

I. Bible Missions Conference Recap

What an ending for 2024 with the conference that God gave us. Today and next week before we get back into Psalms, I want to finish this out so that everybody is on the same page. **Today I want to talk about a promise and a principle.** One that you will use all through your life and it really came out of the Bible Missions Conference. Next week I will take the time to layout New Testament missions as it applies to you and me. One of the most messed up doctrines anywhere in the Bible that people get into. **God has been good to us!** We have reached around the country, our city and actually around the world with the materials that we have. It is like Miles said, we have put our fingerprints all over the world to people with the material and now we are going to put our footsteps. I want you to fully understand everything and as we move forward. I will keep showing you things so you will have a better context of putting it into your life.

This time of year, coming into Thanksgiving and Christmas are always associated with gifts and giving. Everybody likes to give and receive gifts. It is about giving to others that you love. The typical Christmas season is Santa Claus coming down the chimney and bringing gifts to all the world. The original idea was that December 25th was based on the birth of Christ. So, we sing Christmas songs and carols. You see the nativity scenes at churches and people's front yards. Christmas trees are brought into the house and Christmas cards are sent to each other. Most of them say peace on earth good will toward men, which is a quotation of the second coming of Christ into the millennium. **But there will be no peace on earth until the Prince of Peace comes back.**

In truth all the religious aspect of Christmas and Christ's birth has been mostly lost today. It seems that the world can't keep anything focused on God or the Bible without changing it up because it might be offensive to people. You don't say Merry Christmas anymore. Now you say Happy Holidays. Which is really stupid because holiday is another word for holy day. So instead of saying Merry Christmas you are saying happy holy day. But people are so stupid they don't get that. It has all been commercialized. The world has taken Christ out of Christmas. Even schools today no longer call it Christmas break, it is winter break. It never ceases to amaze me that no matter how much the world hates Christianity and tries to get away from Christ and the things of the Bible and God himself. The world will always have to steal something out of the Bible to be successful in their corporate world.

Around 1977 the Kodak Company came up with a marketing slogan to sell cameras. They were talking about the value of taking pictures and they said give a camera to your loved one for Christmas. So, they would say, “*give the gift that keeps on giving*”. That was popular for many years. Along with Kodak, Hallmark cards gave us the slogan, “*when you care enough to send the very best*”. In case you don’t know it, both of those slogans are out of the Bible and are key principles of the New Testament and Christianity.

➤ God’s Unspeakable Gift

It is 2 Corinthians 9:15 that says, ***Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.***” The greatest gift that ever came into this world, didn’t arrive on December 25th with Santa Claus and his backpack as he came down your chimney. **The great gift that is unspeakable, meaning there are no words to explain it. The greatest gift that the world has ever seen was the day the Lord Jesus Christ came to this planet and brought salvation with him. That’s the greatest gift and that is the only gift that keeps on giving.**

Now I feel terrible about the fires out in California. Over 10,000 homes have been lost. I think about all the Kodak moments that must have been in those homes. If their homes are anything like our homes, pictures are everywhere. Pictures of grandkids, pictures of the dogs, pictures of people. In one week a fire sweeps through and not only is your house gone but every picture and memory that you had is now ashes. My point is this, I understand the importance of pictures, but there is only one gift that keeps on giving and it isn’t pictures. Because in a minute all those pictures taken with Kodak are gone never to be replaced. **But God gave us the gift that keeps on giving as we share with others what God has given us. The word of God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.**

➤ God Sent Us His Very Best

The second slogan, when you care to send the very best. That is what God did. God sent us His very best. In the book of Hebrews, you find the keyword that sets Hebrews apart from every other book in the Bible, and that is the word “better”. What he does is compares everything in the Old Testament to the Lord Jesus Christ. He tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ is better than everything before Him. The angels, the Old Testament law, the priesthood, everything.

So those two slogans, the gift that keeps on giving and give the very best, all come out of the word of God and what God did. Along with that understanding, after last weeks Bible Conference, taking the word of God to the world our next level. I am going to follow that because we are going to give the gift that keeps on giving, and I only care to send the very best out of this church to take the word of God to them. Men and women of this church who have proven themselves and are ready to go. Plus, a host of others in a training mode or in some different level that in time that will be the ultimate goal for you.

Over the years I learned that the secret to a successful Christian life and learning to grow will be just one simple thing. The quicker you learn this, the better off you will be. We are going to find ourselves in various situations of life. As a child of God, we are not going to have a rosy path through the Christian life. There are going to be bumps and hills and obstacles that you are going to have to get around. God is going to put us in various situations and circumstances. It is just going to happen. **The difference is that God gives us the promises and the principles to guide us through it. That is the mark for being successful.** When we use the principles correctly in any given situation then we learn the principles completely. Through God adding those principles into our lives it brings us to a maturity level of being a child of God who really understands how to navigate the issues of life. It is where you can read all the books you want and go through all the programs you want. But it simply comes down to God has given you a book of principles and promises that will cover every issue of life. Just as the book of Proverbs says. Our job is to navigate through those circumstances, learning and using those principles. When you learn and do the biblical principles, it will do two things for you:

- 1.) It will teach you to use the word of God “rightly”. As the Bible says “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15)
- 2.) It will make the Bible more valuable and precious to you. Pretty soon as you deal with the issues of life, the Bible is going to be your most treasured possession.

II. Gods Gift to Man – His Son and the Word of God

Today, I want to develop one of the great biblical concepts and principles that came out of our Bible Conference. This one God gave me many years ago and it has been key in my understanding of how God looks at what I do for Him, and how I should see it the way He sees it and understand it. It is found in the book of Ecclesiastes 11. For me there has never been any question that the Bible is a supernatural book. I know the world looks at it as just another book. Unfortunately, a lot of preachers and Christians look at it as just a translation that is no better or worse than any other translation. I have never looked at it that way. **I believe when God gave us the King James 1611 Authorized Version that He gave us God’s perfect word to man. The gift that God wanted to give to us along with His Son. No greater power on Earth other than the power of the word of God.** It is God’s gift to man. Matthew 24:35 says, that heaven and earth shall pass away, but God’s word is never going to pass away. Psalms 119:89 tells us that the word of God is settled in heaven. There is nothing more to be added to it. **When God gave man that unspeakable gift of His Son and the word of God, He gave you everything that you needed to navigate through the trials and issues of life.** I know of no greater place in all of the Bible that will be clearer to us. How that the Holy Spirit of God will use us to give the greatest gift of God to man. This is where we are at right now. This promise and principle are ones that you have got to see and understand. Ephesians 2:8-10 tells us that for by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. God’s unspeakable gift. No words to describe it.

III. Ecclesiastes 11:1-6

Let's read verses 1-6 and there are some things I want you to see out of this chapter.

1. *Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. (I made a reference to this at the conference but never really broke the whole passage down)*
2. *Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.*
3. *If the clouds be full of rain, they empty [themselves] upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.*
4. *He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.*
5. *As thou knowest not what [is] the way of the spirit, [nor] how the bones [do grow] in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.*
6. *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both [shall be] alike good.*

A familiar passage for all of us is found in Isaiah 55:11. It says, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it." The last couple of weeks as we have been coming through Psalms we talked about the patience of his word. Being patient with the word of God. The worst thing that a child of God can do when it comes to their spiritual growth is get in a hurry. There are some things that I can do so you can get it faster. But you don't want to get outside of God's timing. Ecclesiastes 11 verses 1-6 will be our principle for this great truth of Isaiah 55:11.

1.) **Verse 1:** *Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.*

In your Bible Isaiah 17:12 says "Woe to the multitude of many people, [which] make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, [that] make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!" In the Bible people are liken to large bodies of water, like oceans and seas. Also, in Revelation 17:15 "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

The first thing you want to realize is that in your Bible when you see cast thy bread upon the waters, the water here is not going out to the park and throwing bread on the lake for the ducks to eat. It is a picture of you taking the word of God and spreading it on the world. Men, women, children, are liken to bodies of water, liken to the great vast oceans that we put the word of God to.

Then it says cast thy bread. That is an easy one. Bread in the Bible we know is a picture of the word of God. In Exodus 16, the whole chapter deals with the bread from heaven. The manna that God used. The supernatural bread that God used to feed Israel.

In Matthew 4:4 it says, “...*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*”.

Actually, our church has been doing this, just not to the level that we are personally going to get involved. Your tithes and offerings and everything you give to this church has allowed us to send around the world free of charge the material that people need. We didn't charge Miles, Shawn, and others a dime for any of the material they took with them. They would stack it up and say how much do I owe you and I said you don't owe a thing. Here is all I want you to do. Take it back, pass it out and use it to train other people. That is casting your bread upon the waters. Those two boys from Shawn's church that came out here, they fell in love with you guys. I mean they almost had to rent a tractor trailer to take it all home, but they will do something with it. This is the key that we do with everything. Miles when he came in, he took one of everything to put in a Christian school down there. In other words what you are doing with just the material you pay for is casting our bread upon the waters. We have done it for years and years. That is why when someone comes and visits us, I tell them to pick something out of the bookstore. Even for birthdays or something special that happens in your life, I am going to take the opportunity to cast the bread upon the waters. I am going to give you everything that I can.

Cast your bread upon the waters and you'll find it after many days. The principle of Isaiah 55:11 will be one of the greatest promises that goes along with what we are looking at in Ecclesiastes 11. In Isaiah 55 when you put verse 10-11 together, he says,

*10. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, (Those are the treasures of the snow and I will get to the rain in a minute) and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:
11. So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it.*

Doctrinally this is a millennial passage. The rain that he is talking about here we know it as the former and the latter rain that sections out the last half of the tribulation period with Elijah. But in a practical way if we to apply it with Ecclesiastes 11 you see the promise that is fulfilled in all God has done with our church. Being able to give it out to people all around the world, all around the country. I never put a price on anything. If somebody comes to me and says, hey, Bob you know I wanted to get a book out of the bookstore, or I want to get a Bible out of the bookstore, and I just don't have the money. I will give it to you. The church is about giving to others. When you give to others first, in time they will realize that great principle and they will want to give back to be part of what God is doing. I don't want you to give to this church because it is an obligation. I don't want your tithe, offerings or sacrificial giving coming in because you think you have to do it. I want you to do it because this church made an investment in you, and you love it now. You love the Bible, and you love what God has done for you through this church, and you want to invest back into it so we can cast more bread upon the waters. Almost all of you one way or the other, you got here by somebody casting the bread upon the waters of your life.

➤ Giving & Investing in Others

Around forty years ago, I cast bread upon the waters all through New England, Boston, New Hampshire and all those places. When Matt and Shaina came down here, they were a couple that spent time with us because of the impact that this church has made. This is my point. This church invested in them before they ever got here, and we certainly invested in them when they did get here. I promise you that you will see the return on that. It didn't take long after they left that I got a phone call from Dan who has been following us on the website. He says I can't believe what you guys got there. He said, my wife's birthday is coming up and she wants to come out and visit your church. Two days later I got a call from Nick. Nick says, "Bob I feel like I know you. I've been listening to you for years and I know that Dan is coming out with his family. Can we come out with our family?" I said absolutely! He said, "We are going to come out February 20th. We will come out on Thursday and leave on Sunday afternoon. But we want to be part of the church service and part of the Bible Study. We just want to see your church and meet these people. What God is doing through you is unbelievable."

Now if that wasn't enough, two days after that, guess who calls me on the phone? Mike, the pastor of that church up there. Mike says to me. Hey, Bob, thank you for taking care of my people. I know I have got two more couples coming out and would you care if I came with them? So, all of them are coming. Mike is going to preach to us that Sunday.

I tried to tell you, but I know you don't listen to me. I told you how your investment in their lives would go back and change that church. God is doing what I told you God would do. He is pulling these two churches together all the way up in Boston. You know once that church gets a handle on it, other churches up there that they are connected with and that I was connected with, where does this thing end? It ends at the rapture of the church. Until that point, we cast our bread upon the waters.

➤ The Return on the Faithfulness of that Promise

You heard Shawn give his testimony when he was here from North Canton. He talked about his church and his pastor. When I was there this last summer, the pastor introduced me to the church, and I had a ton of people come up that follow us. He gave the testimony and reference to how that thirty-five years ago he was in New Philadelphia in that church there. I had taken a team there to teach them how to disciple. That is where he got the burden in his heart for discipleship. That church in North Canton thirty-five years later is just discipling everybody. They have got an incredible discipleship program based on what we did. We have seen what God has done with Jim and Joe, and they have been casting the bread upon the waters for many years. **We are seeing it all come back to the reality of that promise.**

Then we see the promise come true in your life, our own church here. We have been together now almost twenty-five years. For twenty some years on Sunday morning, Thursday night, People Ministry, Patterns Class, and the New Year's Bible Studies. All the things that we have done, the camps, the conferences, one on one. I've simply over those years cast the bread upon

the waters of you this church. **Last week we saw the return on that faithfulness of that promise.** You would have to be someone pretty far out there that with the conference and the last couple of weeks it has not changed your life. **The promise of God's faithfulness that the word of God never returns void. God reaching down through that conference and touching your life.**

In the last couple of weeks when we were together it was not only a defining moment for our church, but it was a defining moment for many of you. When I put this conference together the guys would call me and ask me, what do you want me to preach? They would ask, what do you want me to do? Most pastors will say we are doing this, or we are doing that so gear your message around that. I didn't do that this time. I wanted to stay out of this other than orchestrating and putting it together. I didn't want to have anything to do with the sermons of who was preaching what. I just simply said do whatever God leads you to do. That was the best advice I ever gave them because everyone of them came in and connected with the guy before or after without ever knowing what they were going to preach. Then when we got together that last night, Joe knocked the ball right out of the ballpark. He gave us exactly what we needed to pull everything together. God used that from Miles to Joe, to Jim to Matt to Shawn and all of their families to change forever this church and its concept on how we look at the world. Our girls Becca, Grace and Ashley. I prayed for Ashley when I knew she wasn't saved. What a privilege it was to open up the word of God and show her how to be saved. Now they have gone back to England.

➤ Taking Our Church to the Next Couple of Levels

I told you before the Bible Conference that God would take us to the next couple of levels. He most certainly did and now we have to enter into a patient process of planning. Finishing out everybody's understanding of where we are at with missions and what New Testament missions is so we can flush out all that stuff that isn't biblical. I am thinking (and this may change) two basic mission trips this year. This is where I am looking. It may change. This isn't one of those things where everybody sign up we are going to all go to the world. No, no. This is a slow process. God doing in your life just like he did in the speakers lives at raising up the men and women in this church that believe they want to go and get a world vision for the world. We are just going to take our time and be patient. What follows in this passage will be the reason behind why we should cast our bread upon the waters. This is where the message begins today. Look at verse two.

2.) **Verse 2:** *Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.*

Understanding verse two is understanding me. This is why I am who I am and do things the way I do them. When it comes to life, the ministry, people and the Bible, I am all in. With me in life when it comes to anything I am all in or I am all out. Many people only approach God, the Bible, and ministry halfway. I can't do that, and it is because of this verse. For me once I understood it and the concept behind it; there could be no middle ground for me when it comes to the Bible, ministry, people, and the Lord. That is not to put pressure to you that you ought to

be there too. No, no, that is between you and the Lord. I am telling you where I am at based on this verse.

He says give a portion to seven, and also to eight. Now you need to see this. Let's get this verse into a Bible configuration. We know that seven in the Bible is how God does things. Seven is God's perfect number. We went through the seven series in the Bible (7 Baptisms, 7 Judgments, 7 Resurrections, 7 Sevens). That is God's systematic theology. The tribulation runs for seven years. When God does something, He does it by sevens. That tells me that I am supposed to do everything I do just as completely as God has done it when He gave me the Bible and everything in it. Then he says give a portion to seven and also to eight. **You and I need to do what God has called us to do and then go extra above that. Over and above what God requires.**

In Genesis 24 (there is a book in the bookstore on this) is the great chapter in the Bible that shows any man or woman that is looking for a help meet (a spouse) 19 principles that you need to follow. I bring that up because verse two is one of those principles. When you come back through Genesis 24 the theme of the story is Abraham wants a bride for his son Isaac. So, he sends his servant Eleazar to find a bride for Isaac. That is the historical story. This is why I love the camel train song.

Oh, get ready the evening shadows fall.
Can't you hear the Eleazar call?
There's going to be a wedding, and our joy will soon begin,
In the evening when the camel train comes in.

It is a picture of Eleazar, type of the Holy Spirit of God, Abraham, type of God the Father, Isaac is a type of Christ. The Holy Spirit of God going out to find a bride for Abraham's son. The chapter is a masterpiece. That song, The Camel Train is based on the day that God sent His son down to find a bride for His Son by the Holy Spirit of God. You and I are on that camel train that is going to be coming in. But from a practical standpoint, it shows every man and woman if you are going to find a spouse in life, which is probably the most crucial decision, what to look for. I know people make mistakes and this is no criticism of that. But the bottom line is if there is one thing in a man or woman's life that can end your walk with God quicker than anything, it is who you marry. It is just that simple! That is why Genesis 24 is such an incredible part of the word of God to show us not only as Eleazar was looking for a bride for Isaac and God is looking for a bride for His Son. The practical application is us.

➤ **When Looking for a Spouse You Want Someone Going Seven & Then Over and Above**

The principle of verse two, give a portion to seven and also to eight, is right in there. Because Eleazar sees Rebecca. The Bible says she is good looking. So, he kind of puts a little plan together and here is the principle. Rebecca is at the well. That is the first thing you want to find. A spouse that is working at the well. Not sitting down and watching television or playing video games all the time. **The first thing you want to see is are they at the well and what they are doing at the well.** Then he says to her, would you fetch us a little water. She says absolutely.

She goes gets water out of the well and brings it back to them. Gives them water and then the Bible says that she went and watered the camels. She not only did what was required of her, she went over and above. When you look for a spouse, you want to look for somebody who just like a leader, just doesn't do what is required of them. Do they go over and above? You as parents know what it takes to raise kids. You do everything you need to do and then you have got to go above that. You get a job someplace and you want to be successful, you do everything you need to do and then you go above that. I am telling you in the ministry you do everything you can do and then you go above that. In relationships this is the principle you look for somebody that is doing everything at the well that they are supposed to be doing. But then do they go above that?

It says in Genesis 24:18-20 that she gave them water and then she hastened to do the camels.

*18. And she said, Drink, my lord: and **she hastened**, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. 19. And when she had done giving him drink, **she said, I will draw [water] for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.** 20. **And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw [water], and drew for all his camels.***

Nobody asked her to do the camels. You see if you are looking for a spouse you want to find somebody who is going the seven distance. But then they are doing over and above what nobody's asking them to do. That is leadership! **You don't want a husband or a wife that doesn't fall into the 19 principles of Genesis 24.** I know what happens, you get emotionally involved. You love somebody. You like the way they look. You are lonely and you just throw the principles out and you wind up in a real mess.

I don't know what you know about camels, but they are the most stubborn animals on the planet. Everybody thinks the mule, or the jackass is stubborn. But they are very workable compared to a camel. The camel can be the most annoying, smelly animal you could ever have, and they are so stubborn. In verse 46 it says she took water, and she made the camels to drink.

*And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her [shoulder], and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and **she made the camels drink** also. [Gen 24:46 KJV]*

She knows how to work with animals. Does the person you are looking at in your life, do they know how to work with people? Are they at the well? Where are they in these 19 principles? These things here go right back to where we are at today. Because you have to give it seven. Give it all you got, but then you got to give it eight and you got to go more. That is true of raising kids, building a church, and your job. But boy, is that ever true in a marriage. Marriage is never break even. Guys you want a woman that you are looking for that is already at the well. Who is doing the seven and has no problem going to eight. Ladies you want a guy who is already at the well. Who is already doing the seven, but nobody has to tell him to do the eight. That is leadership on all levels. The Bible says in verse 21 Eleazar just watched her, and he wondered and held his peace.

And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not. Genesis 24:21

That tells me that you just watch what people do. I don't want to say this in a wrong way. I don't believe a lot of what people tell me because I know that sometimes that doesn't really go anywhere. I watch what people do. I hear people all the time tell me how much they love God and the Bible. But they are not doing it. If you are saved there is no excuse for not doing it. There isn't anything in your life that you can't orchestrate around to be working at the well. Two of the greatest principles found in Genesis 24 out of the 19.

So, he says give a portion to seven and the extra eight. Here is why. Don't miss this last part of verse two, it says, "*for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.*" You give the extra effort. You stay with it, you never quit, and you go over and above. You know why? Because you never see the spiritual battle for the souls of men that goes on around us. You give it all you got. But that extra effort sometimes will make the difference at reaching a soul for Christ or not reaching a soul for Christ. It comes down to the question that I have to answer for myself, and you have to answer. **How far are you willing to go? As a child of God, saved by the blood of Christ, knowing what Christ paid for you, how far are you willing to go?** He says, *for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.* You know in Daniel 10 verse 2 you get an idea of this evil. Daniel was praying and Gabriel was sent down to him to help him. It took twenty-one days for him to get there because the prince of Persia, the devil held up Gabriel. Finally Michael had to come down and bust the gridlock to get him there to help Daniel. In Ephesians 6:12 it says,

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places].

In ministry you give it all that you got, but then you got to go eight. Somebody was telling me they read in the book on David Livingstone that he had been in Africa for over fifty years. When he died that he had such a love for Africa that the African natives cut out his heart and buried his heart in Africa before they sent his body back to England to be buried in West Minister Abby. Somebody reminded me this week that David Livingstone was very sick before he died. He had all the fifty years of jungle diseases and everything. But he went seven. He went into his tent to lie down. They didn't hear from him for several hours and when they went in, they found him dead. You know how he died? He died on his knees slumped over his cot. He gave it seven and then he went eight.

➤ We are Supposed to Go Seven – Don't Expect Anything for that!

In the military men who win battles, the real heroes who make the ultimate sacrifice receive a citation. And no matter what they did, no matter how they did it, on their citation it always reads, it was over and above the call of duty. Most of Gods people think that you get rewards for being at church today. Most people think you get rewards for witnessing. Luke 17: 9 says you don't get rewarded for the things that you are supposed to do. We are supposed to go the seven. Don't expect anything for that. It is the eight!

Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

3.) **Verse 3:** *Verse 3 If the clouds be full of rain, they empty [themselves] upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.*

A couple of things to see here. He is saying that there is a certainty of God's coming judgment. Just as sure as when the rain clouds empty themselves and it rains. So, God's judgment is a sure thing. I laid this out Thursday night, the patterns and the models, when Jesus said in Matthew 16 you can discern the sky but you can't discern the times and the seasons. Let me tell you something. The storm clouds are across this country. God's judgment is a sure thing. He is coming! Then he says in verse 3, "...if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." In Mark 8:24 and many other places men in the Bible are liken unto trees.

And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. Mark 8:24

If you want to find out your family heritage you look at your family tree. Trees have limbs, so do you. Trees have roots, you have yours down where you live. What he is saying here is when a man dies, he goes to south, hell, or he goes to heaven, north. But when he dies, he either goes south or north that is the eternal state of man. If he goes to the south, then he goes to hell and he doesn't get out. If he goes north, then he goes to heaven and that is where he is at. The key to heaven or hell for him may just be our faithfulness and giving it seven but then go eight.

Zach you got saved last Thursday night because your mom and dad went seven and then went eight. God's judgment is certain and if you die without Christ, south or north, you are going one place or the other. The bottom line is you are in this church and probably saved because somebody in your life went seven and then went eight. This is such a powerful passage of the Bible.

4.) **Verse 4:** *He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.*

Here is where most of God's people stop right here. When you fear the storm of life you will never be effective in life. You have got to get the right attitude about the day and age that we live in. You have got to get the right attitude about occupying till he comes. Our country, the world, is about as scary as it could ever be. I told you Thursday night I don't fully understand it. I am not a prophet nor am I a conspiracy theorist. But I am telling you 2025 looks like a wild ride. The patterns of the coming storm. We as a church and you as an individual Christian have two choices. There are some churches out there and I know these guys and they are not bad guys. Their idea is to just circle the wagons, huddle together, turn inward and build a little compound someplace. Stock up on food and rifles, all that stuff so they can survive. Where they just lock themselves in and take care of what they got here. That is an option. A lot of that is going around today. **Or we can head into the storm and save as many of them as we can.**

You know I admire the United States Coast Guard. One of the things I admire about them is the simple motto that they have when bad hurricanes come, and rough times come in the oceans. When the Navy and everybody else is heading to the shore, they are going out. You get a ship stuck out there and it is in the middle of a typhoon, you put out an SOS, the Coast Guard will come to your aid. The Navy won't, but the Coast Guard will. When everybody else is heading into port, in the middle of a hurricane, they are going out.

Matt from Boston, who was here a couple of weeks ago is a firefighter and so is Justin in our church. I have always had the utmost respect for firemen. They don't carry guns; they don't arrest people. But when a building is on fire, and is raging out of control, and when everybody else is running away from the fire, they are running into it. I will never forget 9/11. The buildings were burning. People were trapped. They were climbing up those steps, ropes on their backs and axes in their hands to try to save as many of them as they could. Not one of them said I am not going. Every one of them went seven and then went eight.

➤ The State of Our Country is by God's Design & We Need to Run in with a Message of God to a Lost World

But the first thing we need to know about the terrible state of our country is it's by God's design. This country is going through what it is going through because of what she has done with God and the word of God. God's judgment is falling on not only this country, but around the world. There are people out there that need the truth, and this church just can't close the doors on Sunday. The world is on fire, and we need to be running in while everybody else is running out. What you are seeing is His plan and we are part of that plan. In the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation where God says there is never a time in the history of the world like this. You know what God is doing? He is sending in 144,000 to evangelize the people in the tribulation. Now we are not in that tribulation. But this country is certainly in tribulation. Do you know what we need to be like spiritually? We need to be like the 144,000 that runs in with a message of God to a lost world.

➤ Never Fear the Storm that is Around You

The second thing is never fear the storm that is around you. When you have understanding of Matthew 24:37 as it was in the days of Noah so shall it be in the coming of the son of man. You can go back and look at Noah's day and what was going on and you will totally understand why it is. When you look at Luke 17:28 as it was in the days of Lot so shall it be in the coming of the son of man. You can make the parallels and understand exactly what the difference is. We can't fear the storm. I didn't train you to fear the storm. I built everything I have into you to make you strong and the man or woman that God wants you to be. I built you that way for the day that is coming. I cast my bread upon the waters and gave you everything I had so you would go seven and then give it eight.

5.) **Verse 5:** *As thou knowest not what [is] the way of the spirit, [nor] how the bones [do grow] in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.*

This is a great principle for every one of us. We do all that we do, giving it seven and then going the distance with eight. We give it 150% in ministry and in dealing with people. You go the extra mile above and beyond. The reason for that is verse 5 says that you never know what God is doing in somebody's life. It is so easy for God's people to be so judgmental that when somebody you don't like because of something that they did or the way they look. You just write them off. You never know what God is doing in their life. You just know that God's word will never return void. It will always accomplish the purpose. So, you never write somebody off. They may write themselves off. You must take your stand on the word of God, I get that. You don't compromise, but you never close the door. When it comes to working with people, part of going the seven and the eight is going that extra mile with them. You always leave the door open. Why do I feel that way? Using my own personal example, it took nineteen years for me to figure it out. I wouldn't be where I am at today with what God has given me (even though I don't deserve it) had it not been for a man that never gave up on me, my father in the Lord, Mel Sabaka.

➤ **Someone Never Gave Up on Me**

My mom and dad were charter members of Canton Baptist Temple. At some point, I don't know why, my mom and dad quit going to church. When they quit going, I quit going. Mel Sabaka was the youth pastor back then. We never really got along at that time. One time we had a skating activity, and I was playing the pinball machine. Mel Sabaka came over and kicked me off the pinball machine and I resented that. Back then churches had what they called visitation night. That is where they would go out and visit the people of their church that hadn't been coming. Well, every Tuesday night Mel would send some high school kids out to visit me. I would give them a song and dance about being there on Sunday. After a while when I saw the car coming, I would go out the back door and go off someplace else. One time they came to the house and knocked on the door and I ran out the back door. **Guess who was standing at the back door waiting for me? My father in the Lord, Mel Sabaka. He never gave up on me!**

➤ **I Will Never Give Up on You**

If that taught me any lesson it taught me this. With you and me I will never give up on you. You may give up on yourself. **I will never give up on you because you never know what God is doing in somebody's life.** You got to know in ministry that not everybody is going to hear and want what you have for them. You just trust the promises that the word of God won't return void, and you cast your bread upon the waters. Sometimes it takes time. It took me nineteen years. I look across this crowd and see it took a while for some of you too, but here you are. You know why you are here? Somebody never gave up on you. I have had people come back and try to apologize. But it's okay. This is human nature and the ministry. Just come on back!

➤ Never Close the Door Because You Never Know What God is Doing in their Life

He says in verse 5 just as you can't explain how in the birth of a baby how it develops from a fetus into a newborn with bones and structure, eyes, lips and fingers. You can't always tell what God is doing in somebody's life. The work God is doing. Our job is to stay with it and do everything to seven and then hit the floorboard, put it in fourth gear, slam on the gas and go to eight. Never give up. After many years of dealing with people in almost every situation that you can think of, in time you learn patterns of human nature. Based on that and knowing how people act and what they do you can pretty much meet somebody, talk with them and get involved with somebody in a basic way. Sometimes it is pretty easy to see that person because of where they have been, what they believe, and where they are at, that they are not going to make it. But you know what? In spite of that you give them seven and eight. **You never close the door because you never know what God is doing in their world.**

I read the story of John Wesley. He was a circuit riding preacher over in England. One night he was riding his horse from one town to another to preach. A highway man held a gun to his head and took all his money. When the highway man began to ride away, John Wesley said. Young man, wait a minute. The guy turned around pointed the gun at his head and John Wesley said, someday you may be tired of the life of sin you are living and when you get tired of it remember the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son cleanses us from all sin! The guy turned around and rode off. Two years later he was preaching in a town, and that same guy came up to him, tears running down his face. He restored the money to him and said Mr. Wesley a year after I met you, I found Jesus Christ as my personal savior. I want to give back the money and I am sorry. He said the thing that just would not let me rest is that night that you said the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son cleanses us from all sin. **Sometimes one word dropped in the right place will cut for fifty years. You never know what God is doing.**

6.) **Verse 6:** *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both [shall be] alike good.*

He says in the morning time of my life and in the evening time of my life, sow the seed withhold not thine hand. There is only one major difference between me and most of you. That is the fact that you are in the morning time of your life, and I am in the evening time of my life. We see out of our conference it becomes clear what I have said many times the great principle found in

Proverbs 20:29 *"The glory of young men [is] their strength: and the beauty of old men [is] the gray head."*

In my life when I was a young guy, for me it was guys like Phil Ward, Tommy Thomas, Mel Sabaka and Harold Henniger, Dr. Ruckman, Roy Thompson, Dallas Billington, B.R. Lakin. You learn from the mistakes that they made. They weren't perfect but you learn from their mistakes.

But then you also learn from the things that they did right. In time through the word of God being taught to you, it will never return void. Right now, the strength of you young men and ladies being guided. But the old men of this church who have learned in life the wisdom and understanding that they have gained. Now you do the work in the morning of your life while we are in the evening time of our life and can't do the work. **That Book will always accomplish the purpose God intended it to. That is God's promise.** Understand this. I won't be going on these trips with you. For forty years I have tramped the country and culture of this world. Now it is your turn.

I brought this Bible in today. We have our original 1611, our original Martin Luther Bible and the sword (Hebrews 4 sharp two-edged sword). Years ago, I put together a Bible that I would use for preaching. I didn't want to have a lot of notes carrying around and I took and had two of these made special. The other one is my Bible that I teach you out of. But this Bible is my preaching, Bible. There are over 100 sermons in here that I put in as I tramped all through the United States. When I went to New Philadelphia thirty-five years ago this was the Bible. When I went to every country in Europe, this was the Bible. In Central America, in Africa, this was the Bible. When I started out, I was very young, getting some great opportunities to preach. But I knew the pressures that were out there. So, when I had a guy put two of these Bibles together, I wanted them ironclad. I took it over to a Christian bookstore and had them emboss a verse on the front of it I Kings 22:14. Because I wanted every time, I would get up to preach I wanted to look at that verse and it says,

“And Micaiah said, [As] the LORD liveth, what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.”

I would get up and cast my bread upon the waters. For over forty years this was the Bible that I used. Now I am not going on the trips. I don't go to preach any place. I won't need this one, so you know what? We got these other Bibles up here. You know what happens with this one today? For a testimony to you young guys and gals out there to cast your bread upon the waters. I want you to be able to see this. We are retiring this Bible, and it is going up here with the rest of the Bibles. **For everyone of you to know that this is what God has for you casting your bread upon the waters. But whatever God speaks to you that is what you speak.** After forty years I know my strengths and my weaknesses. For forty years I tramped this country and the world. All that time God's purpose was to cast my bread upon the waters. Now here I am 74 years old. Nowhere near to retire. I mean the Bible is retiring, but I am not. I learned all that I could. I saw the vision down the line of the church that God would give me someday. It is a strange thing I saw all of you sitting here for years before you sat here with no faces. Now the faces are with the people. I learned all that I could and now you men and women will carry on in the evening of my life, the word of God to a lost world. I will get you ready. I will spend time with you giving you everything that you need. But I will stay by the stuff while you go down to battle. I will give you the benefit of all God has taught me. Now is the time in our church that the leadership needs to rise up and we take it to the world.

➤ Missionaries Are Really Special (MARS)

As I said a couple of Thursday nights ago, now you can better understand why God gave us such as young church. We are not like most churches where everybody is headed for the dinosaur graveyard. Most of you are in the morning of your life. You have a lot to give because you as young people have the strength. We old guys, we have the experience. But now it is time for us to mesh it together. This is why I have taken this time to introduce the MARS program. We have supported everybody, now we are going to support our own people. We are going to get teams that want to go. Financially whatever comes in through MARS, over and above we are going to use that to offset some of their costs that nobody has to feel the financial burden. We are going to do everything we can. We are making a future investment in the leadership of this church.

➤ Now We Simply go to Work, Patiently, Powerfully

It is never too early to begin to get you and our high school kids to see and understand a world vision. Once I finish next week, between the conference and what I have done and where we are at, everything will be in place and then we just simply go to work patiently, powerfully. You need to start to consider in your own heart what God's going to have you to do. There has never been a time in my life when I have been prouder of you and looking at the future as bright as God's promises. I don't care what the storm is, we are not paying any attention. The whole thing can come down around our shoulders. **We are running into it. Not away from it.**