven as they teach you. Broadened a little bit, this is the idea of the Catholic confession. I know some Catholics who will go to confession every day, others once a week, month, or once every 30 years. The bottom line is that you go to confession to get put in a state of grace, so if something happens and you die, then you'll go to heaven because you confessed to a man who absolved you of your sins.

You ought to be able to see where this issue is developed now. **With suicide, and this is where the idea starts, you have no absolution or forgiveness. You're dead. You never have an opportunity to get any kind of state of grace;** however, the Roman Catholic Church never misses a chance to make a buck because once they put that in play, somebody along the line came up with the teaching of Purgatory. This will be our next question.

III. Another Question Asked by Fools

Question 21: Is Purgatory Biblical or not even found in the Bible?

Of course, we know it is not found in the Bible. The idea of a place called Purgatory comes into the Catholic doctrine officially around the 10th or 11th century. Almost 1,100 years after Christ, it becomes a standardized teaching.

Purgatory will be like a stop at QuikTrip or 7-11 before you get to the steakhouse. It's a place where you have to kind of pay for your sins for a little while before you can go to heaven. **It's not like hell; it's like being in a hot office with the air conditioner broken. You're actually paying for your sins, stuck there until you can go to the next place.** Anyway, that's the idea.

The Catholic church comes up with a memorial mass for the dead to get them out of Purgatory. For a small fee, they'll have one of these masses for your loved one. **The priest will light a few**

candles and then has the ability to pray that person out of Purgatory into a state of grace. The priest gets to keep that money, although he is only allowed to have one of these masses per day. The idea in people's minds about the act of suicide starts right there. Then they created a scenario based on that teaching where they can make some money off people simply because of their loved ones. **None of this is connected to the Bible as you know. I'm trying to show you where this idea started which is so prevalent today, and then I'm going to show you why.**

➤ **Some Churches want to Make Money off the Problems in your Life**

There is not a lot of difference between the Catholic church today, and their making money from the death of your loved one, than most evangelical and some Baptist churches that want to make money off the problems you have in your life.

I had a lady call me last week, and she wanted to know if I did counseling. I explained to her that not only do I do counseling, but we have a whole counseling program here to help with whatever your problem is. I knew she went to a church, and I knew she had a pastor; nevertheless, I asked her why she was calling me. She gave me the standard answer. Her pastor doesn't do counseling and there is a counseling service in the church, but it charges \$50 per hour. This is so typical.

How do you as a Christian, a pastor, or a church, make money off people. The Bible says, *freely ye have received, freely give.* How do you charge somebody for helping to solve their problems of alcoholism, depression, marital and family problems. How do you look in the mirror every morning and charge people to help them with the Bible that God gave you freely, with the education in the Bible God gave you freely, that you're supposed to take and help people without making any money off it. There's not a lot of difference between that and the Catholic church making money off the death of your loved ones. This is the Christian world that we live in.

If you want to see a good example of the Catholic Church and their priorities, you ought to go over to Revelation 18:12-13 sometime. You're going to find the priority list of the Roman Catholic Church. There are 28 priorities listed there. You ought to see what the first one is as well as the last one. **The last priority on that list is the souls of men.**

➤ **The Unpardonable Sin**

In addition to that influence into our culture, you've got another little wrinkle which will be found in Matthew 12:31-32. It will be taught by charismatics and other groups. It is what is commonly called the unpardonable sin. **The sin that if you commit it, it's unpardonable. There is no way you can get forgiveness for it.** Even though you don't find the word unpardonable anywhere within 100 million light years of that verse, they take it and want to make it so that, for you as a Christian, there is something you can commit that God will never forgive you for. **Depending on who you listen to, everybody gets to make up whatever sin they want it to be; however, it will most generally be the act of suicide. They will say that because you can't ask forgiveness for it because you're dead that it's unpardonable.** That's the mindset.

➤ Understanding Suicide

Now that I've laid that out, the next thing that I want is for you to understand it. I showed you where it came from, but now I want to walk you into the very act of suicide and help you see why they look at it and think that way about it.

First, death by suicide will be in a class all by itself. No other form of death can compare as far as the impact it has not just on the person who dies, but on the people who are left behind. It's a tragedy when someone gets murdered, killed in a car wreck, or drowns. In those cases, it is non-intentional, and they are true victims of the circumstances; however, that is not true of a suicide. **The only victims of suicide are the people who are left behind. Whether they understand it or not, people see that. Given the bad information that has been circulating because they don't have any Bible or any understanding, they obviously think that if you commit suicide, there is no way you can go to heaven.**

When a person takes their own life, it will be hard for most people to put it into a proper context. When I preach a funeral of a suicide, I am very careful what I do because people come in with the idea that the person who died is bad, not going to heaven, or has committed some terrible sin.

The first thing that I try to do, when I preach a suicide, is protect the person who committed suicide to the best of my ability. In fact, I understand that in any given funeral service like that, there are probably people there who are contemplating the same thing. They may be down in life, despondent, depressed, don't have any goals, and everything is broken up in their lives. They see something like that, and if somebody doesn't get the word out to them that this didn't have to happen, they may not realize there is a way out of it.

I will say that everyone in attendance, if they find themselves in the same situation, may think that is the only way out because that is part of human nature if you don't put the word of God in your life the way you should. You've got to make sure that people understand. You want to make sure people see that what the person did was wrong, but I don't have a right to judge because if I let myself get into the same situation, or anyone in this room, you may also think that is the only way out...when it's not. It happens to people. **You need to understand how and why it happens so you can deal with people before it ever gets to that point.** It's one of the great keys to being able to help people and change their lives.

➤ Facts and Statistics about Suicide

There are some that believe when you commit suicide, you take your life out of the hands of God (which, okay you do), and then you cut your life short. No question about that, but with all the other stuff that's out there, they sit there and ask themselves, "Well, how could a person go to heaven if they did that?" You need to learn this material because suicide is a real issue in America today.

The CDC keeps all the records on suicide in America. In 2022, there were 49,000 suicides in the country. That's one every 11 minutes, and I'm sure it's higher in 2024. The CDC says that same year that 13.2 million people said they thought about taking their own lives, 3.8 million made a

plan to take their own life, 1.6 million actually attempted to take their own life, and 49,000 succeeded. Now I preach for about an hour, so while I'm preaching today, five or six people across this country will have taken their own life. It's a sobering thought.

For most folks, with their limited understanding and basically no Bible, it's hard to grasp how and why a Christian could take his own life. About 10-15 years ago a good friend of mine, who I truly believe was saved, got out of fellowship with God. There were some extenuating circumstances, and he not only took his own life, but also the lives of his wife and grandson. I had to preach at that funeral. Now that isn't like your dear sweet grandmother who prayed for missionaries all her life. How do you do that by not blasting that person, but rather holding them accountable for what they did while taking it and being able to help somebody else out there understand it or maybe deal with something similar in their own lives?

I met a kid several years ago at the fitness center. He had cancer which had gone into remission. He was as lost as could be, and against God. I tried to witness to him, and he just laughed at me. I hadn't seen him in a while, so I asked about him. I found out his cancer came back and instead of dealing with the cancer, he shot himself. An unsaved man will do things like that because he has no knowledge of God at all. These are things that I've had to deal with, and if you stay with it and you work with people, you're going to get involved in it at some point.

I would say that many of them, based on my experience and the times we live in, have never really been saved. I'm not judging anybody, but let's be honest. We live in a world today where salvation is whatever you want it to be, whenever you want it. It's not Bible-based anymore, but it's based on your feelings and emotions for the most part.

➤ Teen Suicide

Teen suicide is an epidemic. How many times do you hear stories about some teenage girl being cyber-bullied or some guy bullied at school? Because they don't have parents who are dialed into the word of God to help them, they wind up taking their own lives.

It blows my mind how a parent can allow somebody or something to have a greater influence on their children's lives. Psalms 127:4 says, *as arrows [are] in the hand of a mighty man; so [are] children of the youth*. As parents, you launch your children in life to hit a target and that target will be either heaven, hell, or maybe somewhere in between.

IV. The Evidence

It absolutely amazes me how people will pick and choose out of the Bible what they want to believe. I grew up and was trained that you don't get to pick and choose out of the Bible what you like or what you don't like. You've got to take it all—good, bad, or indifferent. When it comes to my Bible, I believe the King James Bible is the absolute perfect word of God. I don't think there is any other Bible on this planet that can touch it. I believe and teach that it is the only Bible in the world that God ordained; however, the reason why I know it's the absolute perfect word of God is not because Mel Sabaka or Peter Ruckman told me it was. **The reason I know it's the absolute perfect word of God is because I have investigated the evidence.** It's

called manuscript evidence, and it was the evidence that supported the fact that it's the only Bible on the planet.

➤ Evidence for Christ being God, Creation, and the Resurrection,

When it comes to Christ being very God, I believe that because of the evidence. I don't believe it because some preacher said Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I don't believe it based on what any man told me. I looked at John 1:1, John 1:12, and all the other 400 verses in the Bible about it, and I saw the evidence that He was truly very God. When it comes to creation, I didn't believe it because I wanted to or because it was Christian. I believed it simply because the evidence was overwhelming. When it comes to the resurrection, I believe Jesus Christ rose from the dead. I believe what 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 says: He died, He was buried, and He rose again the third day. Again, **I believe it because the evidence is overwhelming and not because some preacher told me or because it's the popular thing to believe.** 1 Corinthians 15:5-6 says that when He came out of that tomb, over 500 people were witnesses to it. Acts 1:3 says, *to whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs.* It's the evidence.

➤ There Should be Evidence of your Salvation

In the Christian world we live in, you must have evidence for your Bible, evidence that He was God, evidence for creation, evidence for the resurrection, evidence for the true Biblical line; however, you can have somebody who has absolutely no evidence in their life that they've ever been saved. Yet, they're still considered a Christian even though they've got no church, no Bible, no ministry, etc. In the world we live in, everybody loves God. Let me say this. **In your Bible, there are seven evidences of a man or woman's true salvation. That is, there are seven evidences that you have been truly born again. Those evidences develop in your life and everybody sees it. Don't mistake it—God did not put evidence into everything else and not put it into the Christian life.**

Did you ever notice in the New Testament, with all the people listed, you don't find one Christian like the people who claim to be Christians today who don't have any evidence of their salvation? There is no place in the New Testament where a Christian has one foot in the world and one foot in Christianity. You won't find anybody like 90% of the Christians today that claim to be saved yet don't want anything to do with God, the church, the Bible, or anything related to true Christianity. **It's because true Bible Christianity isn't based on you just saying, "I'm saved." Where is the evidence?**

If you get arrested and you go to court, there is a prosecutor, and you get a lawyer. In the court system in America, you're supposedly innocent until you're proven guilty. **It's the prosecutor's job to prove that you are guilty. The only way he can do that is by the evidence. If he doesn't have the evidence, he can't prove you're guilty.** God's people don't have the evidence, and well, you can take it from there.

I can hear it right now. How can you say something like that! You shouldn't judge a person. Well, 1 Corinthians 2:15 clearly tells me that *he that is spiritual judgeth all things*. Notice the words *all things*. I don't judge people. I don't have a right to judge anybody; we're all a mess,

but what am I supposed to judge if I'm spiritual? I judge the things. **When I look at something, I don't look at the person, I look at the evidence.**

In the word of God, you have recorded for you seven suicides. If you'd ask the average saved person, who has their mind all wacked out about this, if they could lay out those seven suicides, they don't even know there are any in the Bible. It's another part of God's Systematic Theology that I've told you about. We will get deep into this in our Patterns of Human Nature class, and you'll completely understand that there are seven reasons why a man or a woman will take their own life. It's all found in those seven suicides, and in each case, the Bible will show you a different reason.

➤ **Suicide is a Tragedy because it doesn't have to Happen**

Most people look at it wrong based on what they know or don't know. They'll see a suicide and say it's a tragedy that the person is now dead by their own hand. It is a tragedy, but that's not how I look at it. I look at it and say yes, it's a tragedy, but it's a tragedy because it didn't have to happen. **The Bible says, *and as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: God has a date that every man and woman is going to meet their maker, but God never intended it to be by the hand of suicide. The church, the Bible, the pastor, God's people, or parents should make the difference.*** You parents are the first line of defense for your child in anything. You take those elements out, and you will be a possible candidate to be a statistic of suicide. It can happen to anybody. **That's why you don't beat one person up; it could happen to any one of us in this room. There could come a time in your life when you're so down and so despondent, and everything has left you and forsaken you, and you are so broken and busted down that you actually think that the only answer is checking yourself out of this life.** That is a tragedy because it doesn't have to be that way.

➤ **A Person who Commits Suicide and is Truly Saved will Go to Heaven**

Here is the real reason why a person can be saved and yet get to the place in their life that they commit suicide. **Yes, saved people who take their own life will go to heaven.** But know this, a Christian may take his own life in suicide, and we can all breathe a sigh of relief that their judgment will not be the Great White Throne judgment as they're cast into hell; however, as a child of God, their judgment will be the Judgment Seat of Christ. When you stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ in that kind of condition, you may wish you went to hell. If you don't understand the last part of that statement, then you don't understand the Judgment Seat of Christ when you stand before Him.

Now learn this. Spare yourself and your children a lot of heartache. I'm 74 years old, and I've had to learn some lessons in life as we all have. Some came fairly easy, and some I had to learn the hard way. **A lot of what I try to give to you is through my mistakes, so you don't have to make the same ones. You know parents do that with their kids.** Sometimes parents won't allow their kids to do this or that because they did it, and they know it's a dead-end street.

When you deal with people who think there is no salvation for people who commit suicide, I want to show you how you deal with that. It must start with you dealing with yourself first, then

applying it. There were many lessons in life I had to learn, but I can boil most of it down to two key lessons.

V. Understanding why a Christian would Take Their Own Life

➤ You Only Get Out of Life What You're Willing to Put into it.

The first key to understanding why a true Christian, who had the evidence, would take their own life, is that you only get out of life what you're willing to put into it. That's true of everything. When you first get saved, we will try to work with you and help you. Some of you come along faster than others, but as long as you come along, that's all I care about. The first thing we try to get you to understand is that the Christian life is about you making the right investments.

- **There are three things a Christian must begin to invest his life in after salvation.**

This is what you see in the book of Acts. This is what the early New Testament Church Christians did, what the Ethiopian Eunuch did, and what the Philippian jailer did. It's what everybody in the New Testament did once they came to the place that they were truly saved, and the evidence began to build itself.

1. **The Word of God.** The first investment is the word of God in your life, which shows you what the right investments are, so that the very moment you get saved you begin to make them. You're going to find out what's right and what's wrong. You're going to find out who you need to hang out with and who you shouldn't anymore. You're going to find that all the issues of life that you're going to be up against are found in one book that you're holding in your lap today. I don't care what your problem is, I don't care what your heartache is, I don't care what you're struggling with. You come to me and give yourself and your undivided attention. I'm going to take you back to a Book that God gave me without any fee involved, and I'm going to freely give to you what He freely gave to me because all the answers to your struggles are found in that Book. The first investment you need to make, no matter how basic it may be, is getting into the word of God.
2. **The Local New Testament Church.** The second investment is a good Bible-believing local New Testament church that teaches the Bible with a pastor and people who will help you with the Bible. A church where you're the most important thing; you're not just a giving record on an envelope someplace. In the world we live in, everybody is big on support groups. We have support groups for alcohol, drugs, depression, grief, and any other problem that you might have; however, the greatest support group you'll ever find is what God intended for you to have as a Christian in a New Testament local church. Get into a church where you have a pastor and people who care about you and will take whatever problems you have, no matter how severe, and begin to show you a pathway

out of it. The church, by God's design, is to edify you, to help you, and to support you and your family.

3. **The Ministry that God has Called you to.** Shortly after you get saved, if you get into the word of God and get the help that you need to grow, you're going to realize that God saved you for a purpose. I would think it would be safe to say that the biggest underlying reason for a Christian to commit suicide would be the fact that they have grieved the Holy Spirit of God because for 10, 15, 20, 30 years they've never fulfilled the plan that God saved them for, and that's going to lead to a disaster. Ministry does a lot of things. We're big on ministry here because the ministry is people, and your giving to other people is the ministry. When somebody visits, I start ministering to them by giving them something free out of the bookstore. Most of you, if you're not already, very quickly will be working with people in ministry. That is a great thing, but for you, as for me, and for any new Christian who's working their way through the first two, **ministry is the greatest thing to keep you spiritually healthy.** We all have issues and go through our day-to-day struggles. You know what ministry does for me? It puts me in perspective when I deal with somebody who's really got some problems that mine aren't too bad. Then it makes me look inside and thank Him for how He's taken care of me, and then because of that, it makes me want to reach out to somebody to show them how God will take care of them, too. That's ministry.

These three will automatically, when you start to do them, put the seven evidences in your life that the Bible says are the evidences of your salvation. You can't get around it. A lot of people believe the goofy stuff they believe because it's all they've got; they've walked away from the truth.

➤ Life will be About the Choices we Make

The second thing I've learned is that life will be about the choices we make. You see, suicide is nothing more than a choice that a person made, and that choice will be based on the investment they made in the things of God after their salvation. Do you see how the two go together? Suicide will be a conscious choice that the person makes, but that choice will be based on what they invested in or what they didn't invest in. No Bible, no God, no church, no ministry...when a Christian will continually make bad choices and make wrong investments, it will most definitely lead to a compounding effect of problems that will take you deeper into sin and farther away from God with each bad choice.

When I deal with people, I don't really care what they've done. There are people who come to me for help, and they're embarrassed by what they've got to tell me or what they're involved in. Hey! You're not going to tell me anything I haven't heard in 50 some years of the ministry. All I care about is if you want to fix what you need to fix in your life to get where you need to be. I'll have couples come in with serious marital problems. People with problems keep it inside so long, and one of the first things I do is have a "throw up" session where they get it all out, then I bring them back to reality. I tell them they're in the problems they're in because they made some bad choices. The first of which is they got into a marriage that God designed, and they have no clue how it's to operate Biblically. I tell them that they can't fix the other person; you need to fix

what's wrong with you. If I'm going to work with you, I'm going to help you each fix your problems to be the best husband or wife you can be. Then I send them to lunch to talk. They need to decide if they really want to fix the marriage and make it work. There are some things that each of them will have to do to make some changes for it to ever work.

Life is choices and when you don't have the evidence of salvation in your life, it'll be because you made some bad choices. In time, the issues of drinking, marital problems, and wrong priorities will allow the world to compound in your life so that it begins to fall apart. In some cases, depending on the individual, it will get so bad that they think the only way out is for them to take their own life.

Now understand this, too. Nobody ever just got up in the morning who has a life filled with God, in ministry, and in the word of God daily and said, "I think I'm going to kill myself today!" It doesn't work that way. There is a pattern to it, and those patterns are found in the seven suicides in the Bible. **Suicide will always be based on an absence of God in a person's life so that there's no Bible, no God, no church, no ministry, and they make the wrong investments that lead to the wrong choices.** Now get this. Saved or lost, suicide will be a conscious choice; however, it will be based on a lifetime of bad choices that ultimately lead to the choice of suicide.

VI. Summary

Suicide will be a choice for a child of God, and unfortunately, it's the last choice they'll ever make in a life full of bad choices. A child of God can get so far away from God that he loses all reference of an understanding of God. I've seen it happen too many times. The real tragedy is that it didn't have to happen, but nobody cared.

*Psalms 142:4. I looked on [my] right hand, and beheld, but [there was] no man that would know me: refuge failed me; **no man cared for my soul.***

Psalms 142:4 is probably one of the most tragic verses in all the Bible. I've told you the story about my friend, he's in heaven now, Harold Massey. He was a pastor at the church when I first came to Kansas City. Harold was blind, but he was a great witness. He oversaw the hospital ministry, so someone would have to take him around through all the hospital rooms. I thought it was one of the greatest times where I got to learn by watching him. He was blind, but he could see more than most people with both eyes. One time he had to do a funeral of a young guy who was part of a rough crowd of motorcyclists. Many people were crying including his family. I took Harold up to the pulpit. He couldn't see, but he could hear everybody crying. He knew this was a rough crowd, and this fellow probably wasn't saved.

I'll never forget what he said as long as I live. It made a huge impact on my life. He got really quiet, and said, "**I want to be honest with you. Let me tell you some things that a blind man can see. I hear the weeping and the crying, and I might say this. If you folks would have shed those same tears over him to get right with God and saved, you most like would not have been shedding them now at his death.**" Now, I was worried that they were going to kill

both of us, but the way that he presented it, the Holy Spirit of God took that, and he preached one of the best sermons I've ever heard about caring for people. **If we cared for them the way that we should have, their untimely deaths would have never happened whether it be suicide, or this guy killed in a brawl someplace.**

That is so true. Parents and friends laugh with people. They joke with people, they go fishing and hunting with them, but *no man cared for my soul*. And if the people in that family would have shed the tears over that boy in prayer to get right with God, he probably wouldn't have died that way anyhow. If you want to see how it all builds together and comes together to a tragic end, God has given us seven suicides in the Bible that lay it out so clearly. Each one is a different part of seeing and putting together a very difficult puzzle as most people look at it.

I want you to learn this because you will deal with people who are convinced that if you take your own life that you can never go to heaven. You're going to have to be able to use this material and to tread your way through it carefully and cautiously protecting the person who committed suicide yet dealing with it in a way that everybody out there gets the truth.

Did you ever notice that everybody wants to have a funeral about the celebration of life. Do you realize that in the Bible there is not one celebration of life anywhere. The Bible says, *precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*. **For a real Christian, it isn't the day you came into this world, it's the day you go home to glory. That's where the real rejoicing is, but we're so far from that today.** We don't have that today because there is no evidence; therefore, we must make it a celebration of life, and everybody gets fooled. They come and leave no different than when they showed up. My goal in a funeral, no matter what the scenario, is to have people not leave the same way they came in. That's the key.

The word of God changes people's lives, and I want you to know how to handle the word of God. I want you to be able to be put in any situation from God that you can take somebody that is hurting, and most of the time they're hurting on bad information or disinformation, and you turn it around. You not only give them the truth, but you give them hope. And as the old hymn goes, our *hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness*.