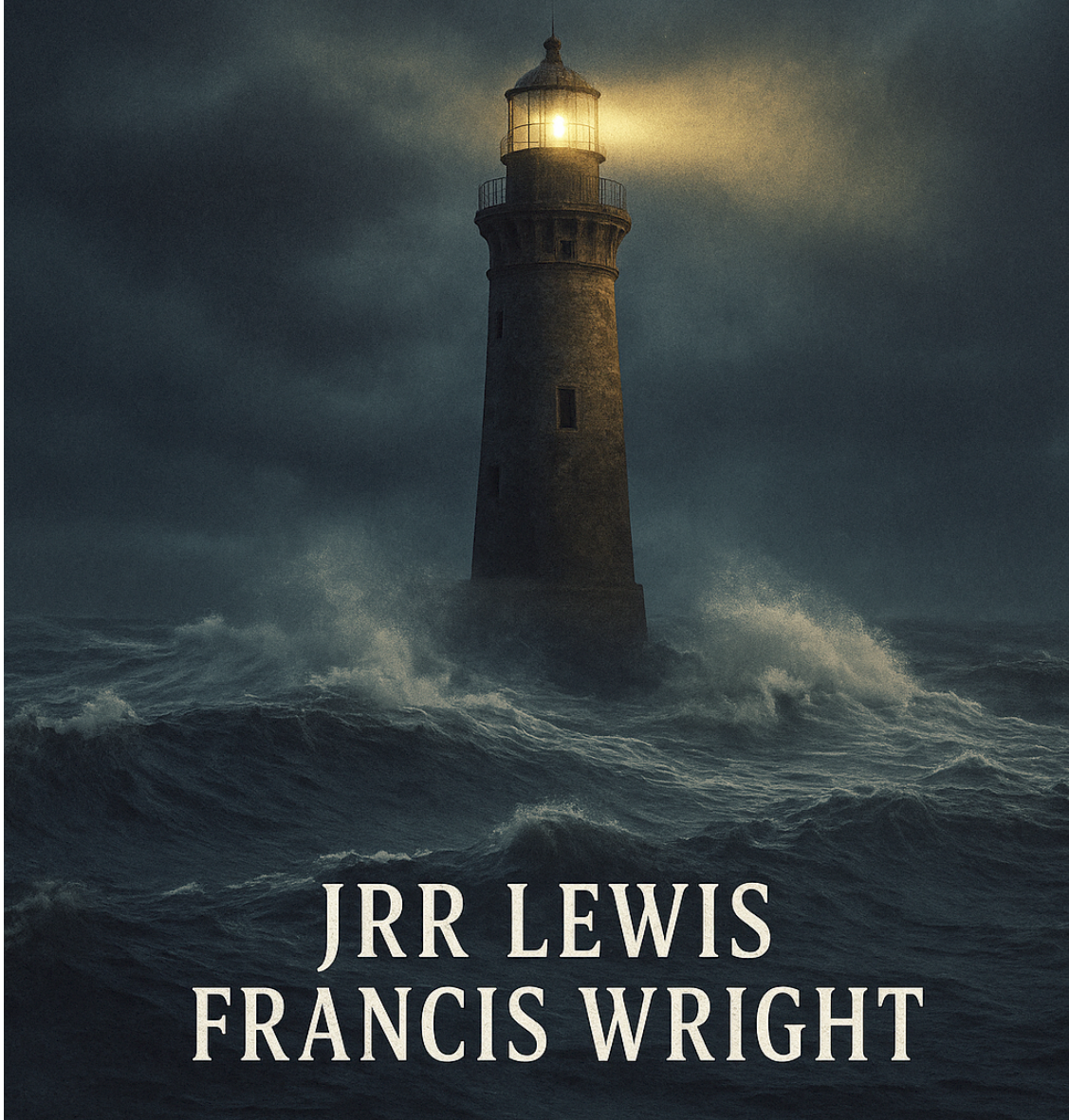


CHRISTIANITY

EVANGELICAL DISASTER



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Chapter 1 – The Great Evangelical Disaster

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but... having itching ears... they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

—2 Timothy 4:3–4

That time isn’t coming.
It’s here.

1984.

Francis Schaeffer writes his last book.

The Great Evangelical Disaster.

It’s not a soft goodbye.

It’s a final trumpet blast.

His grief?

The church was trimming the truth to fit the culture.

The Bible’s authority was no longer assumed.

And once that goes,
everything else collapses.

Paul knew this.

He warned the Galatians —

*“I marvel that ye are so soon removed... unto another gospel:
Which is not another; but there be some that... pervert the gospel of Christ.”*
(Galatians 1:6–7)

A “slightly altered” gospel is no gospel at all.

He told the Ephesian elders —

*“I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God...
For three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”*
(Acts 20:27, 31)

A half-gospel is a false gospel.
Schaeffer agreed.
So should we.

Numbers over depth.

That's how we measure "success" now.
Attendance.
Budgets.
Views.

The little white churches knew their people.
Shepherds, not CEOs.
Discipleship, not production.

Now?
Massive campuses.
Massive upkeep.
Massive pressure to keep the seats full.

And the easiest way to do it?
Soften the edges.
Downplay the offense.
Sand the rough parts off the cross.

But soft truth kills.

It may inspire for a Sunday,
but it will not hold through Monday's trial.

Paul saw this coming —

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof..."
(2 Timothy 3:5)

Schaeffer called it accommodation.
Isaiah called it flattery —

“They say to the seers, See not... speak unto us smooth things.”
(Isaiah 30:10)

Jeremiah called it false peace —

“They have healed also the hurt... slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.”
(Jeremiah 6:14)

It's not just the pulpit.

It seeps into the pew.

Then into the next generation.

Kids grow up knowing the songs,
but not the Scriptures.
They speak of God,
but don't know His voice.

Ephesians 4:14 warns —

“Tossed to and fro... carried about with every wind of doctrine.”
That's the fruit of shallow roots.

Schaeffer's answer?

Courage.

Refuse compromise.

Preach the truth if it costs you applause.

Stand firm if it empties the room.

Paul said the same:

“Watch... stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”
(1 Corinthians 16:13)

Jesus said it too:

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.”
(John 15:18)

Faithfulness will never be fashionable.
But it will always be fruitful.

This book isn't just a critique.
It's a call.
A call to rebuild depth.
To stand on the whole Word of God,
not the edited version.

The question isn't,
"Is the disaster happening?"
It is.

The question is,
"Will we be part of the disaster...
or part of the recovery?"

Chapter 2 - Entertainment Over Equipping

“And He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” — Ephesians 4:11–12

When the Stage Overshadows the Shepherd

A good band isn't the problem.

A joyful noise is biblical.

But in many churches, the volume, lighting, and production have taken the front seat, while the Word of God is squeezed into the margins.

When worship becomes more about **the experience of the room** than the presence of God, something sacred has shifted.

The goal is no longer transformation, but *engagement*.

The question becomes, “*Did they enjoy it?*” instead of “*Did they repent?*”

The Show That Shines and Fizzles

An emotional high on Sunday can feel spiritual — but without the anchor of truth, it evaporates like mist under the sun.

Paul warned of this in *2 Timothy 4:3–4* — a time when people would prefer teachers who tell them what they want to hear.

When the focus is on keeping the crowd engaged, the church starts to measure success by applause and attendance rather than transformation.

Like fireworks, the spectacle may light up the night for a moment, but it leaves no lasting warmth.

If worship draws a crowd but doesn't produce disciples, it's not worship —

it's a performance.

And a performance must keep growing louder and brighter to keep attention.

Youth Ministry by Amusement

We've done the same with the next generation.

Games, events, and hype nights bring them in — but what happens when life gets harder than dodgeball?

Too often, teens leave youth group knowing the snack schedule better than the Scriptures.

When they head to college, their faith collapses because it was built on connection without conviction.

Jesus warned in Luke 6:49 about the one who builds without a foundation — “when the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

Emotion Is Not the Enemy

God gave us emotions. David danced before the Lord (2 Samuel 6:14).

Worship should move the heart.

But biblical worship moves the *heart through the mind*.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:15, “*I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding.*”

When truth and emotion work together, you get deep joy.

When emotion replaces truth, you get shallow zeal.

The Cost of Entertainment Discipleship

When the church becomes a performance venue:

- People come to be served, not to serve.

- Truth is replaced by impressions.
- Trials expose the lack of depth.
- The next generation inherits a faith of atmosphere, not substance.

The early church turned the world upside down with no bands, no stage lights, no sound systems — just the gospel preached, the Word taught, and the Spirit moving.

Choosing Equipping Over Entertaining

For Worship Services:

- Let music serve the message, not overshadow it.
- Choose songs rich in doctrine and Scripture.
- Make the sermon the central act of worship, not the pause between songs.

For Youth Ministry:

- Use games as a tool, not the foundation.
- Teach the whole counsel of God, not just favorite verses.
- Train students to read and apply the Word themselves.

What This Means for Us

The world can out-entertain us. It can't out-disciple us — unless we stop discipling.

The mission is not to get people in the room; it's to get Christ in their hearts. Not to wow them for an hour; but to prepare them for a lifetime.

Entertainment fades. Truth endures.

The church that chooses equipping over entertaining may not always get applause — but it will hear, “*Well done, good and faithful servant.*”

Chapter 3 - Shallow Discipleship

“But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.” — Hebrews 5:14

The Thin Ice Beneath the Surface

In too many churches, people know the opening chords of the worship set better than they know the opening chapters of Genesis. They can quote popular Christian authors but stumble to find the Gospels. They can raise their hands in worship yet don't recognize when Scripture is being misquoted.

This is not a new problem. The writer of Hebrews lamented believers who should have been teachers but still needed milk instead of meat (Hebrews 5:12).

The difference? Today we have more Bibles, podcasts, and study tools than ever — and still, biblical depth is rare.

The Sunday-to-Monday Fade

We've normalized a pattern Paul never endorsed:

- Sunday morning — inspired, convicted, ready to follow Christ.
- By Monday — the urgency fades.
- By Wednesday — the same old sins feel comfortable again.

This is not discipleship; it's spiritual tourism.

We visit the mountaintop once a week, but we live the rest of the time in the valley with no map.

Mile Wide, Inch Deep

The phrase says it all: a big surface, no depth. Churches focus on programs and attendance rather than depth of faith. We produce people who look active but are spiritually fragile — easily swayed, quickly discouraged, easily offended.

Paul warned in Ephesians 4:14 that immature believers are “*tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine.*” That’s exactly what happens when believers don’t grow roots.

The Illiteracy Problem

Biblical illiteracy fuels shallow discipleship. When we don’t know the Word:

- We fall for false teaching.
- We confuse cultural values with biblical truth.
- We can’t pass on the faith to the next generation.

Psalm 1 paints the opposite picture — the blessed person delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on it day and night, producing fruit in every season.

From Milk to Meat

The solution isn’t complicated — but it is costly in time and effort. We must train believers to:

- Read the Bible for themselves.
- Understand its context and apply it correctly.
- Live it out even when it’s inconvenient.

Discipleship is not instant; it's formed in the small, daily obediences that deepen faith and sharpen discernment.

What This Means for Us

Programs won't fix shallow discipleship.

More events won't fix biblical illiteracy.

The church must return to intentional, relational discipleship — opening the Scriptures together, teaching the hard truths, calling each other to holiness, and refusing to settle for emotional highs without doctrinal roots.

Shallow faith is easy to lose. Deep faith is hard to shake.

If we want believers who endure, we must move from *mile wide, inch deep* to *narrow but deep*, willing to trade numbers for depth if necessary.

Chapter 4 - Mission Drift in the Pulpit

“For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man?”

If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.” —
Galatians 1:10

From Shepherd to Salesman

The pulpit was once the place where a shepherd fed the flock with the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

Today, in too many places, it feels more like a sales pitch — carefully worded to avoid offense, heavy on brand, light on truth.

We justify it: *“We don’t want to scare people off.”*

But in softening the call, we’ve changed the call.

Jesus said, *“Repent and believe the gospel”* (Mark 1:15).

When repentance disappears from the sermon, so does the gospel’s power.

Fear of Offense

We live in an age where truth is treated as hostility.

Pastors feel the pressure: *“If I preach what the Bible says about sin, people will leave.”*

And some will. They always have (John 6:66).

But the measure of faithfulness is not crowd size — it’s obedience to the One who called us.

If we trim God’s Word to fit cultural taste, we become like the false prophets in Jeremiah’s day, who healed the wound of God’s people *“lightly”*, saying, *“Peace, peace,” when there is no peace* (Jeremiah 6:14).

Marketing Over Missions

When numbers become the scoreboard, the mission changes.
Church growth becomes the *goal*, rather than the *result* of faithfulness.

Branding and PR replace prayer and proclamation.
We ask what the audience wants instead of what the Lord commands.
And slowly, without even noticing, the church becomes a business competing for customers rather than a body contending for the faith.

The Subtle Shift

Mission drift rarely happens with one decision.
It's the slow compromise of a hundred small choices:

- Avoiding a hard passage because it might upset donors.
- Choosing a sermon series for its marketability instead of its necessity.
- Preaching in a way that attracts but does not transform.

By the time you notice, the compass is no longer pointing to Christ.

Recovering the True North

Paul told Timothy to “*preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching*” (2 Timothy 4:2).

That's not marketing language. It's marching orders.

To recover the mission:

- **Fear God more than man** — His opinion is the only one that matters.
- **Preach the whole counsel** — even the parts that cut against the culture.

- **Trust the Spirit's work** — conviction may scatter some, but it will root others.
- **Measure success by faithfulness**, not just attendance.

What This Means for Us

A church can fill its seats and still be empty before God.

A preacher can be popular and still be unfaithful.

When the pulpit loses its courage, the people lose their compass.

We must demand — and support — leaders who will keep the mission clear: to make disciples of Jesus Christ, teaching them to obey all He commanded (Matthew 28:19–20).

The gospel is not a brand to polish.

It is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16).

And it must be preached — in season, out of season, whatever the cost.

Chapter 5 – From White Church to Christian Coliseum

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

—Matthew 6:21

There was a time when a church’s strength wasn’t measured in square footage.

It was measured in faithfulness.

Small wooden pews.

White clapboard walls.

Windows open to let in a summer breeze.

A steeple pointing heavenward.

A bell to call the community together.

A Bible always open on the pulpit.

It wasn’t glamorous.

But it was grounded.

The little white church was often the hub of the community.

The pastor knew every family by name.

He preached at weddings,

stood at gravesides,

and sat at kitchen tables.

People prayed together.

Sang together.

Sometimes argued —

but stayed committed to one another.

They didn’t have a “welcome team.”

Everyone was the welcome team.

Now?

Many churches are measured by scale.

The size of the lobby.

The size of the parking lot.

The size of the stage.

Some call it “vision.”

Others call it “progress.”

But here’s the quiet danger:

Big buildings require big money.

Big money requires big crowds.

Big crowds are easier to keep when the message is kept safe.

Paul warned about this pull:

*“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men?
for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”*
(Galatians 1:10)

When pleasing people becomes the priority,
serving Christ becomes the casualty.

The Christian coliseum can inspire awe.

Screens.

Lights.

Professional polish.

But it can also hide spiritual anemia.

The crowd can be loud while the roots are shallow.

Jesus warned:

“This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.”
(Mark 7:6)

This isn't an attack on size itself.
The early church in Jerusalem was large.
Three thousand believed in one day (Acts 2:41).
But it was also deep:

*"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship,
and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."*
(Acts 2:42)

Large doesn't have to mean shallow.
But when expansion outruns discipleship,
the foundation starts to crack.

The difference is focus.

The little white church knew what it was for.
It was a place to worship God,
to preach His Word,
to build one another up,
to send believers out.

The coliseum model can blur that focus.
It can become a venue for inspiration,
but not transformation.

Paul's reminder is still true:

"Ye are the temple of the living God."
(2 Corinthians 6:16)

The building is not the church.
The people are.

Bigger isn't wrong.

But bigger isn't better if depth is lost.
A grand building without grounded people
is just a shell.

A small church can be unhealthy too —
if the Word is not taught,
if love grows cold,
if outreach is forgotten.

The issue isn't square footage.
It's spiritual footing.

Paul said the church is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).
The strength of a pillar comes from what's inside,
not how tall it stands.

We need churches — large and small —
that remember their first calling.

*“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations... teaching them to observe all things
whatsoever I have commanded you.”*
(Matthew 28:19–20)

Not just gathering crowds.
Not just building campuses.
Not just hosting events.

Teaching.
Discipling.
Equipping.

What This Means for Us

We may not decide the size of our church,
but we can decide the depth of our faith.

If you're in a large church — seek smaller circles for discipleship.
Don't let yourself become anonymous in the crowd.
Know and be known.

If you're in a small church — don't envy scale, invest in people.
A room of twenty Spirit-filled believers can shake the world.

If you're a leader — remember that the Great Commission is about making
disciples,
not just making attenders.
If you're in the pews — be part of the work,
not just the audience.

Church health isn't measured in square footage,
but in spiritual fruit.

"Every tree is known by his own fruit."
(Luke 6:44)

Whether in a white clapboard chapel or a multi-million-dollar campus,
the goal must be the same:
Truth preached.
Souls shepherded.
Christ exalted.

Chapter 6 – Prosperity Preaching and the Poisoned Well

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

—Matthew 7:15

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

—2 Timothy 3:5

It promises blessing.

It promises success.

It promises health, wealth, and happiness...
all in Jesus’ name.

But it is a poisoned well.

The prosperity gospel says God’s main goal is to make you comfortable here and now.

If you have enough faith, you’ll be healed.

If you give enough money, you’ll be blessed.

If you declare it, you’ll receive it.

It sounds hopeful.

It sounds biblical.

It’s not.

Paul warned Timothy about teachers “supposing that gain is godliness” (1 Timothy 6:5).

He told the Philippians there are some “whose god is their belly... who mind earthly things” (Philippians 3:19).

This isn't new.

It's the oldest temptation — the serpent's whisper:

"You can have what you want without the cost God requires."

Jesus never promised ease.

He promised trouble:

"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

(John 16:33)

He promised cost:

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

(Luke 9:23)

Paul didn't write from a mansion.

He wrote from prison.

Hungry. Cold. Content.

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

(Philippians 4:11)

The poison works slowly.

It doesn't deny God outright.

It redefines Him.

It makes Him a means to an end,
instead of the end Himself.

It turns faith into a transaction.

Man becomes the center,

God the helper.

The well looks full.

The water looks clear.

But it cannot satisfy.

Jeremiah said:

*“My people... have forsaken me the fountain of living waters,
and hewed... broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”*
(Jeremiah 2:13)

The fruit is the same.

When the blessing doesn't come,
faith collapses.
When the healing doesn't happen,
bitterness grows.

Some walk away,
not because God failed,
but because the false promise failed.

This is not the gospel.

The true gospel calls sinners to repent and believe.
It gives eternal hope.
It offers joy that survives prison cells and hospital beds.

It doesn't promise life without storms —
it promises an anchor in them.

Why does it spread?

Because it appeals to our flesh.
We like comfort.
We want control.

Isaiah's words fit our day:

“Speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.”
(Isaiah 30:10)

Paul's antidote:

“Preach the word...reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

(2 Timothy 4:2)

Not promises to tickle ears.

Truth to pierce hearts.

What This Means for Us

We must know the difference between truth and almost-truth.

The prosperity gospel uses Christian words — blessing, faith, abundance — but empties them of meaning.

Measure every teaching against Scripture.

If the promises are all for this life,

it's not the gospel.

Leaders — resist the pressure to “sell” Jesus with benefits He never promised.

Hearers — guard your heart from style over substance.

God does bless.

God does heal.

But He also grows us through suffering,

and calls us to eternal treasure, not earthly trinkets.

Jesus is not the way to get what we want.

Jesus is what we want.

“Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.”

(Psalm 73:25)

Chapter 7 – Casualties Without Truth

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”

—Hosea 4:6

Some casualties come from persecution.

Others from temptation.

But many fall because they were never taught to stand.

Not because they never heard a sermon.

Because they never received instruction.

Malnutrition kills slowly.

A church can be full of activity and still starve its people.

Preaching alone can inspire,

but without teaching, it rarely transforms.

The Missing Half of the Job

Ephesians 4:11 says Jesus gave

“pastors and teachers” — no comma.

One role.

One calling.

To shepherd and to teach.

To care for the sheep and to feed them.

A shepherd without teaching leaves the sheep warm but hungry.

A teacher without shepherding leaves them informed but uncared for.

The biblical pastor is both.

Paul lived it.

*“I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you,
but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly,*

and from house to house.”
(Acts 20:20)

Public preaching.
Personal teaching.
Both, without neglect.

The Shift in the Modern Church

In much of the modern West,
we've drifted toward preaching for the crowd
instead of teaching for the disciple.

The sermon became a performance.
The platform became a stage.
The pulpit became a spotlight.

Preaching aims for the heart.
Teaching aims for the mind and roots.
We need both — but the second has been shrinking.

Why?

Because teaching takes time.
It's slow.
It's messy.
It doesn't always “wow” the room.
But it builds something preaching alone cannot —
depth.

Jesus was called “Rabbi” — Teacher —
more than He was called Preacher.
He spoke to crowds, yes,
but He explained to His disciples in detail later.

Acts 2:42 — the early church

“continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship...”

Doctrine first.

Life together second.

They fed on truth before they faced the world.

The Casualties

Without teaching,
people confuse inspiration with transformation.
They feel moved on Sunday,
but unchanged by Wednesday.

When trials come, they have no root:

*“They... have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time:
afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth... they are offended.”*

(Mark 4:17)

They leave wounded.

Confused.

Sometimes bitter.

Some walk away,
not because God failed,
but because no one ever taught them who God is.

Ezekiel described shepherds who failed their flock:

*“The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which
was sick,
neither have ye bound up that which was broken,
neither have ye brought again that which was driven away...
but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.”*

(Ezekiel 34:4)

Today's cruelty often looks polite.
It's not abuse,
it's neglect.
Leaving people with shallow roots in a storm.

Why Teaching Brings Depth

Teaching answers questions.
It connects Scripture to daily life.
It explains why, not just what.

Paul told Timothy:
*"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses,
the same commit thou to faithful men,
who shall be able to teach others also."*
(2 Timothy 2:2)

Faithful teaching multiplies.
A church that teaches well
is a church where truth spreads far beyond Sunday.

Preaching without teaching can be like planting without watering.
Seeds sprout quickly,
but the sun burns them away.

Teaching cultivates.
It digs deep.
It produces believers who can stand when the winds blow.

The Restoration Plan

If we want to stop losing people to spiritual malnutrition,
we have to restore the balance.

- **Pastors must be teachers.**
Preach to the crowd, yes — but also teach the flock.
Open the Bible verse-by-verse.
Explain, connect, apply.
- **Teaching must happen outside Sunday morning.**
Small groups.
One-on-one discipleship.
Homes open for Bible study.
- **Members must hunger for more.**
If the only Scripture you get is from the pulpit,
you are underfed.
Read. Study. Ask questions.

Paul warned that the time would come
when people “will not endure sound doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:3).
That time is here.
But that doesn’t mean the teachers should stop teaching.

A Church That Teaches

Colossians 1:28 —

*“Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom;
that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”*

That’s the goal.
Not just converts.
Not just crowds.
Complete, mature believers.

The early church turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6)
because it was grounded in truth,
not just stirred by speeches.

What This Means for Us

If you lead —
Shepherd your people by feeding them truth.
Don't settle for being a motivational speaker.
Be a teacher of the Word.

If you serve —
Find ways to pass on what you've learned.
Older believers should teach younger ones (Titus 2:3–5).
Parents should teach children (Deuteronomy 6:7).

If you listen —
Don't be content with milk.
Grow up into solid food (Hebrews 5:12–14).

A church without teaching is a church with casualties.
A believer without teaching is a believer without roots.

We are in a battle.
We need more than a weekly rally.
We need to be trained to fight.

Because one day the storms will come,
and the difference between standing and falling
will not be how often we felt inspired,
but how deeply we were taught the truth.

Chapter 8 – The Missing Jewel — A.W. Tozer on Worship

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” — John 4:24

A Voice from the Past

Few warned against the danger of entertainment in the church as sharply — or as early — as A.W. Tozer.

He saw it decades before it became normal.

Tozer wrote:

“The church that can’t worship must be entertained. And men who can’t lead a church to worship must provide the entertainment.”

That was over sixty years ago.

And yet here we are — with churches that would rather risk losing the truth than risk losing the crowd.

The Difference Between Celebration and Substitution

Tozer never railed against music, lights, or energy in themselves.

David danced before the Lord (2 Samuel 6:14). Israel sang with tambourines (Exodus 15:20). The Psalms call us to praise with loud instruments (Psalm 150:3–5).

The problem isn’t *celebration*. The problem is *substitution*.

When entertainment replaces worship, the crowd may clap, but God may not be honored.

Worship is not:

- a show to keep us occupied until the sermon,

- an emotional warm-up to make the message easier to hear,
- a means to “set the mood” for an audience.

True worship puts God at the center. Entertainment puts the audience at the center.

Tozer’s Diagnosis

Tozer saw the drift from shepherding to showmanship.
He warned:

“We must not think of the church as an entertainment hall, but as a place where God meets His people.”

Paul gave the same warning in Galatians 1:10 — *“For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”*

When the goal becomes to please the crowd, the aim to please the Lord gets lost in the fog machine.

It happens slowly:

- Add a little more flash to “engage the room.”
- Match the world’s production quality to keep pace.
- Measure a “good service” by how much energy was in the room.

And one day — without planning it — we have trained people to chase a feeling instead of a Person.

Spirit and Truth

Jesus said worship is *both* spirit and truth (John 4:24).

Spirit without truth becomes empty emotion.

Truth without spirit becomes dry ritual.

Biblical worship marries both — passion fueled by reality.
When worship is right, it does more than stir emotion. It:

- exalts God,
- humbles man,
- prepares the heart for the Word.

Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up (Isaiah 6:1–5) *before* he was sent out to speak. Worship shaped him for the mission. That is what our gatherings are meant to do.

When Worship Becomes Entertainment

Tozer knew the danger:

When entertainment takes over, the focus shifts from the message to the musicians.

We remember the lights more than the lyrics.

We leave wanting to repeat an *experience* rather than walk in obedience.

David's psalms didn't just celebrate God — they taught truth about Him.

Psalm 96:3 says, "*Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.*"

Worship should declare who God is and what He has done — not just create an atmosphere.

The Remedy

Tozer's solution was as simple as it was difficult: return to the Word.

He called worship "the missing jewel" of the church — a treasure lost under the rubble of our distractions.

"If you will not worship God seven days a week, you do not worship Him on one day a week." — A.W. Tozer

Worship is not filler. It is theology set to music.
It is not about preference — it is about presence.

What This Means for Us

If you lead worship —

- Plan with the Word in mind.
- Choose songs that say something *true* about God.
- Aim for clarity of truth, not just emotional peak.

If you're in the congregation —

- Engage your mind and heart.
- Sing with understanding (1 Corinthians 14:15).
- Let the lyrics shape your faith, not just your mood.

If your church leans toward high production —

- Guard your heart from becoming an audience member.
- Refuse to let the “wow” factor replace the “holy” factor.

Worship isn't a concert to attend.

It's a response to the glory of God — and Tozer's voice still warns us: If the church loses worship, it will replace it with entertainment. And when that happens, the crowd may be full, but the spirit may be empty.

Chapter 9 – The Downgrade in Doctrine

“Hold fast the form of sound words... in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

—2 Timothy 1:13

In the late 1800s, Charles Spurgeon sounded an alarm.
The “Downgrade Controversy,” he called it.

Churches in England were beginning to compromise on the authority of Scripture.

They were bending doctrine to fit the latest scholarly trends.

And Spurgeon saw the danger: once truth is softened, the slide is almost impossible to stop.

He wrote:

“We cannot be expected to meet in union with those who... would lower the standard of truth, and weaken the spiritual power of the gospel.”

The downgrade begins quietly.

Not with open denial of the faith,
but with small concessions.

A doctrine trimmed here.

A hard truth reworded there.

All to avoid offense or keep pace with the culture.

Paul warned Timothy the same way:

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.”

(2 Timothy 4:3)

Sound doctrine is not always easy to endure.
But when we trade it for easy words,
we've already begun the descent.

Spurgeon's metaphor was a ship losing altitude.
It doesn't fall all at once.
It slips — slowly — until it cannot recover.

And when doctrine slips,
everything else follows.

The downgrade often begins with the authority of Scripture.
If the Bible is no longer absolute,
every teaching becomes negotiable.

Adam and Eve? Maybe just a story.
Hell? A metaphor.
Marriage? Redefined.

The Word is no longer the Word —
it's a suggestion.

From there, the gospel itself is reshaped.
Sin is softened into "brokenness."
Repentance becomes optional.
Jesus becomes one way among many.

The cross still hangs in the sanctuary,
but the message of the cross —
the offense of the cross —
is absent.

Spurgeon saw this in his day.
We see it in ours.

And the result in England has been sobering.
Once a beacon of gospel light to the nations,
sending missionaries across the globe,
its churches now stand half-empty.
The gospel voice that once thundered from London's pulpits
is now, in many places, barely a whisper.

When truth is abandoned,
the lampstand is removed (Revelation 2:5).

The antidote to downgrade is the same now as it was then:
Hold fast to sound words.
Cling to Scripture's authority.
Preach the whole counsel of God.

Paul told the elders at Ephesus:
*"I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you...
For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."*
(Acts 20:20, 27)

The church is not called to be popular.
It's called to be faithful.

What This Means for Us

If you lead — guard the pulpit.
Teach the Bible as it is,
not as the culture wishes it to be.
When Scripture and society disagree,
stand with Scripture.

If you serve — be discerning.
Measure every sermon, book, or podcast by the Word.
Ask: Does it align with what God has said,
or is it adjusting God's words to fit ours?

If you listen — love truth enough to endure it.

Don't demand soft edges.

Welcome conviction.

Let the Word cut when it needs to (Hebrews 4:12).

The downgrade in doctrine is never just about doctrine.

It's about the church's very foundation.

And as Spurgeon warned,

once the slide begins,

climbing back is harder than we think.

England's empty churches are a reminder:

If we do not hold the line,

we will lose the light.

Chapter 10 – The Primacy of Preaching

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

—2 Timothy 4:2

Martyn Lloyd-Jones was a physician before he was a preacher. He knew the difference between a symptom and the disease. When he looked at the church, he saw the root problem clearly: Nothing can replace the faithful proclamation of God’s Word.

He said:

“The primary task of the Church... is the preaching of the Word of God. The moment she tries to be something else, she loses her authority.”

Preaching is not optional.

It’s not filler between music sets.

It’s not one program among many.

From the earliest days, the church gathered around the apostles’ doctrine (Acts 2:42).

Jesus Himself said, *“Let us go... that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.”* (Mark 1:38)

When God’s people come together, the central act is opening His Word and letting Him speak.

Lloyd-Jones rejected trends that shifted focus away from preaching.

Church growth strategies.

Entertainment.

Social programs without the gospel.

He didn't deny the value of those things in their place —
but without the preaching of the Word,
the church loses its power.

Paul saw the same danger in his day.
That's why he told Timothy to “preach the word... reprove, rebuke, exhort.”
Not just encourage.
Not just inspire.
But speak the truth in all its weight.

The pulpit shapes the pew.
If preaching is shallow,
discipleship will be shallow.
If preaching is faithful,
the church will grow strong — even if it grows slow.

Lloyd-Jones favored expository preaching —
verse-by-verse through Scripture.
Why?
Because it forces the preacher to address all of God's counsel,
not just his favorite topics.

Paul modeled this:
“I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”
(Acts 20:27)

The danger today is replacing preaching with talking points,
sermonettes,
or motivational speeches.

These may hold attention,
but they cannot hold a soul in the storm.

True preaching is not merely explaining a text —
it is declaring what God has said,
with the authority of the God who said it.

Preaching is also more than information.

Lloyd-Jones spoke often of “logic on fire.”
Truth must be explained with clarity,
but it must also be delivered in the power of the Holy Spirit.

A well-organized sermon without the Spirit
is like a prescription without the medicine.

When preaching loses its place, everything else suffers.

Doctrine drifts.
Discipleship weakens.
Worship becomes unmoored from truth.

But when preaching holds its place —
when the Word is central —
the church is anchored.

What This Means for Us

If you preach —
Preach the Word, not yourself.
Open the Bible.
Explain it faithfully.
Apply it clearly.
Do it in season and out of season.

If you lead —
Guard the pulpit.
Don’t let it become a platform for personal opinion,
political talking points,
or shallow encouragement.

If you listen —

Come to church hungry for God's Word.

Bring a Bible.

Take notes.

Weigh what you hear against Scripture (Acts 17:11).

The church will be as strong as its preaching.

If we want healthy Christians,

we must give them more than stories and slogans.

We must give them the living and abiding Word of God.

As Lloyd-Jones said:

"The Church's greatest need is the Word of God in the power of the Spirit."

Chapter 11 – Shallow Profession and Easy-Believism

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;

but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

—Matthew 7:21

J.C. Ryle, the 19th-century Bishop of Liverpool, saw a dangerous pattern in the church:

Many professed Christ with their lips but denied Him with their lives.

He wrote:

“The Christianity which is from above will always be known by its fruits... where there is no fruit, there is no life.”

Easy-believism says faith is a moment, not a life.

Pray a prayer, sign a card, join the membership roll —
and nothing else needs to change.

But Jesus said the opposite:

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

(Luke 9:23)

The gospel calls us to a new birth,
and new birth produces a new life.

Shallow profession thrives when churches lower the cost of discipleship.

When sermons avoid sin,
and salvation is presented as an add-on to life instead of a surrender of life.

Ryle warned that the church could fill its pews with unconverted people if it stopped preaching repentance and obedience alongside grace.

Jesus told the parable of the sower.
Some seed sprang up quickly,
but withered away because it had no root (Mark 4:5–6).

That's what happens when people receive the Word with excitement
but never develop depth.
The first storm comes,
and they are gone.

True saving faith shows itself in fruit:
love for God,
obedience to His commands,
and perseverance over time.

James wrote:
"Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."
(James 2:17)

Works don't save us,
but they prove the salvation we claim.

Why is this so common today?

Because it's easier to count decisions than to make disciples.
It's easier to celebrate a response than to walk with someone through
repentance.

But Jesus wasn't looking for quick numbers.
He said, "*Count the cost*" (Luke 14:28) before following Him.

Ryle's England was full of people who called themselves Christians by habit,
by heritage,
or by convenience.
He knew that nominal Christianity could survive in a culture —
but it could not survive before the throne of God.

We face the same danger.

Church attendance can be cultural.

Faith can be assumed because a person “grew up in church.”

Baptism can be treated like a box to check.

But Jesus will not be fooled.

On that day, many will say “Lord, Lord,”

and He will reply,

“I never knew you.” (Matthew 7:23)

The answer is not suspicion of everyone’s faith —

but a commitment to preaching the whole gospel:

Repentance and faith.

Grace and obedience.

Justification and sanctification.

As Ryle put it:

“Where there is no holy life, there is no real faith in Christ.”

What This Means for Us

If you lead —

Preach the full gospel.

Don’t give false assurance.

Don’t skip the hard words of Jesus.

If you serve —

Help new believers grow.

Walk with them.

Encourage them toward obedience,
not just attendance.

If you listen —

Examine yourself (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Is there evidence of God’s work in your life?

Not perfection —
but direction.

A growing desire to love Him,
serve Him,
and follow Him.

Shallow profession is deadly because it looks alive while dead inside.
Easy-believism is dangerous because it makes people think they are safe
when they are not.

Let's love people enough to tell them the truth:
The faith that saves is the faith that follows.

Chapter 12 – The Truth War in Our Day

“Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
—Jude 3

In early 2025, the church lost a steadfast voice.

John MacArthur, pastor, teacher, and author, went home to be with the Lord after more than five decades in the pulpit.

He was known for his clear, unwavering commitment to biblical truth.
For some, that made him a lightning rod.
For others, a lifeline.

One of his most urgent works, *The Truth War*, summed up his mission:
The greatest battle the church faces is not against the culture,
but for the truth inside its own walls.

Truth is under attack.

Not only from outside the church,
but from within it.

MacArthur warned that false teaching often wears a Christian mask.
It quotes Scripture.
It uses Christian vocabulary.
But it twists the meaning just enough to undermine the gospel.

Paul saw the same danger:

“Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”
(Acts 20:30)

The truth war is fought on two fronts.

First — **the authority of Scripture.**
If the Bible is not our final authority,

truth becomes subjective.
Doctrine becomes negotiable.

Second — the content of the gospel.

If repentance, faith, and the lordship of Christ are minimized or redefined,
what is left may be called “good news,”
but it will not save.

MacArthur was not interested in popularity.

He was interested in faithfulness.

He wrote:

“We are not entitled to tamper with God’s truth. We are stewards of it, called to guard it and proclaim it without alteration.”

This meant calling out error —

whether in prosperity preaching, seeker-sensitive pragmatism,
or theological liberalism.

Contending for the faith is not comfortable.

It requires courage to stand apart,
and humility to stand under God’s Word.

Paul charged Timothy:

“Preach the word...reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

(2 Timothy 4:2)

MacArthur took that charge seriously —

and he called other pastors to do the same.

Why does this matter now?

Because the pressures he warned about have not decreased.

They’ve intensified.

We live in an age when truth is treated as offensive.
When the highest virtue is “tolerance,”
and the worst crime is to say someone is wrong.

But truth by nature excludes what is false.
The gospel by nature confronts sin.
And love by nature speaks what is needed, not just what is wanted.

The truth war will not end until Christ returns.
But in every generation,
God raises up men and women to fight it.
MacArthur’s ministry was one such stand —
rooted in Scripture,
unshaken by trends,
focused on Christ.

What This Means for Us

If you lead — guard the flock.
Know the truth so well that you can spot a counterfeit immediately.
Feed the sheep solid food,
even if it’s not what the crowd craves.

If you serve — be a Berean (Acts 17:11).
Test every sermon, book, and “Christian” message against the Bible.
If it contradicts God’s Word,
no matter how appealing,
reject it.

If you listen — love the truth.
Not just the parts that comfort you,
but also the parts that confront you.
Let God’s Word correct you,
shape you,
and strengthen you.

The truth war is not fought only in pulpits or seminaries.
It's fought in every heart.
Every believer has a part to play.

MacArthur's voice is silent now,
but his call remains:
Hold the line.
Guard the truth.
Preach the Word.

Chapter 13 – Celebrity Pastors: When the Spotlight Blinds

“For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

—2 Corinthians 4:5

In the first century, Paul had to deal with factions in the Corinthian church: *“One says, ‘I follow Paul’; another, ‘I follow Apollos’...”* (1 Corinthians 1:12).

It was already a problem then — elevating the messenger over the message.

Today, we’ve given it a modern twist.

We livestream sermons.

We clip quotes for social media.

We put the preacher’s name in bigger letters than the name of Jesus on the conference poster.

The rise of the celebrity pastor is not always intentional.

Some pastors simply become well-known because God has given them a strong gift and a wide platform.

That’s not wrong in itself.

The danger comes when the focus shifts:

- From shepherding people to building a brand
- From faithfully preaching the Word to producing viral content
- From giving God glory to chasing human applause

Fame is a dangerous fire.

It can warm and influence,
but it can also burn and destroy.

Paul warned Timothy about new leaders becoming conceited —
“*puffed up with pride and falling into the condemnation of the devil*” (1 Timothy 3:6).

The devil’s original temptation was about status: “*You will be like God.*”
When a pastor starts to believe their own press,
pride creeps in,
and humility slips out the back door.

The problem isn’t just in the pulpit.

We create celebrity pastors because we want them.

We like charisma.

We’re drawn to confidence.

We feel secure when our leader is well-liked and widely followed.

But the New Testament’s picture of leadership is far humbler:

A shepherd who smells like the sheep.

A servant who washes feet.

A watchman who warns in the night.

When the pastor becomes the brand, the church becomes a fan club.

And when the leader falls,

so does the faith of many who were following the man more than the Master.

We’ve seen it too often:

Scandals.

Moral failures.

Spiritual abuse.

And a trail of disillusioned believers who confuse the collapse of a ministry
with the collapse of the gospel itself.

The solution is not to ban big platforms or avoid gifted leaders.

God uses voices that reach far beyond one congregation.

The solution is to return to the biblical model:

- **Plurality of leadership** — elders, not just one figurehead (Titus 1:5)
- **Accountability** — leaders answerable to others, not untouchable
- **Servant posture** — remembering that the greatest is the one who serves (Mark 10:43–45)

Paul summarized his ministry this way:

“We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

A faithful leader will point away from themselves and toward Christ.

A faithful church will admire faithfulness more than fame.

What This Means for Us

If you lead — guard your heart.

Don’t believe the hype.

Stay rooted in Scripture, close to your people, and accountable to others who will tell you the truth.

If you follow — admire humility more than charisma.

Support leaders who shepherd well,
even if they’re not “trending.”

If you’re tempted by the spotlight — remember that applause is temporary.

The only “well done” that matters comes from the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4).

The church doesn’t need more celebrities.

It needs more servants who disappear into the work of Christ,
content for His name — not theirs — to be remembered.

Chapter 14 – Biblical Illiteracy: A Famine of the Word

*“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land,
not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water,
but of hearing the words of the LORD.”*
—Amos 8:11

We live in a paradox.
Bibles in every format.
Verses on walls, mugs, and screens.
Yet a famine in the soul.

Many can quote “Judge not,”
but few can finish the sentence.
We know the playlist,
but not the passages.
We attend church,
but cannot explain the gospel.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” (Hosea 4:6)

How We Got Here

We outsourced Scripture.
From the table to the pulpit.
From the week to the weekend.
From daily bread to a weekly snack.

We snack on verses-of-the-day
instead of feeding on books-of-the-Bible.
A sugar rush, not a steady diet.

We traded meditation for distraction.
Endless scrolling.

Notifications at war with attention.

The seed is sown, but the birds are fast. (Mark 4:4)

We softened the sermon.

Sermonettes for Christianettes.

Applications without exposition.

Encouragement without doctrine.

We believed the lie that the Bible is too hard.

But the God who speaks also explains.

“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” (Psalm 119:130)

What Scripture Expects

Parents, not programs, are the primary teachers.

*“Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children...
when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way,
and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”* (Deuteronomy 6:7)

Leaders must read and explain.

“Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.” (1 Timothy 4:13)

“Rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)

All of us are to chew, not merely taste.

*“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth;
but thou shalt meditate therein day and night...”* (Joshua 1:8)

*“His delight is in the law of the LORD... he shall be like a tree planted by the
rivers of water.”* (Psalm 1:2–3)

Let the Word move in, not pass through.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” (Colossians 3:16)

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”
(Psalm 119:11)

Test everything.

The Bereans “*searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*”
(Acts 17:11)

All Scripture is necessary.

“*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable...
that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good
works.*” (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

Why Literacy Matters

Without Scripture, we lose:

Discernment.

We are “*tossed to and fro... with every wind of doctrine.*” (Ephesians 4:14)

Holiness.

We cannot fight what we cannot name.
Temptation speaks loudest when truth is quietest.

Worship.

Songs become feelings without foundations.
Theology set to music requires theology.

Mission.

When the message is fuzzy, the mission is foggy.
Biblical clarity fuels evangelistic courage.

A Way Back

Not gimmicks.
Not guilt.
A return to the ordinary, supernatural means of grace.

Church Level

Preach the whole counsel. (Acts 20:27)

Expository, text-driven, Christ-centered.

Books, not just themes.

Recover the public reading of Scripture. (1 Timothy 4:13)

Let people hear whole chapters, not isolated lines.

Teach the basics on purpose.

A simple, recurring path:

- What is the gospel?
- Who is God? (attributes)
- How do we read the Bible?
- What is the church?
- How do we pray?
- How do we fight sin?

Rebuild small groups around the Text, not trends.

Open Bibles, open lives, clear application.

Catechize again.

Short, memorable Q&A that anchors souls.

Children and adults.

Memorize together.

Church-wide memory of anchor passages: Psalm 23; Psalm 103; Isaiah 53; John 1; John 15; Romans 8; Ephesians 2:1–10; Philippians 2:5–11.

Home Level

Family worship (10–15 minutes, most days):

1. Read a section.
2. Explain one truth in simple words.

3. Pray brief, honest prayers.
4. Sing a verse of a hymn or psalm.

Keep it short.

Keep it steady.

God grows oaks with daily water.

Talk along the way. (Deuteronomy 6)

Car rides, meal tables, bedtimes—sow truth everywhere.

Personal Level

Two speeds: big and slow.

- **Big:** read through Scripture each year (or two).
- **Slow:** pick one book; linger, mark, ask, obey.

A simple daily rhythm (15–30 minutes):

- **Hear:** read today's passage aloud.
- **Hinge:** write one sentence of truth.
- **Heart:** pray that truth into your life.
- **Hands:** name one obedient step.

Make it concrete.

Paper Bible open.

Phone in another room.

Same chair.

Same time.

Form an accountability pair.

Share what you read.

Ask real questions.

Pray by name.

Fast from noise.

One quiet hour weekly — no screens, just Scripture and prayer.
Let your mind re-learn attention.

Common Objections

“I don’t have time.”

We make time for what we treasure. (Matthew 6:21)
Start with ten minutes. God multiplies loaves — and minutes.

“I don’t understand.”

Keep reading. Ask someone. Use a simple study Bible.
Light grows with use. (Psalm 119:130)

“I miss days.”

Then miss pride, not days.
Return tomorrow. Manna spoils when hoarded; it nourishes when gathered daily.

What This Means for Us

If you lead — put the Bible at the center.
Plan the year around books of the Bible.
Train readers and teachers.
Measure health by Scripture saturation, not attendance spikes.

If you parent — become the chief catechist of your home.
Small, steady seeds. God gives growth.

If you are young in faith — begin with John, then Acts, then Romans.
Add Psalms for prayer, Proverbs for wisdom.
Keep going.

If you are seasoned — adopt a Timothy. (2 Timothy 2:2)
Pass on what you know.
Truth is not a trophy; it’s a torch.

If you feel dry — ask God to make His Word sweet again.

“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.”

(Psalm 119:18)

There is a famine in the land—

but there is Bread in the house.

Open the Book.

Let it dwell richly.

And watch God turn thin roots into trees by living water.

Chapter 15 – Pathways Back: The Role of Home Churches

*“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple,
and breaking bread from house to house,
did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,
praising God, and having favour with all the people.
And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”*
— Acts 2:46–47

When the church first began, there were no sanctuaries, no pulpits, no sound systems.

Just believers—
gathered in homes,
breaking bread,
sharing the Word,
bearing each other’s burdens.

It was personal.

It was relational.

It was hard to hide in the crowd, because there was no crowd to hide in.

Why Home Churches Are Growing Again

In many parts of the world, home churches are not a trend—
they are a necessity.

In China, Iran, and parts of Africa,
the home church is the only safe place to meet.

Here in the West,
some have returned to homes for a different reason:
to regain depth, simplicity, and fellowship
that feels lost in big, program-driven churches.

The model is as old as Acts 2—
but in our time, it's also a path back for believers who've slipped away.

What Home Churches Offer

1. Connection over consumption.

In a living room, there are no spectators.

Everyone is known.

Everyone contributes.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom...” (Colossians 3:16)

2. Simplicity.

No stage to fill.

No schedule to impress.

Just prayer, Scripture, and shared life.

3. Discipleship by proximity.

It's easier to encourage, challenge, and hold each other accountable when you're face to face, week after week.

4. Flexibility.

Ministry can respond immediately to needs—

meals for the sick, prayer for the hurting, help for the struggling.

Potential Pitfalls

Home churches are not magic.

They can drift into isolation,

become personality-driven,

or lack biblical oversight.

That's why Paul told Titus to appoint elders in every town (Titus 1:5).

Even small gatherings need leadership,

sound doctrine,

and connection to the wider body of Christ.

A Way Back for the Wounded

Many believers leave the institutional church
because they feel unseen, unheard, or unnecessary.

A healthy home church can be a bridge back to fellowship—
a place to heal without disappearing,
to be fed without being forgotten,
to rediscover that church is not a building,
but a body.

What This Means for Us

If your large church is thriving —
consider also supporting small groups that function more like true house
churches,
where discipleship can happen up close.

If you've been burned —
don't give up on gathering.
Try something smaller,
but stay rooted in Scripture and under godly leadership.

If you lead a home church —
guard it from drifting into a clique.
Keep it open to the hurting,
and anchored in the mission Jesus gave:
"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19)

The church started in homes.
It may finish there, too.
Whether in a living room or a cathedral,
the goal is the same:
Christ at the center,

His people in unity,
His Word guiding all.

Chapter 16 — Reclaiming the Pulpit — Restoring the Pastor-Teacher

"Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding." — **Jeremiah 3:15**

The Pulpit Shapes the People

In God's design, the health of the church is tied to the health of its shepherds. Strong pulpits produce strong believers. Weak pulpits produce weak believers.

Ephesians 4:11 tells us Christ gave *pastor-teachers* to His church — one role, not two. A shepherd feeds and protects. A teacher grounds and instructs. Both are needed. Both are expected in the same man.

But in many churches today, that role has been split — not officially, but functionally.

Some pastors lead with warmth but avoid doctrine. Others manage programs but shy away from calling sin to repentance. The result is an atmosphere where inspiration replaces instruction and feelings outweigh truth.

Where the Drift Began

There was a time when seminaries were the guardians of biblical fidelity — producing men saturated in Scripture, trained in expository preaching, prayer, holiness, and shepherding the flock.

But in many schools today, the center of gravity has shifted.

- **From Bible to business** — courses on marketing, branding, and leadership strategy often outweigh courses on theology and the original languages.
- **From truth to tolerance** — the pressure to avoid offense has muted the call to repentance.

- **From conviction to cultural comfort** — leaders are trained to adapt to the world instead of calling the world to Christ.

Sexual ethics has become the sharpest edge of this compromise. Entire denominations have split over whether to affirm what Scripture calls sin — not only same-sex practice, but also adultery, fornication, and any sexual intimacy outside the covenant of marriage.

The arguments are often wrapped in soft sympathy: “*God loves you as you are*”. And that is true — but only half true. The same Jesus who defended the woman caught in adultery also told her, “*Go now and leave your life of sin*” (John 8:11).

Love Without Truth Isn’t Love

A gospel that welcomes but does not transform is no gospel at all.

Paul asked the piercing question: “*Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?*” (Romans 6:1–2).

To preach grace without repentance is to preach a counterfeit gospel. It tells people they are safe while leaving them in chains.

Why This Matters

If the shepherd is unclear, the sheep will be confused.

If the shepherd is silent, the sheep will be scattered.

If the shepherd is compromised, the sheep will be corrupted.

Weak pulpits create shallow disciples.

Shallow disciples cannot withstand trials, recognize false teaching, or pass the faith on to the next generation.

The damage is slow but deadly. It produces churches that may be full on Sunday but empty on judgment day (Matthew 7:21–23).

How We Got Here

It didn't happen overnight.

1. **Cultural Pressure** — As the surrounding culture shifted, churches wanted to appear more welcoming and less “harsh.”
2. **Educational Drift** — Seminary boards began hiring faculty more aligned with social trends than with Scripture.
3. **Fear of Loss** — Pastors feared losing members or donors if they spoke too plainly about sin.
4. **Misdirected Compassion** — Sympathy for sinners slowly replaced the biblical call to salvation and holiness.

The result is pulpits that preach comfort without confrontation, blessing without obedience, and heaven without the cross.

The Biblical Model of the Pastor-Teacher

The Bible is not vague about what shepherds should be.

- **Guard the flock** — *“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock... Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood”* (Acts 20:28).
- **Feed the flock** — *“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction”* (2 Timothy 4:2).
- **Lead by example** — *“Be shepherds...not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock”* (1 Peter 5:2–3).

Notice: this is not marketing. It is not image management. It is not “avoiding offense.” It is courage, clarity, and care.

Turning the Tide

In the Local Church

- Mentor future pastors in-house. Let them preach, teach, and serve under watchful elders.
- Model a deep love for Scripture, not just polished communication.
- Expect leaders to call sin what God calls sin — all sin, without favoritism.

In the Seminaries

- Support only institutions that uphold biblical authority without compromise.
- Withdraw funding and students from schools that revise Scripture to fit culture.
- Encourage boards to hire faculty with proven pastoral faithfulness, not just academic credentials.

In the Congregation

- Choose a church that opens the Bible and explains it faithfully.
- Pray for your pastor's courage. Protect him when he takes heat for truth.
- Reject celebrity-driven ministry in favor of shepherds who know their sheep by name.

Facing the Pushback

The moment a pastor refuses to bless what God forbids, he will face resistance — from outside and sometimes from inside the church. But this is not new.

Paul told the Galatians, “*Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God?... If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ*” (Galatians 1:10).

The choice remains the same: please God or please man.
You cannot do both when the two disagree.

What If We Don’t Change?

If the pastoral pipeline stays corrupted:

- The next generation of pulpits will be weaker still.
- Biblical illiteracy will deepen.
- Churches will fracture further over moral issues.
- Many will be spiritually unprepared for persecution.

The enemy knows this. If he can compromise the shepherd, the sheep will wander.

The Hope That Remains

God is not finished. He still raises up shepherds “after His own heart” (Jeremiah 3:15).

He still equips ordinary men to preach extraordinary truth.

History shows He can use a single faithful voice to ignite renewal — men like Charles Spurgeon in Victorian England or John Knox in Scotland.

But renewal won’t come by accident.

It comes when God’s people demand truth, support the courageous, and reject compromise.

What This Means for Us

We are not powerless in this.

- **Pray for faithful pastors** — by name, regularly, earnestly.
- **Support biblical training** — send students to trustworthy schools, or train them in your own church.
- **Refuse to fund compromise** — stop financing institutions that preach another gospel.
- **Live the message** — a holy congregation strengthens a holy pulpit.

When the pulpit is reclaimed, the people are revived.

When the people are revived, the gospel is proclaimed with clarity and power.

And when the gospel is proclaimed faithfully, the kingdom advances — no matter the cost.

If we plant truth in the pulpit, we will harvest faith in the pew.

Chapter 17 – The Shepherd Who Knows His Sheep

*“I am the good shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me,
just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father;
and I lay down My life for the sheep.”*

—John 10:14–15

A church without a true shepherd may have sermons, music, and programs — but it will lack the personal care Jesus modeled.

The good shepherd knows his sheep.
Not just their names,
but their fears, wounds, and temptations.
He notices when one is missing.
He pursues the straggler.
He binds the broken leg,
lifts the weary,
and protects the flock from wolves.

This was the model Jesus gave,
and the apostles followed it.
But in much of the modern church,
pastors have become CEOs, event planners, or influencers —
managing systems more than tending souls.

Biblical Pastoral Care

Peter’s charge is clear:

*“Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight,
not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you;
not for shameful gain, but eagerly;
not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock”*
(1 Peter 5:2–3).

The emphasis is on personal presence—
being “among” the flock.

Pastoring is not done from a stage alone.

It is done in living rooms, hospital rooms, coffee tables,
and in quiet prayers over each name.

Paul told the Ephesian elders,

*“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers,
to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood”*
(Acts 20:28).

The weight of that sentence should make any pastor tremble.

The Cost of Distance

When the shepherd becomes distant,
sheep wander.

They feel unknown,
and eventually unloved.

The wolves have no trouble finding them—
false teachers, addictive habits, worldly distractions.

This is not merely about attendance numbers.

It’s about spiritual health.

A church can be full but sick
if no one is watching for signs of danger in the flock.

Jeremiah 23 gives a stinging rebuke to shepherds who scatter rather than care
for the sheep:

*“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!”
declares the Lord.*

God Himself promises to gather the remnant,
because His under-shepherds failed.

The Model of the Good Shepherd

Jesus' pastoral model was intensely relational.

He called His disciples by name.

He walked with them.

He asked questions and listened to answers.

He corrected them privately.

He prayed for them specifically (John 17).

He even told Peter after the resurrection,

"Feed My lambs...Tend My sheep...Feed My sheep" (John 21:15–17).

Notice the repetition.

Notice the tenderness.

The shepherd's job is not to entertain or impress —
it is to feed, guide, and protect.

Recovering Biblical Pastoral Care Today

How can we recover what has been lost?

1. Smaller circles within the larger church.

Even in a megachurch,

there can be smaller, elder-led groups where true shepherding happens.

2. A shift in pastoral priorities.

Less time on branding, more on being present.

Fewer meetings about the budget, more visits to the bedside.

3. Training for pastoral care.

Not every gifted preacher is a natural shepherd —

but pastoral skills can be learned and cultivated.

4. Shared leadership.

In the New Testament, multiple elders carried the shepherding load.

No one man was expected to be everywhere at once.

What This Means for Us

If you are a pastor—
Ask yourself: Do I truly know my sheep?
Could I name their struggles?
Have I walked with them through their valleys?

If you are part of a church—
Look for shepherds, not just speakers.
Support leaders who will invest in people,
even if they are less polished on stage.

If you've felt unseen—
Don't assume God is absent just because man has failed.
He is still the Good Shepherd,
and He may lead you to a place where human shepherds reflect His care more
faithfully.

A church can survive on events for a while.
It can draw a crowd with a talented communicator.
But sheep who are not known will eventually drift.

The true measure of a shepherd's ministry
is not how many attend the services,
but how many are still faithfully following Christ years later.

Chapter 18 – The Whole Counsel of God — Why Expository Preaching Still Works

“I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.”
— Acts 20:27

The modern pulpit has grown topical.
Messages often begin with a felt need—
stress, marriage, finances—
and then find verses to match.

That approach isn’t always wrong.
Jesus Himself addressed immediate concerns.
But when this becomes the norm,
the people of God never receive the full meal.
They get snacks instead.
And you can’t run the race of faith on spiritual finger food.

Why Expository Preaching Matters

Expository preaching takes the Bible as it is—
verse by verse, chapter by chapter,
book by book—
and unfolds the meaning in its context.

It doesn’t chase the trends of the week.
It lets God set the agenda.
Paul told Timothy,
*“Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season;
reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching”* (2
Timothy 4:2).

The Word itself is the power—
not the personality of the preacher,
not the cleverness of the outline.

The Whole Counsel

When Paul met the Ephesian elders in Acts 20,
he didn't boast about building crowds or meeting felt needs.
He said he had declared *the whole counsel of God*.
That means the easy parts and the hard parts.
The comforting promises and the sharp warnings.

Topical preaching often avoids the sharp edges.
But expository preaching forces us to face them.
When the next chapter is about judgment,
you preach judgment.
When it's about grace,
you preach grace.
When it challenges your own life,
you preach it anyway.

Benefits for the Church

1. Spiritual Depth

Exposition builds a theological backbone.
People learn not just verses, but the flow of God's redemptive plan.

2. Protection from Error

A well-fed congregation is harder to mislead.
When they've seen truth in context,
they recognize distortions.

3. Transferable Skills

Hearing Scripture explained in context
teaches believers how to read and study the Bible for themselves.

4. Unity in Truth

Shared, systematic study creates a common foundation.
Everyone is walking through the same passages together.

The Challenge Today

Expository preaching is slower.
It may not deliver a “wow” moment every week.
It requires endurance—both in the preacher and the hearer.

That’s why many churches avoid it.
It’s tempting to go for short series with catchy titles,
messages designed to draw quick interest.

But God never told pastors to hold attention.
He told them to feed sheep.

Recovering Expository Preaching

If we are to see depth return to the church,
we must return to this kind of preaching.

Pastors must commit to the long road.
Believers must be willing to engage their minds,
not just their emotions.
And churches must value truth over novelty.

We are not entertainers.
We are stewards of the oracles of God.
Every generation needs preachers who will open the Book and say,
“This is what God has said. Now let us obey.”

What This Means for Us

If you are a preacher—
Resist the urge to avoid the hard passages.
God’s people need more than what they want to hear.

If you are a listener—
Lean into the whole counsel.
It may challenge you.
It may confront your sin.
That's the point.

If your church doesn't offer systematic teaching—
Find ways to add it:
Bible classes, small group studies,
or even personal reading plans that take you through entire books.

The church that commits to expository preaching
will be slower to drift,
slower to compromise,
and quicker to recognize the voice of the Shepherd.

Because when you've heard His Word in full,
you can tell the difference between the voice of the Lord
and the voice of a stranger.

Chapter 19 – Discipleship in the Everyday — Taking Growth Beyond Sunday

*“These words that I command you today shall be on your heart.
You shall teach them diligently to your children,
and shall talk of them when you sit in your house,
and when you walk by the way,
and when you lie down, and when you rise.”*
—Deuteronomy 6:6–7

Sunday is the starting line, not the finish line.
Too many believers treat worship as a weekly recharge—
a shot of spiritual caffeine to carry them to next Sunday.

That’s not the pattern Scripture gives.
Faith is meant to be lived out in the ordinary—
woven into conversations, decisions, and habits every day.

Jesus’ Method Was Relational

When Jesus called His disciples,
He didn’t schedule them for weekly lectures.
He invited them into His life.
They ate together, walked together,
worked together, and served together.

They learned His teaching
not only by listening to His words,
but by watching His example in real time.

The Church's Modern Gap

In many churches, discipleship is a program.
It has a time slot and a classroom.
But life change rarely happens in a vacuum.

Programs can start the process —
but growth accelerates when believers
see the gospel lived out in the routines of everyday life.

Paul told the Thessalonians,
“We were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves” (1 Thessalonians 2:8).
That's the heart of everyday discipleship —
sharing the truth and sharing your life.

How Everyday Discipleship Works

1. Scripture in Conversation

Talk about God's Word naturally.
Not forced, not in “lesson mode,”
but as a normal part of discussing life.

2. Shared Work and Service

Serve alongside others.
Painting a widow's house can disciple as much as a Bible study —
when the work is framed in light of Christ's love.

3. Imitating Christ Together

Invite others into your home.
Let them see how you handle pressure,
how you pray over decisions,
how you reconcile after conflict.

Barriers We Must Break

Compartmentalized Faith

Many Christians split “spiritual life” from “real life.”
But the Bible doesn’t make that divide.
Everything belongs to God.

Fear of Vulnerability

We hide our struggles,
thinking they disqualify us from helping others grow.
Yet God often uses our weakness to teach humility and grace.

Busyness

We fill every spare moment
and then claim we have no time for relationships.
But discipleship takes time—
and it’s worth reordering life to make it possible.

Everyday Discipleship in Action

- A young believer learns to pray
because an older believer calls and prays with them weekly.
- A small group adopts a single mom,
helping with errands, repairs, and encouragement.
- A coworker sees you respond with kindness
when falsely accused—
and asks why.

These are not “church events.”
They are life lived on mission.

What This Means for Us

If you're a seasoned believer—
Invite someone to walk alongside you in daily life.
Don't wait for a program.
Mentor over coffee, over laundry,
over a thousand small moments.

If you're a newer believer—
Seek out someone who will let you see their faith in action.
Ask questions.
Listen.
Learn by imitation as well as instruction.

If you're a church leader—
Equip your people to make disciples where they are—
in homes, workplaces, neighborhoods.
Sunday services are a launching pad,
but the flight happens Monday through Saturday.

Discipleship isn't a one-hour block.
It's a lifestyle.
It's the willingness to let others in,
and the humility to be taught in return.

When the church lives like this,
growth isn't just measured in attendance,
but in maturity—
and the everyday world becomes a classroom for Christ.

Chapter 20 - Pastors, Teachers, and the Power of Mentoring

*“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,
to equip the saints for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Christ.” — Ephesians 4:11–12*

The Problem Beneath the Problem

We’ve said it before — the modern church can be a mile wide and an inch deep.

But shallow faith doesn’t just happen because the sermons are too light. It happens because there’s no one walking alongside believers after the sermon ends.

Many pastors carry the burden as if they alone are responsible for the spiritual growth of hundreds.

Meanwhile, mature believers sit in the pews, encouraged to “attend” but rarely called to *disciple*.

We have, in practice, separated “pastor” from “teacher” and “mentor.” But in the New Testament, these were inseparable.

The Pastor-Teacher Role

In *Ephesians 4:11*, the Greek construction links “pastor” (shepherd) and “teacher” together.

A shepherd who cannot teach cannot feed the flock.

A teacher who cannot shepherd will starve them in the field.

Paul modeled both:

- **Publicly:** Preaching to the gathered church (Acts 20:20).

- **Privately:** Teaching “from house to house” — not just addressing crowds, but knowing names and stories.

The job is not simply to inspire on Sunday, but to equip for Monday through Saturday.

Mentoring Is Biblical

This is not a modern invention — it’s the original discipleship model.

Jesus with the Twelve — He preached to the masses, but He *trained* a few, explaining parables in private, correcting their misunderstandings, and showing them what obedience looked like in action.

Paul with Timothy and Titus — He didn’t just hand them sermons; he gave them his life (2 *Timothy* 3:10 — “You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience...”).

Older to Younger — Titus 2 commands older men and women to train the younger in godliness. That’s mentoring. That’s family.

Not Just the Pastor’s Job

The pastor’s calling is to equip the saints for the work of ministry — not to do *all* the ministry himself.

If the pastor is the only discipler, the church will always be bottlenecked.

Hebrews 5:12 rebukes this very passivity:

“By this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again...”

Mature believers must move from consumers to contributors — from being fed to feeding others.

Why We Don't Mentor

- **Fear of inadequacy:** "I'm not a Bible scholar."
- **Busyness:** "I don't have time for someone else's spiritual growth."
- **Unclear expectations:** "No one's ever shown me how."

These are solvable problems — but only if the leadership casts vision and gives tools.

Models That Work

Here are proven approaches from history and today:

1. One-on-One Discipleship

The Navigators' "life-to-life" method — meet weekly, study Scripture, memorize verses, pray, and apply the Word together.
Simple, relational, reproducible.

2. Small Group Mentoring

John Wesley's "class meetings" — groups of 8–12 where believers shared struggles, confessed sins, and encouraged each other toward holiness.
Built accountability into the DNA of the church.

3. Apprenticeship Ministry

Pair newer believers with mature ones in ministry contexts — hospital visits, outreach, teaching prep — so discipleship happens in real life, not just a classroom.

4. Tiered Mentorship

Each mentor trains two people, who in turn mentor two others (2 *Timothy* 2:2).
Multiplication by design.

Practical Steps for a Mentoring Culture

- **Identify & Equip Mentors** — Pastor or elders personally train a group of mature believers in how to disciple biblically.
- **Pair Intentionally** — Match people based on life stage, schedule, and spiritual maturity.
- **Set Clear Goals** — Bible reading plan, prayer, basic doctrine, personal holiness, ministry involvement.
- **Review Regularly** — Quarterly check-ins to encourage mentors and ensure growth is happening.

Addressing the Mile-Wide, Inch-Deep Problem

Mentoring slows down the conveyor belt of church life long enough for roots to grow.

When truth is learned in relationship, it sticks.

When believers see the gospel lived out up close, they imitate it (*Philippians 3:17*).

Without this, churches risk creating spiritually fragile believers who can sing loudly on Sunday and crumble quietly by Wednesday.

What This Means for Us

If you are a pastor —

- Preach faithfully, but also lead in mentoring.
- Identify faithful people who can teach others also (*2 Timothy 2:2*).
- Give them permission and responsibility to disciple.

If you are a mature believer —

- Stop waiting for a formal title.

- Look around for someone newer in the faith and invite them into your life.
- Share Scripture, pray together, and walk with them through the real struggles of obedience.

If you are new to the faith —

- Ask for a mentor.
- Be teachable.
- See this as God's provision for your growth.

Final Word

Paul told the Thessalonians, “*We were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves*” (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

That's the heart of mentoring.

Not just passing along information — but sharing a life.

A mile-wide church can become deep again if the faithful will step out of the pews and into the lives of others.

Chapter 21 – A Church That Stands Apart — Holiness in the Midst of Cultural Compromise

*“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance,
but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,
since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”*
— 1 Peter 1:14–16

The early church stood out.
Not because they were trendy.
Not because they blended in.
They stood out because they lived differently—
morally, relationally, spiritually.

Their values were upside-down compared to Rome’s.
And people noticed.

Today, many churches blend so seamlessly into the culture
that you can barely tell the difference.
The line between sacred and secular has been blurred
until holiness is almost an outdated concept.

What Holiness Is—And Isn’t

Holiness is not perfectionism.
It’s not hiding from the world in fear.
Holiness means being set apart for God—
thinking His thoughts,
loving what He loves,
hating what He hates.

It is purity in motive and action.
It is choosing God’s ways
even when they cost you.

Holiness is practical:
how you speak,
how you treat people,
how you handle money,
what you watch,
and where your heart finds joy.

Cultural Compromise Is Subtle

Rarely does the church fall into sin overnight.
It's usually one small concession at a time:

- Softening on sin to avoid offense.
- Redefining truth to fit current trends.
- Making worship about entertainment.
- Treating Scripture as “helpful advice” instead of divine command.

James warns,
“Friendship with the world is enmity with God” (James 4:4).
We can't walk arm-in-arm with the world's values
and claim to walk closely with Christ.

Why the Church Compromises

Fear of Rejection

We want the world to like us,
so we adjust our message to be less offensive.

Love of Comfort

Standing apart costs something—
sometimes jobs, sometimes friendships, sometimes safety.

Misunderstanding Love

We think being loving means never confronting sin.

But Jesus, the embodiment of love,
confronted sin directly and clearly.

A Church That Stands Apart

To stand apart, we must first stand with God.
This means:

1. Unapologetic Truth

Speak God's Word as it is written.
No softening. No reshaping.
Truth saves. Compromise does not.

2. Different Priorities

Wealth, fame, and power are the world's measures of success.
Faithfulness, humility, and obedience are God's.

3. Visible Purity

Not self-righteousness,
but a life that clearly reflects Christ's character —
in speech, in business, in relationships.

Holiness Attracts and Repels

Some will be drawn to the light.

Others will be offended by it.

Paul wrote,

*"We are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved
and among those who are perishing,
to one a fragrance from death to death,
to the other a fragrance from life to life"* (2 Corinthians 2:15–16).

Holiness has always divided opinion —
but it always pleases God.

What This Means for Us

If you're a believer—
Ask yourself if your life is clearly different
because you belong to Christ.
Would someone know you are His
without you telling them?

If you're a church—
Evaluate your message and your methods.
Are they shaped by God's Word
or by cultural expectations?

If you're a leader—
Model holiness openly.
Confess sin honestly.
Teach your people that standing apart
is part of their witness.

Holiness won't win you popularity contests.
It might cost you influence in the world.
But it will gain you eternal reward—
and a clear conscience before the Lord.

In the end, the only verdict that matters
is His.

Chapter 22 – Working Until He Comes — The Acts 1 Reminder to Serve Faithfully Now

*“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?
This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven,
will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.”*
—Acts 1:11

The disciples had just watched the unimaginable—
Jesus, risen from the dead,
ascending into the clouds.

If there was ever a moment to stand in awe, this was it.
And yet... two angels interrupted their gaze.

“Why are you standing here looking into heaven?”

It was a gentle rebuke.
The message:
Yes, He’s coming back—
but your job is here, now.

The Temptation to Wait Instead of Work

Christians have always wrestled
with the balance between watching for His return
and working until He comes.

Some lean toward passive waiting—
eyes on the clouds,
hearts longing for escape from the world’s troubles.

Others forget He’s coming at all—
living as though today is all there is.

Both miss the command Jesus gave:

Be faithful now.

Work now.

Serve now.

What the Disciples Did Next

After the angels' reminder,
the disciples returned to Jerusalem.

They prayed.

They chose leaders.

They preached the gospel.

They healed the sick.

They did not know how long Jesus would take to return.

But they knew what He had left them to do.

The Great Commission was their marching order—

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19).

Work Is Part of Watching

Waiting is not idle.

True waiting is active.

Jesus used parables to make this point:

- The faithful servant who keeps working until the master returns (Luke 12:42–44).
- The ten virgins who kept their lamps ready for the bridegroom (Matthew 25:1–13).
- The servants entrusted with talents to invest (Matthew 25:14–30).

Each story carries the same truth:

Preparation is proven by action.

Why We Drift Toward Idleness

Distraction

We fill our time with good things,
but not the main thing.

Discouragement

When the world grows darker,
it's tempting to withdraw and wait for rescue.

Doubt

We start to wonder if our work matters—
if anyone notices,
if anything will change.

Paul addressed all three in Galatians 6:9—
*“Let us not grow weary of doing good,
for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”*

Faithful Work in the Present

What does it mean to “work until He comes”?

1. Preach the Gospel

Not just from pulpits—
but in conversations, in relationships, in the way we live.

2. Serve the Body

Build up the church.
Meet needs.
Encourage the discouraged.

3. Live Holy Lives

Holiness is its own form of witness.
It shows that our hope is in Christ,
not in this world.

4. Stand Against Darkness

Refuse to compromise truth,
even when culture demands it.

The Urgency of the Hour

We don't know the day or hour.
But each day brings us closer.
The world will not drift toward righteousness —
so the work will not get easier.

That is why Jesus told us to be found faithful,
not found idle,
when He returns.

What This Means for Us

If you're weary —
remember that the reward is not here.
It's coming with Him.

If you're distracted —
clear away what keeps you from your true calling.

If you're discouraged —
remember that God's Word never returns void (Isaiah 55:11).
No act of faithfulness is wasted.

The angels' message still stands:
Don't just look to the sky.
Look to the field.

Work while it is day.
The night is coming when no one can work (John 9:4).

And when the sky finally splits,
and the trumpet sounds,
may He find us in the middle of the work
He gave us to do.

Chapter 23 – A Remnant Still Stands — Why God Always Preserves a Faithful Few

“So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.”

—Romans 11:5

History shows a pattern.

God’s people wander.

Truth is forgotten.

Holiness fades.

And yet—some remain.

A remnant.

They may be small.

They may be overlooked.

But they are faithful.

God has always preserved them.

From Noah’s family in a corrupt world,

to seven thousand in Israel who refused to bow to Baal,

to the persecuted church hiding in catacombs,

a faithful few always stand.

Why a Remnant Matters

The remnant keeps the light burning.

When nations reject God,

the remnant prays,

worships,

teaches truth,

and lives set apart.

They are God’s seed for renewal—

the roots from which revival can grow.

Isaiah called them
“a stump” after judgment had cut the tree down (Isaiah 6:13).
Small, but alive.
Seemingly insignificant,
but carrying the promise of life.

Chosen by Grace, Not Numbers

We measure strength by size.
God measures by faithfulness.

Gideon’s army was reduced from 32,000 to 300.
The early church began with 120 in an upper room.
In both cases, God worked through the few—
so no one could credit human power.

Paul reminded the Romans,
“So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace” (Romans 11:5).
Not chosen for skill,
not chosen for influence—
chosen because God is faithful to His promises.

The Remnant’s Calling

Being part of the remnant is not a status to boast about.
It’s a responsibility.

The remnant:

- Guards the truth when others distort it.
- Lives holy lives when the culture mocks them.
- Bears witness when others are silent.
- Intercedes when others forget to pray.

The Cost of Remaining

Remaining faithful in a faithless age will cost you.
The remnant in Elijah's day hid in fear of death.
The remnant in the early church faced prison and execution.
Today's remnant may face social rejection, job loss,
or persecution in parts of the world.

Jesus warned,
*"You will be hated by all for my name's sake.
But the one who endures to the end will be saved"* (Matthew 10:22).

Why God Preserves a Few

To Keep the Witness Alive

God will not leave Himself without a voice in the world.

To Fulfill His Promises

He promised Abraham descendants,
David a throne,
and the church victory —
no matter how dark the times.

To Show His Power in Weakness

When the faithful are few,
it is clear the victory belongs to the Lord.

What This Means for Us

If you feel alone in your faith,
you may be part of the remnant.
Don't let that drive you to despair.

Instead, let it drive you to greater faithfulness.

- Stand firm when others compromise.
- Speak truth when others stay silent.
- Pray when others give up.

The remnant's influence is not in their number—
it is in their connection to the living God.

Looking Ahead

The remnant in the Old Testament often became the foundation
for God's next move in history.
After exile, they rebuilt Jerusalem.
After Pentecost, a small group launched the gospel to the nations.

The same could be true today.
If Christ tarries,
the remnant now may be the spark
that lights the next great revival.

You may feel the tide is against you.
You may wonder if it's worth it.
But remember—
God has always preserved His people.

He will not stop now.

Be among those who stand.

Chapter 24 – Rebuilding the Walls — Lessons from Nehemiah for Today’s Church

“Let us rise up and build.” So they strengthened their hands for the good work.

—Nehemiah 2:18

Jerusalem was in ruins.
The walls broken down.
The gates burned.

God’s people had returned from exile,
but they were living among rubble.

Then God stirred Nehemiah’s heart.
A cupbearer in a foreign palace
became the leader of a rebuilding movement.

The First Step — See the Ruin Clearly

Nehemiah began by inspecting the walls at night.
No crowd. No noise.
Just a careful walk through the devastation.

You cannot rebuild what you refuse to see.

Today’s church needs this same honest look.
Not just attendance numbers,
but spiritual depth.
Not just buildings,
but disciples.

If the walls of truth and holiness have crumbled,
we must admit it before we can repair them.

The Second Step — Seek God First

When Nehemiah heard about Jerusalem's condition,
he didn't start a committee.

He prayed.

He fasted.

He confessed the sins of his people.

He began with repentance before strategy.

The church cannot rebuild
without first bowing low before God—
acknowledging our failures,
asking for mercy,
seeking His favor.

The Third Step — Strengthen the Hands for the Work

Nehemiah told the people,
*“The God of heaven will make us prosper,
and we His servants will arise and build”* (Nehemiah 2:20).

Rebuilding requires willing hands.
It is not the task of leaders alone.
Every believer has a part—
just as every section of Jerusalem's wall had its builders.

When the church is rebuilt,
it will be because the whole body worked together.

The Opposition Will Come

As soon as the work began,
Sanballat and Tobiah mocked,
threatened,
and plotted.

Nehemiah's answer was not to quit,
but to post guards with swords in one hand
and tools in the other (Nehemiah 4:17).

Rebuilding the church today will draw ridicule.
There will be internal resistance and external pressure.

The answer is not retreat.
It is watchfulness.
Prayer in one hand,
obedience in the other.

The Power of Shared Commitment

One of the striking features of Nehemiah's story
is how ordinary people built next to each other—
priests beside goldsmiths,
merchants beside farmers.

The work was not divided by class,
status,
or profession.

This is the blueprint for the church:
all members laboring side by side,
without rivalry,
for the sake of God's glory.

Rebuilding Means Restoring What Matters

Nehemiah's work was not just about stone and mortar.
The walls protected something far greater—
the worship of God at the temple.

Rebuilding in our day is the same.
The point is not larger buildings or more programs.

It is to restore truth,
holiness,
prayer,
and gospel witness.

Without those,
walls are just decoration.

When the Work Is Finished

Nehemiah's wall was completed in 52 days—
a miracle of focus and unity.

And when it was done,
the people gathered not for a parade,
but for the reading of God's Word (Nehemiah 8).

Rebuilding is not complete
until the people are shaped by Scripture.

What This Means for Us

The church today needs Nehemiah's vision.

- **See the ruin honestly** — don't sugarcoat decline.
- **Seek God before action** — prayer and repentance must come first.
- **Put everyone to work** — the body builds itself up when every part does its share.
- **Expect opposition** — be ready with both sword and trowel.
- **Keep the goal clear** — restoration of worship and witness.

The church's walls—truth, holiness, and mission—can be rebuilt.
But only if we rise together and say,
“Let us rise up and build.”

Chapter 25 – From Disaster to Revival — What Real Renewal Looks Like

*“Will you not revive us again,
that your people may rejoice in you?”*
—Psalm 85:6

When the walls are down,
when the worship is cold,
when the people are scattered—
revival is the cry of the faithful.

But revival is not a marketing campaign.
It is not scheduled on a calendar.
It is not a week of special meetings.

Revival is when God breathes life into what was dead,
and the church awakens to love, holiness, and mission.

Revival Begins with God’s Presence

The first mark of revival is not excitement—
it is the felt nearness of God.

When Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up,
he was undone (Isaiah 6:5).
When the Spirit fell at Pentecost,
the disciples were bold,
the crowd was cut to the heart (Acts 2:37).

True revival is God coming among His people in power,
not us working harder to impress Him.

Revival Begins in the House of God

“It is time for judgment to begin at the household of God” (1 Peter 4:17).

We often pray for God to change “the world out there,”
but revival starts “in here.”

It begins with the church repenting of her own sin,
returning to her first love,
casting off idols,
and embracing obedience.

When God’s people are made right with Him,
the watching world takes notice.

Revival Is Marked by Brokenness

Before the joy of renewal comes the sorrow of conviction.

In Nehemiah’s day,
after the wall was rebuilt,
the people wept as Ezra read the Law (Nehemiah 8:9).

In the Welsh revival of 1904,
meetings often began with hours of confession—
sins named aloud,
relationships reconciled,
stolen goods returned.

Revival that skips over repentance
is not revival at all.

Revival Restores the Word to Its Place

Every true revival in history has been marked
by a return to Scripture.

In Josiah's day,
the rediscovered Book of the Law
brought national repentance (2 Kings 22).

In the Reformation,
the Bible was placed back in the hands of the people.

When God moves,
He stirs hunger for His Word—
not as a footnote,
but as the foundation.

Revival Sends God's People Out

Pentecost did not end in the upper room.
The Spirit-filled church spilled into the streets,
and the gospel went to the nations.

A church that experiences real revival
will not keep it inside the building.
The overflow of joy and conviction
will send believers to neighbors and nations alike.

Beware of Counterfeits

Not every wave of religious energy is revival.
Emotional highs can be manufactured.
Crowds can be gathered without hearts being changed.

Jeremiah warned,
*"They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,'
when there is no peace"* (Jeremiah 6:14).

If sin is not addressed,
if holiness is not pursued,

if the gospel is not central,
it is not revival—no matter how big the crowd.

What This Means for Us

We cannot manufacture revival,
but we can prepare for it.

- Pray earnestly for God to move.
- Repent of personal and corporate sin.
- Restore the Word to the center of our lives.
- Seek unity in the body of Christ.
- Be ready to go wherever God sends you.

The church in our time is fractured,
distracted,
and often content with surface success.

But God has not changed.
He still takes dry bones and makes them live (Ezekiel 37:10).
He still turns hearts of stone into hearts of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26).

The cry of Psalm 85:6 should be ours:

*“Will you not revive us again,
that your people may rejoice in you?”*

And if He does—
the joy, the holiness, the mission—
will be unmistakable.

Conclusion — Holding the Line Until He Comes

*“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.
Let all that you do be done in love.”*

— 1 Corinthians 16:13–14

We began this journey looking honestly at the state of the modern church.

Not the glossy brochure version.

The real one.

We saw the frailties—

celebrity culture,

marketing replacing mission,

fear of offense,

biblical illiteracy,

and a generation growing up in youth groups without knowing the gospel.

We didn’t point fingers at “them out there.”

We looked at “us in here.”

From Frailty to Faithfulness

We explored how the church can lose its moorings when:

- Pastors become personalities instead of shepherds.
- Worship becomes a concert instead of a sacrifice.
- Preaching replaces teaching, leaving the flock shallow.
- Evangelism gets outsourced to programs instead of lived by people.

We asked what it would look like to return to the biblical model—
pastors who know their sheep,
teaching that builds depth,
fellowship that disciples,
worship that exalts Christ more than the band.

The Corrective Path

We considered pathways back:

- **The Shepherd Who Knows His Sheep** — Pastoral care rooted in relationship, not ratings.
- **The Whole Counsel of God** — Expository preaching that lets Scripture set the agenda.
- **Discipleship in the Everyday** — Growth that happens at the dinner table and on the job site, not only in the pew.
- **A Church That Stands Apart** — Holiness that marks us as different in a world desperate for the real thing.

None of these are optional extras.

They are the bones and sinews of a healthy body.

The Warnings We Can't Ignore

Along the way, we heard the prophets and watchmen:

- Tozer's cry that the church could entertain itself to death.
- Warnings from history—like England's drift from gospel vitality to spiritual barrenness.
- The reminder that truth without love is a weapon, and love without truth is surrender.

We saw that when the church compromises—
to fit the culture,
to keep the peace,
to maintain the numbers—
she loses the very thing the world needs most:
the undiluted gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Call to Work

We also remembered that Jesus didn't ascend so we could wait passively
for His return.

When the disciples stood gazing into heaven,
the angel said:

"Why do you stand looking into heaven?" (Acts 1:11)

Our calling is to work until He comes—
to plant seeds we may never see grow,
to bear witness in word and deed,
to make disciples who will make disciples.

The work is not glamorous.
It is often costly.
But it is always worth it.

The Hope That Anchors

Through every failure, every shortcoming,
God has always kept a remnant.

Elijah thought he was alone—
but God had seven thousand who had not bowed to Baal (1 Kings
19:18).

Nehemiah rebuilt a wall with a handful of determined laborers.

The early church spread across the world under the shadow of the sword.

God's people have never survived by being the majority —
but by being faithful.

What This Means for Us

We cannot fix the whole church.
But we can be the church where we are.

We can:

- Refuse to settle for shallow teaching.
- Live as salt and light in our neighborhoods.
- Open our homes as places of worship and discipleship.
- Pray for pastors and leaders to be bold and tender,
guarding the flock instead of building a platform.

We can choose holiness when compromise is easy.
We can choose mission when comfort is tempting.
We can choose faithfulness over fame.

From Disaster to Revival

Revival will not come through clever branding or better entertainment.
It will come when the people of God:

- Humble themselves.
- Seek His face.
- Turn from their wicked ways.

Then—*then*—He will hear from heaven and heal the land (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Our part is to prepare the soil.
God sends the rain when He wills.

Standing on the Edge

We stand at a crossroads.

One road continues the drift—
toward shallowness,
compromise,
and eventual spiritual irrelevance.

The other leads to renewal—
costly,
countercultural,
Christ-centered renewal.

We can't walk both.

The Final Word Before the Hope

If you have read this far,
you already care about the state of the church.
You see the cracks.
You hear the Spirit's warning.

The question now is not what's wrong with "the church."
It's whether you and I will be faithful in *our* part of it.

Because in every age,
God has worked through a remnant willing to pray,

repent,
and rebuild.

May we be that people.
May we hold the line until He comes.