

I'm afraid that if I try to explain to you what I want to do this week, it will be too much for you to grasp. But I'm going to say it anyway. First of all, I personally am very aware that I'm standing just a few miles away from where they burned John Hus, and I also am aware that we might not be here if it had not been for men like John Hus who gave their lives to make our day possible. So, I am very aware of the historical implications. Secondly, I am back in my second home. I lived in Switzerland longer than any other place I've ever lived. Well, maybe it's my third home. I just remembered I lived in Canada longer than in Switzerland, but I never think of that. I'm not very far from the place where I studied, nor am I far away from the place where the Anabaptists began in Zurich, and the Roman Catholics used to give them an ironic way of dying, in that the Anabaptists believed in adult baptism, so the Catholics gave it to them by drowning them. I am aware of that.

Now, the things that are on my heart...I guess one thing I would like to do, if I could in one week, but I can't, is to completely destroy your way of thinking, just smash it to pieces. I would bring down the evangelical Christian mind if I could. That would take a little time. Secondly, I would like for us to come to a whole new approach to the Word of God, one that is...and I'm going to use the word "new," because I am absolutely certain that it's not happened before, because I've never found it, and I've searched hard. You're not going to understand this, but I declare the gospel of the Lord from a model. Now, that doesn't mean a thing in the world to anybody in this room but me. As far as I know—this is not a boast, this is just history—as far as I know, I am the first and only person who ever preached the gospel from a model. Now, would one of you like to ask me what I mean by "a model"? Okay, now then, would anybody in this room like to take a stab at what I mean by a model? You don't know?

When people who believe in evolution talk about it, they have to build a model because they weren't there: how fish evolved, how man evolved, how the universe evolved, so they build a model. When scientists work on something new, they often will build a model and say, "This is the way it's going to be, we think." Of course, architects always build a model before they build their building. That's more or less a present thing. Models are used in just about every area of human endeavor, one way or the other. A creationist will use a model to prove that Earth was created by God in a very short length of time. That's a model. Are you beginning to understand what I'm saying? They weren't there; therefore, they have to build a model. Can someone help me now that you've heard this with a model? A pharmacist may sometimes build a model of a molecule to better understand it. Astronomers build models of the universe and study and understand them. They have to because time is warped.

Now then, I have either succeeded in explaining to you what generally a model is, or I haven't. Do you want to ask any more questions before I describe what I mean by a model in my own life? Are you following me at all? To my knowledge, there has never been a model made of the first-century church, or the first-century experience, including the Lord's life. We kind of stick it together with glue as we go along. Trouble comes up—here's a verse that says something else happens—this is the way I think God's people did it. Then, with the

evangelical mind, we go to the Scripture, and we find Christian universities, Bible schools, church buildings, pulpits, pastors, pews—they're all in the New Testament...but we find them there when we need to find them.

When I was 29 years old, I began building a model. It started on the day of Pentecost and ended with John on Patmos, and I included everything on Earth I could find, and I have never varied from that model. I don't try to find something that's not there. I don't try to justify something new tomorrow. I looked at it as a student of history, and I looked at it as someone who has spent his whole life, up to this very hour, studying first-century history so that I might be able to better understand the model that was created. I will speak to you from a model. It's the first time I've ever said this publicly. I don't expect you to understand it, but if I could, I would force everyone who has ever spoken or ministered the gospel to first build a model.

I would like him to justify the Bible school, the seminary, the pastor, the pew, the minister of education, the mission board, the mission field, and the missionaries. What else can I throw in there? Sunday school...from his model. Lots of other things. A Bible study class. Sunday morning church service. The Sunday morning ritual. You have to build it into your model and say, "This is what they did in the first century, and here is the story from beginning to end." If you build a model of the first-century church, you cannot put those things in there. They're not there. Now, I'm not beating this thing with an axe. It's a very private thing to me, but I'm going to talk to you from a model. That's another thing. Then, that's why I kind of hated getting up here and telling you what this week's about.

I want to tell you something else: I don't like to pray. I can do about all the praying I'm going to do in about two minutes. I also don't like to kneel unless it's on the carpet. A little louder, please. I find prayer boring. I find it—man laughs—most of it scripturally unjustifiable. But there is something I do believe in very strongly, and it bothers me. I believe in knowing the Lord, and touching the Lord, and experiencing the Lord, and embracing the Lord, and fellowshiping with the Lord, and encountering the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, what brought me out of the organized church was not the model. Two things brought me out of the organized church. One was pure, unadulterated boredom; I just couldn't go to church again unless I was horse-whipped all the way there. But the other thing is that I had a hunger to know my Lord, and I went after that with everything that I knew. I have in my library most of the writings of the mystics of the Catholic Church and the Protestant Church. However, I've thrown away a lot of those books, as well as the Eastern Orthodox Church mystics, and anything else they ever had to say that might help me a little bit about the Lord. And all the Protestant and Evangelical books I could find, and most of it was worthless, almost all of it, in fact. I can't think of anything that helped me other than Jeanne Guyon's little book, and that was in one chapter.

What frustrates me is that I just came back from a conference of the house church movement in America. It was my third time to be there, and I blew my stack. I got frustrated.

I'll not dare say I got angry, because that's not true. I couldn't possibly get angry. Fortunately, they are a very gracious bunch of people with a wonderful sense of humor, and you can say things to them and not offend them. I watched those brothers preach and preach and preach out of the Bible, and they were putting together the church. One brother spoke for an hour and a half on why women should be silent in the meetings. I don't remember what another brother spoke on. Someone else probably spoke about elders and all that. One of the things I said to them is: in my library is a book written by Alexander Hay in the early part of this century, and there's not one single thing they have said but what has been covered by Hay, way back at the beginning of the century. There's nothing new there. I said to them, "Brothers, I do not understand why you are not passionately trying to find your Lord." And it bothers me that the house church movement doesn't have passion.

Brothers and sisters, I'm going to qualify this a little bit, but most of the Christian faith has moved forward on the basis of fanaticism. Good fanaticism. Burning hearts of people who cannot stand what's going on. They got up and caused a stink, and then some things happened that brought us a little further on. My point being, this is the longest opportunity I will have to be with the brothers and sisters from Chicago, and I'm looking forward to it. We're going to talk about touching the Lord, perhaps more than anything else. Other than the time that we spent together in Louisiana, and y'all all went home and diligently had a fight, and the whole thing fell on its face. Margaret, is that not accurate? You don't know? Well, I'll tell you after the meeting. Y'all got home and got a little sidetracked from Louisiana. We spent the week there. It was some of the healthiest things that ever happened to the church in Chicago. If you think about it sometimes, you'll figure it out, but anyway, it doesn't matter. It concerns me that most of our preaching is done on the level of the earth rather than the other realm, and most of our experience is very earthly rather than heavenly.

Now, the last thing, and if I can do any of this well, I will be very surprised this week. We have reached a place in Christian history where we are virtually without the church. Now, that may not be true of the people in this room, but even those of us in this room, and I count myself as part of that, it is still difficult for us to break away from our evangelical mind and see the centrality of the church. Now, I'm using the word "centrality," and I know what that means. So, I must be very careful to say: the centrality of Christ in the church. We have a Bible, we have a New Testament, that we can stretch in any direction we wish to justify just about anything. And when we come to the Scripture, it is our natural inclination for the last 1700 years to minister to you, *the individual*. We have almost no capacity whatsoever to find the Scripture addressing a body of believers, and that's one of the things I'm going to attempt to do this week: to take our brains and crack them open. I want you to know that I struggle with doing this myself, and if I struggle with it, I can only imagine how difficult it must be for many, many others of God's people, because this is something that I am consumed with. I am consumed with the church. She is my breath, my love, my passion, and yet I also find it very difficult to come to the Scripture and realize that most of it is not addressed to "me." That it's addressed to "us." Now, you try sometimes to minister anything, and it'll come out "you," and it'll come out "me" every time...but it's to the church. Okay,

now, I'm through with that. That's my introduction. Does anybody want to say something? I'm going to tell you a story, and the brothers and sisters from Chicago, when they hear it, they're going to think that they've heard it before, but I'm going to tell you a story that nobody in this room has ever heard before. In fact, this is the first time I have ever told it. It's a long story. It will seem to have nothing to do with this week. It has everything to do with this week.

Have you ever read a book by Gene Edwards entitled *Revolution*? Yes, you have. You wouldn't be here. Of course you have. Don't tell me you have not. That starts with the day of Pentecost and ends with the day when Paul and Barnabas begin their church-planting trip. It ends with Paul about to make his second trip. Okay? I have written a book that covers both of those. One of them is called *Revolution*, which takes us up to Paul's first church planting trip. And now, in October of 1998, there will be a book coming out entitled *The Silas Diary*, which will take you through—where does it take you to, Gene? It takes you through...you know something? I wrote the book; I don't remember where it ends. Golly Moses, this is embarrassing. Well, it ends somewhere, and now I'm going to take up where that book leaves off. Obviously, *The Silas Diary* covers Paul's second journey. I'm going to pick up at the very end of the second journey, and I'm going to take you through the third journey. I don't even feel I have a right to speak to you unless you know what I'm about to tell you. Otherwise, I could be lying to you.

I'm going to take a book from the New Testament. I'm going to treat it in a way I've never treated it before. I want to present it to you, but I want you to know the whole story behind it first. By the way, stop me anytime and interrupt me, and tomorrow morning and tomorrow night...beginning this evening, I want you to keep your Bibles nearby. I'm not going to use mine tonight, but after that, we will use it constantly.

Well, let me review the second journey really quickly, may I? Paul and Silas go to Galatia, where there are four churches, and they revisit them. Those churches have just been really hurt by the Jewish...I want to say Blastinius Drachrachma, but you don't know who he is. Anyway, they have been hurt by a Jewish gentleman who has come through there trying to circumcise the Christians in the four churches in Galatia, which are Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Paul and Silas come through and visit them.

Now then, Paul and Silas go from there and plod along, trying to go to the right and to the left, but they can't make it. All they can do is go north, and they go as far north as they can, and the Holy Spirit stops them. So Paul has a vision, and there's someone who says, "Come over into northern Greece and help us." Did you hear what I just said? What did I just say? Did I say anything unusual just now? You didn't, you didn't hear that, did you? What I should have said...Macedonia. Sister, I was 75 years old before I found out that Macedonia was northern Greece. So, I'm saying northern Greece. They landed in a town called Philippi. Philippi was named after Alexander the Great's father. It was a town of about 300–400 years old, but it had been destroyed several times. It had been rebuilt by Augustus and Mark Anthony out of gratitude for the fact that the city sided with them during their war with

Brutus, who had assassinated Caesar. And I know you are fascinated to know all of that. The town of Philippi was made into a...we can call it a Roman colony, but that's not true. Philippi was actually considered part of the city of Rome, even though it was in northern Greece. If you're born there, you're a Roman citizen. Everything in it is Roman. The buildings are Roman. The language is Latin. It's all Roman.

Paul and Silas go in there and preach the gospel, and they do it at a most un...they find a lousy time to come into the city of Philippi to preach. Does anybody know why? This is a bad time to come into a town and preach the gospel. If you'll give me a nickel, I'll tell you: because just before they arrived there, just about the time they arrived there, the emperor, whose name was Claudius, passed the decree that all Jews had to leave the city of Rome. The news reached Philippi, which considered itself part of the city of Rome, and here were two Jews preaching the gospel. The fact that they were Roman citizens didn't help. They were beaten, and they were thrown into jail. The jail is on the north side of the town, and it was hewn out of a rock. The rock is quite deep. There are bars this way. The front of the rock it was hewn out of had a steel door, and they put the "less criminal" criminals in the first part of this cave, a stone cave, and the bad ones in the very back, fettering them to a wall. That's where they put Paul and Silas, and there was an earthquake, and they got out, and they baptized some folks, and in the meantime, a church was born.

A minute ago, I told you that Paul and Barnabas went on a church-planting tour. Now, sister, you're really good at this. What should I have said? Missionary journey. You don't know. Missionary journey. A missionary journey, which is one of those little things that so damage our thinking without our realizing it. Because if they were missionaries, then that's something foreign, and what they're doing has nothing to do with us here. We can have a pastor, a pulpit, a pew, a church building, because we're not missionaries. They're out there, and they're kind of strange and peculiar.

Paul and Barnabas, and Paul and Silas, did not go on a missionary journey. They went out and did what we ought to do. They planted churches the way churches should be planted. Now, the loveliest thing about what Paul and Silas did was they got up and left a little group of Christians, and they left them, and they left them, and they left them. And they left them without elders at that time. I realize that for some of you, this is utterly unimportant, but if you live on the mission field, have you ever been an elder, sister? Yes. Have you been an elder? Have you been an elder? Now, sister, let me ask you a question. Is there a chance that they chose you to be an elder because you were enthusiastic about the Lord and believed everything they said, and then, when you got bored and a little upset with the fact that everything was organized, and that they were all Americans, and they weren't leaving, were you still an elder?

Alright. I don't know if you got the point at all. One of the most beautiful things about the New Testament is that time when they leave brothers and sisters all on their own to work out the expression of the ecclesia without pastors or missionaries or whatever you want to

call them, church planters, breathing down their throats and causing them to do whatever they're told.

Now, I have an application to make to the brothers and sisters who meet here in Constance, and that is, I wish, first of all, that there were about 15 of you, and we have to do something about that. But you are Deutsch, and you are Swiss, and you are not—I hate to break this news to you—but you're not Puerto Ricans. There should be a time when you get to be Deutsch and Zwei Deutsch.

They then went to the capital of northern Greece, which was Thessalonica. A church was raised up there in a very short length of time. The brothers, Paul especially, were pushed out of town and headed for Athens with their young companion Timothy. Then he went on to Corinth and spent two years there — about 18 months —and met... now this is all in Greece, by the way—they're now in Achaia, or southern Greece —and they also planted a church in Berea after they were pushed out of Thessalonica. Then they went to southern Greece and raised up the church in Corinth. By the way, and again, I know you're wondering where in the world this man is going, I'd like to tell you just a little bit about Corinth. May I tell you a little bit about Corinth? This is northern Greece, this is southern Greece, and right down here is the city of Corinth. It's nine miles to the sea this way, and it's six miles to the sea this way, but there's more of Greece down here and a lot of islands. When you want to go to Rome, you have to go this way, and these are some very tumultuous, very dangerous places to navigate. So, over the centuries, there grew up the custom of landing in the little town of Cenchrea. They dragged the ships across the land to the other port over here, and Corinth became the broker city where everybody did their trading. Sometimes they would take their ships and go back. Ships from Rome would come this way, but sometimes they were dragged across, usually when they were headed east or when they had vast cargo bound for Rome. Rome was entirely dependent on ships for its food. All of its grain and a lot of other things; most of what they had was imported.

Corinth was a town with four major languages and many dialects, and when you walked into the city, the first 30 stores that you came to sold wine. You've heard all of the terrible things about Corinth, and I won't go into them, but it was a wild place, and it had a temple given over to immorality and all of those things. Paul was there 18 months, and he was never able to tame that church, right down to the day he died. And if we were to believe Clement, who wrote to them, even 50 years later, they were still having Corinthian problems in Corinth.

When he finished Corinth, he decided, before he went home to Antioch, that he would make a very, very short trip to the city of Ephesus. And he took with him a brother and a sister. Jan, what were their names? I love it the way you folks know the Bible. Tychicus? Tychicus was a boy. Did you say two people? Yes, from Corinth to Ephesus, which, by the way, is going back east, a city that the Lord did not let them go to earlier. Does anybody here besides who, huh? Priscilla. Priscilla and Aquila. That's right. Okay, thank you. He dropped them off there (in Ephesus), and he went home.

Now I'm going to tell you the story. He went to Jerusalem, taking Silas with him, and Timothy, who had never seen Jerusalem. Timothy had his mouth wide open. He got to see Jerusalem. He got to see the temple. He got to meet the apostles, and he was looking forward to meeting someone in Antioch, which was north, whom he had heard a great deal about, whose name was Titus. Titus had a reputation because he had gone to Jerusalem several years earlier with Paul and Barnabas and had met with the Jerusalem Christians. They were both young men, and both were looking forward to meeting one another. Now, you won't find that in the Bible, but listen to me anyway; I'm telling you the truth. Timothy comes to Antioch, along with Silas and Paul, and they report to the church at the end of their second church-planting journey. Silas goes home to Jerusalem. Paul brings his report, but Timothy does too, and Timothy just...he's just fantastic, and he turns the church on its ear. He's a fiery young kid, and he loves the Lord, and when the meeting is over, Titus comes knifing his way through the crowd and pushes his way toward Timothy. Timothy sees him coming, and they grab one another, hug, and cry. They'll live a good part of their lives together.

They're home for a short time, then they head to the city of Ephesus. Let me tell you what happens before they go. There are two or three things you may not know, and that is that the city of Jerusalem is in convulsions. They had a governor over Israel who was not good; his name was Cuspius, and a group of people had grown up who were disgusted with Roman rule and determined to throw off Roman rule. They are people from the countryside, and they are a secret organization, and they come into the city to kill Jews who cooperate with Rome. Does anybody in this room know what their names were? What name was given to them? Not the Zealots yet. They haven't emerged yet, but that was a good try, brother. They had this little, short knife, and they would wait until the festivals, and they would walk up to one of these people cooperating with Rome, and they would slip out this knife very skillfully and stab the man, and then they would jump back and begin tearing their clothes and saying, "Who killed him? Oh, this wonderful person." And they came to be known as the Daggerman.

There were two people whom they (the Daggermen) were concerned about. They would kill a lot of folks, and they were never getting caught either. As things evolved, there were two men they were concerned about; they were determined to kill. Now you know what one man's name is. What's his name? Paul. Do you know who the other one was? Simon Peter, because Peter had allowed Gentiles to, from their viewpoint, enter the Jewish religion. We look at it from a different direction. Paul of Tarsus knew that a revolution was coming in Israel. He knew there was a chance he could die at almost any time. He's going on his third journey to plant one church, and he does something for me that is the greatest single stroke of genius in the history of Christianity. Now, Jan, no, you'd still be wrong, but it's okay.

He leaves for Ephesus with Timothy and Titus, but he writes letters to some of the churches and tells the church in Derbe, "Send Gaius to Ephesus." He writes to the church in Thessalonica and says, "Send Aristarchus and Secundus to Ephesus." And then he says...so how many have I got so far? I've got five. He writes to the church in Berea, saying, "Send me Sopater," and we will rendezvous in Ephesus. I don't know if you understand, but I want you

to understand. Michael, I want you to know this. Danielle, I want you to know this. Charles, you should know this. You two brothers should know this. He is going to make church planters out of those six men, but *he only picks young men who have already grown up in church life*. He picks men from literally five different cultures across three or four basic worlds and brings them together.

Titus knows what it's like to have church life in Syria. He has lived there for years. He also knows the brothers in Jerusalem. He knows the apostles. He's got that to give. Timothy is the second one. He can tell you all about Blastinius Drachrachma, that fellow who was the Jewish gentleman who came in and almost wrecked those four churches. It was Timothy... not elders... but Timothy who stopped that Judaizer. He was from the land of the Gauls, Galatia. He was from the land of poor people and slaves. Secundus and Aristarchus came from Thessalonica. They could tell you what it was like to be part of a church that went to seed on the second coming, and what it was like to get up on a mountain and stand there and say, "Jesus is coming any minute. I don't need to work. The rest of you can feed me, because Jesus is coming any minute now." "That's Him for sure." "No, it was just a cloud." "While I sit down and eat, y'all watch. He'll be here any minute now." Sopater could tell you what it was like to grow up in a city that was a resort area and to be part of a church that was probably the only place that didn't give Paul a great deal of trouble, although Blastinius' friends eventually got there. Those are the people who went with Paul to a city called Ephesus. Now I want you to make this note: every one of them had already been at a church birth, and that's important—to be at the birth of a church. Every one of them could say, "I was there from the beginning."

Now I want you to watch Paul of Tarsus enter the city of Ephesus. He's got six young brothers in tow, and they're from five different areas of the world, and he's going to let them see another "beginning." They come, with different languages and different cultures, into a place where none of them have ever been. And he has also sent Priscilla and Aquila there to open a tent-making business.

You want to go to Ephesus with me? Would you come and go to Ephesus with me? Okay. They get outside of town and find 12 strange-looking men there. Paul talks to them. Six young men with 12 big eyes are watching because they want to see how Paul does it. Paul says...I haven't said that yet... he says, "Who are you?" They say, "Well, we're John the 'Baptistites.'" And he said, "Well, have you received the Holy Spirit?" "No." He preaches the gospel to them and puts his hand on them; they all receive the Holy Spirit, and if you're Pentecostal, they all spoke in tongues, and if you believe that tongues are of the devil, then they didn't speak in tongues.

Paul looks at his six young men and says, "See how easy it is?" And one of the young men in that group had a name. Does anybody know what his name is? Boy, Gene, I hope you remember this. I hope I'm right. Does anybody know his name? His name is Epaenetus, the first convert in Asia. Hold on to that name. Would you do that? I haven't stopped to tell you a lot about these other towns. Believe it or not, I'm trying to hurry, but now I'm going to tell



you about the city of Ephesus. The city of Ephesus has 200,000 people in it. It's the fourth-largest city in the Western world.

The synagogue is located on the north side of town. When you come in by ship, the city is about five miles in, but it has a large harbor, and by the way, even then, they were having a big problem with silt covering up the river. Today, if you were to visit Ephesus, you'd find that it's five miles inland, and the river no longer exists; it's been covered with silt. It (Ephesus) had monuments and major temples dedicated to about seven or eight gods or goddesses. Still, they all paled in comparison to the great temple outside town, which was called the Temple to Diana, if you're a Roman. What about if you're a Greek? Then it's Artemis. It's 220 feet long. It was 160 feet wide. Inside it, covered with curtains, was a burned piece of wood that supposedly had fallen from heaven, and it was Diana herself, or at least the idol Diana. No, for them it was Diana. She was completely covered. You could never see her.

There were three kinds, three different orders of priests who night and day watched over the temple: some here, some here, and some inside. Now, there were two reasons they guarded it: one of them was to guard it because of what it was, but the other one was, and you owe me a thousand dollars for telling you this, it was the third-largest bank in the world. People came, brought their gold and silver, deposited it there, and got a little sheet of paper proving it was there. By the way, that little sheet of paper evolved into something; you know what it's called today? It's called money. It's not, but that's what it evolved into: a little proof that they had their gold and silver in there. That was the third-largest bank in the world. You know what the biggest bank in the world was? Where was the biggest bank in the world? Oh yes, now can you tell me what the second-largest bank in the world was? Jerusalem, the temple in Jerusalem. This was the third biggest, and it was a great place because it was easy to get a mortgage and build. You had to pay back, just like we do today.

Paul went to the synagogue, and he had a brainstorm when he was in Corinth. When they threw him out of the church in Corinth, the temple in Corinth, he just moved next door to the home of somebody named Justus. Well, he looked next door when he got thrown out of the synagogue in Ephesus, and he saw a for-rent sign. Actually, it was not. It was a school, probably for young boys and girls, that was open from about daylight till 11 a.m., and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. all the shops closed, and people took a siesta. Thank you very much. And Paul rented the building out from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the church met in the home of Priscilla and Aquila, and it got bigger and bigger. It grew bigger and bigger because of Paul's signs and wonders... unless you don't believe in signs and wonders, then it was because he was a great preacher of the Bible. Paul taught those six young men from 11 to 4 every day.

Now y'all listen to me really carefully, will you? Before daybreak...before daybreak every day...Paul went to the marketplace, sat down with Aquila, and, with a weaver's beam, made what you and I would today call canvas, then shaped it into tents, and he worked there until 11 a.m. Then he went to the school of Tyrannus, and he met with his six young men, and he supported all six of those men with his own hands and took no money from anybody...from

anybody...by the way. And in case you haven't figured this out, I am giving you my model. I dug most of it out of the New Testament; the rest I got from history, and I put it in chronological order, and I couldn't find Christianity today.

The church got larger and larger. Paul, while he sat there at the weaver's beam making tents, also talked to people who came by. The fact that he was able to heal in that day, at a time when there was no television, was big news, and also because people were so desperately ill, the average lifespan of a person was 39 or 40. Does that sound very young to you? Does it? That the average lifespan of a human being at that time was around 40? Well, it shouldn't shock you at all. Do you know what it was in 1900? In America. That's in America. Well, make a wild guess. That? Forty-seven. So, from Paul's time until the generation before me, it added seven years. People die young. You will not die young unless you're blown to a nuclear crisp.

A lot of people were saved, and I'm going to tell you about someone who was saved. He made fleece. I mean, he grew...well, he was a merchant in fleece. He lived 90 miles due east of Ephesus. Ephesus was an incredibly huge marketplace. He came there from his hometown to market his fleece. He also came and sat down in the marketplace and listened to Paul, sitting there at the weaver's beam, talk about Jesus Christ. He got saved, and he was a fairly well-to-do man. Now, is there anybody in this room who is wise enough to tell me his name and the town he came from? We know so little about Scripture, it's unbelievable. What's his name? That's right. Thank you. His name was Philemon. He came from a town famous for its fleece, a little town of about 10,000 people jammed up against a mountain. By the way, it sat here, and another town sat here, and another town sat here, and they were in a triangle, and they were all 10 miles away from one another. Would somebody like to tell me the names of the other two towns? I'm sorry, brother. Laodicea and Hierapolis. Wasn't that much clearer? Depending on which piece of land you're standing on, it wouldn't make a lot of sense to an Irishman at all.

He went back home after several months of sitting in Tyrannus' house listening to Paul preach. I want you to remember a couple of things that are really important. One of them was that those six men, young men, had all been from a church somewhere, from different cultures and languages. They were all pollinating, cross-pollinating with one another. They were now in a totally different country and a totally different culture, and they were all learning church life in another place, and they were watching Paul of Tarsus. If you were to think really, really hard, the idea or thought might come to you that what Paul of Tarsus was doing with those six men in that town was very similar to what Jesus Christ had done with 12 men that He raised up to be church planters.

Now, I want to introduce you to two or three other people. One night, two young men come in, and they're friends. No, they came in at four o'clock in the morning. It was a morning meeting of the church, and they stood there, and one of them said, "I want to be baptized." The other one shook his head, and Paul had seen them in the marketplace, and something had happened to them. Something wonderful. A few questions were asked of them, and they

took them out to the river. I think the river's name is Lyceum or Lycius; I've forgotten. I'm doing this from memory. I did it deliberately. I'm testing what I can remember. They baptized them, and these were incredible young men. I don't know how they managed to do this. They never told me, but from that moment on, every day they were sitting at Paul's feet in Tyrannus' house. And now, Jan, this is your big moment. What were their names? They're both from the city of Ephesus. Come on. It starts with a T. You've already said it. Tychicus and Trophimus, and before Paul of Tarsus leaves Ephesus, he is not training six men but eight men, and you will find all of them reappearing in different parts of the Roman Empire throughout Scripture. He bet on eight men, and he won in every case. Although we know almost nothing about Secundus, we know a lot about the other seven.

One day, one of the brothers whose name we don't know came running in from the Ephesian port and broke into Paul's house. He was white as a sheet, and he said news had just come from the first ship from Rome since this had happened. It's unbelievable. Does anybody want to guess what the man is going to tell Paul? This is the greatest news Paul has ever heard. Honest to goodness, it really was. Very close. Thank you. I'll give you an A for that. The word was that Claudius was dead, and it was 54 AD, which meant it was 24 years after Pentecost. And Paul flips out.

Now I'm going to tell you why Paul's excited. Paul is excited because all the Christian churches in Israel and Cyprus—well, let me just talk about Cyprus—were really dead because Jewish Christians were saved, and they went to the synagogue, and they had never made a clear break. There had been a group of Christians meeting in Rome, Italy, and they were all Jewish, and they all met in one ghetto of Rome, and the name of that ghetto is Trastevere. It's the Jewish ghetto. But when Claudius forced the Jews out of Rome, there was no longer a church in Rome. Paul didn't have to deal with a half-dead Jewish church, and he was thrilled pink at the news that Claudius had pushed the Jews out. Now he was thrilled pink that Claudius was dead.

Now, somebody thrill my heart and tell me what Paul did when he heard this news. Tell me that you have been a really good student of mine. Don't break my heart. Please. Tell me, in great, big, thick words, what Paul did. He went to it? No. He wrote to every church he knew anything about that had Gentiles and said, "Back them, get them there." Priscilla and Aquila say to him, "We're going back to Rome," and Paul says, "Don't do that. We don't know yet if there is going to be a decree that will let you back in." And Priscilla, who grew up in Rome, said, "Paul, every time one of these decrees has been passed, and it's been done before, and when the emperor that does it dies, it always gets forgotten." And then Paul said, "You'll be risking your necks." And Aquila says, "We'll do it."

He has written a letter, and this is what he said: "I'm asking Priscilla, Aquila, and one other brother to go to Rome." Now stay with me; thrill my heart and tell me what his name is. Epaphroditus. Epaphroditus, Priscilla, and Aquila are going to Rome. Help them buy a house and send some brothers and sisters, and Priscilla says, "You don't have to ask them to buy a house. I come from a very wealthy family, and I have enough money to buy one." And Paul

said, "Buy that house in a decent place, because Rome is quite literally the hellhole of the world." It's the noisiest place on earth. It's the filthiest place on earth. Thirty thousand people take up one third of the land in that city, and everybody else is crammed into rooms that are 8 by 9 and 8 by 10, and they're paying the equivalent of 10 months' wages per month to live in those. They're called insulas, which means islands. And you know what people do? Ten or fifteen people will rent an 8-by-10 room and take shifts sleeping there. The only thing is, they don't sleep. It's too noisy, and those rooms do not have windows. In the winter, you freeze, and in the summer, you burn out.

And now I'm going to tell you a little story. If you were to walk through the forum in Corinth at 2 o'clock in the morning, or you were to go out and watch on the hills where the slaves were pulling those ships across the isthmus of Corinth, if you were to go at two o'clock in the morning in Ephesus and walk out in the hill country or into the forum, you know what you would see? You would see the forum absolutely packed with nothing but tents. You would see all the doorways with people sleeping in them. If you went to Corinth and saw the grassy hills around it, they would be filled with tents. People just made nine cents a day. They made a denarius a day, and they slept in these tents at night, and that was their home. Then they would fold them up. If they were in the forum—and in Rome, literally all the forums were filled with cattle at night, the people slept on the roofs or any place they could find a square foot. They would set up tents wherever they could, sleep in them, store their clothing and belongings in the rooms they rented, and come there to eat. Now you didn't know that, did you?

By the way, did that ring a bell with anybody? Did anything click? Did you get a point here and a point here and put them together? What did Paul of Tarsus do? Build tents. He was doing land-office business, building tents. Because the poorest people either slept in the doorways or managed to buy a tent. That's where they lived, and so, he said to Priscilla and Aquila, "Buy a decent place." I want you to know it is actually possible to go to the very spot where she bought that house. It's one of those few things that has managed to survive history. They bought a home in one of the few areas of all of Rome where you could get a night's sleep and where the stink was not beyond nausea. It was on a hill, and it managed to be quite near the ghetto so that the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians could meet in, and this is in the Scripture, in the home of Priscilla and Aquila.

Brothers and sisters, this was what life was like in the first century. This is reality. Most of God's people, poor beyond description—slaves and freed slaves and free men—make up well over 90% of the churches in abject poverty. But that's what happened when they waved Priscilla, Aquila, and Epaphroditus off to Rome. Paul said, "I'm coming soon." He also asked his first cousin down in Jerusalem to go so there'd be some Jews there, and he wrote to all the churches and asked them to send somebody there. Would you like to know their names? Simple - read Romans 16. There are 29 of them. We know by name who got up and left the Gentile churches and a few Jewish churches and went to Rome. And when they got to Rome, they all headed for the house of Priscilla and Aquila. Epaphroditus lived there too, and they stayed there until they could get jobs. Then they rented out an insula, and there were

five brothers, you'll find them listed in Romans 16, five brothers got together and rented an insula. You only need to read it once to understand that that's what they were doing. Some of the others got jobs in the homes of two of the great controllers of Rome. One was Narcissus, and what was the other's name? Well, Narcissus was one of them. Very clear what's going on when you read Romans 16, but Paul hasn't left Ephesus yet, and he's sitting in the school of Tyrannus teaching his six young—eight young—brothers, and the whole room's packed with new Christians.

Priscilla and Aquila, by the way, left their home in Ephesus, tore out two or three walls to make room for more people, and met every morning before the sun went up and every night after it came down, and probably met in several other homes. But on this particular day, someone walked in, and when he got to the door, he just completely filled it up—big guy. Yeah, like Brother Mike over here—came in the middle of the room and just interrupted Paul and said, “I want to be baptized.” Paul looked up and had no idea who he was. Paul asked him where he was from, and the man told him. Then Paul said, “Well, do you know such and such?” And he said, “Yeah, he led me to the Lord, but I want to be baptized.” So, the young brothers, all eight of them, took him down to the water, the river, and they dunked him good, because he was a young man too. They're just drawn to that. They did not know that they had just baptized one of the greatest Christians of the first century. He hung around for months, probably until Paul left, learning all they could. And so, in a way, there were nine men whose lives were touched in Ephesus.

Now, a few of you know who this person is; I wish you wouldn't say. I'd like for somebody to make a wild guess at it. Does anybody want to make a wild guess as to who he is? He is my second favorite Bible character, and a brother and a half. Okay. Someone who knows, please tell us his name and where he is from. Danielle, are you going to flunk this? You don't know. Yes, you do. Epaphroditus. Epaphras in that city, in that country. That was his Asian name. He went back home to Philemon. By the way, Philemon met him at the door; they rejoiced and said, “Oh, by the way, I just bought myself a new slave.” Epaphras says, “Wonderful,” and Philemon says, “You know, I paid too much for him, but I'm expecting to make a real profit.” Epaphras reaches out to shake hands with this young slave and says, “What's your name?” The young slave says, “I don't know. He hasn't named me yet.” And so, Philemon says, “I think I'll name him Profitable. He'd better be Profitable.” Or you may know him as Onesimus. Okay.

Epaphras begins preaching the gospel in Colossae, and a church is born. Then he preaches in Laodicea. Church is born. By the way, that's a really decent church. It takes a long time for it to get a bad reputation. It does happen. Then he went to Hierapolis and preached the gospel there.

When Paul was in Antioch, he wrote to the Galatian churches when he found out Blastinius Drachrachma was up there messing the churches up. He got to Corinth, and he wrote 1st and 2nd Thessalonians to the church in Thessalonica, which was only three months old, and it was all about the second coming of Christ. When Paul was in Ephesus, some brothers,

such as Stephanas, came over to tell him, and Chloe's family also, telling him that things were really bad, so he wrote 1st and 2nd Corinthians. Then Paul left Ephesus and went to Corinth, and he wrote a letter to his 29 friends in Rome and wrote what is probably the greatest single piece of literature in human history. We call it the book of Romans. Go back and read it sometimes in the context in which I've just presented it to you.

And those are the books he's written so far, but now he leaves Corinth, goes to Jerusalem, and he makes a big mistake. He takes all eight of his brothers with him, and one of them is Trophimus, and Trophimus, unfortunately, looks very much like a Jewish brother in the church in Jerusalem. Now, we're leaving out a lot of this story, but he goes to the church in Jerusalem, and they are told, "Paul, you and Peter are both in big trouble." The book of Galatians has been passed out everywhere, and everybody's convinced you do not believe in Moses and that you're trying to tear down the Jewish religion. The Daggersmen are trying to find you and kill you. Now go shave your head and go to the temple and make a sacrifice, and we'll have this brother from the church in Jerusalem shave his head and go in there with you, and everybody will maybe be happy."

Things were really electric in Jerusalem. Unfortunately, someone had seen Trophimus with his hair, and he saw this young Jewish believer without his hair, and he thought the Jewish believer was Trophimus. And what happened? Well, there was a riot. Paul almost got killed and managed to get to the capital of Israel, Caesarea, spent two years there, and went to Rome; a very bad time of the year to sail a boat. He had a shipwreck, his fourth. Not his third, but his fourth. He got to Rome; he had sent Timothy, Titus, Aristarchus, and Secundus to meet him there. Secundus and Aristarchus and Luke, and possibly Timothy, were probably on the boat with him when it was shipwrecked. Luke, of course, was with him. Titus was also there, and probably Trophimus, but for sure Tychicus, were all there in Rome, either waiting for him or coming with him. Just about a month or two after he got there and was put in chains and rented a room in one of the insulas, Paul looked up, and the doorway was once more filled with a very big, young man. It was Epaphras. In Greek, his name was Epaphroditus, and he had just left his homeland in Asia and gone by way of Philippi, which is the correct route to Rome unless you're going through Brindisi. You know where Brindisi is? Have you ever been to Brindisi, Peter? There have been more emperors and generals who have gone through that town than any other city in the world, and you can't even get a good plate of spaghetti there, I understand. Epaphroditus came all the way from Colossae to Rome to see Paul.

The greatest books that Paul ever wrote, if you don't agree to that, let me put it this way: did you ever wonder what Paul of Tarsus taught and preached? What did he say when he first came to Ephesus? What did he first say when he first came to Corinth? What did he first say when he went to Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea? He wrote three letters to churches where he had never himself preached. What's one of them? Colossians. Romans is another one. What's the third one? Second Colossians. Second Colossians: Paul never wrote a letter to the church in Ephesus. He wrote two letters to Colossae. They are so rich that it is unbelievable, but I think the thing we forget most is that they were written to churches. And

so was the letter to the Romans. Written to a church. Do you know why they call it the book of Ephesians? It was never called the Book of Ephesians until about 400 A.D., about 350 years after it was written. I don't know how it ever got the word Ephesians. It's very, very clear in both letters to whom it was written. The first one was written to Colossae, to be passed out in Hierapolis and Laodicea, and the second one was written to Laodicea and Hierapolis to be read by the church in Colossae. The second book should be entitled either "The Circuit Letter to the Churches in Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea," or it should be called "Second Colossians." Unfortunately, we call it Ephesians, but we now know where it was written.

Now, brothers and sisters, you're going to get to go home, go back to your bed, and I promise not to give you any more background, but I am going to tell you what we're going to do. Brother Michael, do you see that brother taping right back there? I've had a real struggle about what I want to talk to you all about here, but I've finally decided to leave a legacy for you, brothers, and for the new people who come in. You can either show them videos or let them listen to tapes and say that this is part of our beginning, and I would like for them to know a little bit about just how deep the message of Jesus Christ is, even to a group of young Christians who had never seen the face of Paul Tarsus. If that book, if those two books say anything, it's this: that Paul did not waste time giving out little morsels of truth. He went to the deepest, most profound words a man has ever read or written in those two books. I think we do ourselves great injustice when we try to begin with simple stuff. We can't possibly understand the deep stuff, so why don't we just start there? And after a year or two, it dawns on us.

You're going to go home tonight, and you're going to read chapter one of 2nd Colossians. You are going to underline every new topic Paul introduces in chapter 1, and when I say "new," it is not repeated a single time. Now, the word grace is repeated four times in 2nd Colossians (Ephesians 1), so that's no good. Topics that are addressed without definition or explanation in Chapter 1. How many different topics, beginning with verse 3? You'll find the word revelation—that's mentioned, I think, once. Wisdom, once. Grace, I think it's three or four times. But you're going to mark or even circle the number of topics he introduces without explanation in chapter one. That's one thing you're going to do.

Now then, I can't tell who's back there on the stage with Charlie, but whoever you are, who is it, Mikey? Mikey, I can see the seven. Mikey, I want you to come forward there and see if you can find a stack of something called Second Colossians. Will you bring it down here, please, sir? And Brother Charlie, I don't know if you want to cut this off now. Maybe you'd go ahead and let it run. Tonight, you're going to have one of the great treats of your life. You're about to read three chapters. Are you ready for this? Hold your heart. You could have a heart attack. Three chapters out of the Edwardian New Testament. It's never been seen by the eye of man. And by the way, I did it in one afternoon, and I haven't corrected it. All of this got done just before I got on the plane.

That's 2 Colossians 1, 2, and 3...by me. Are you excited? Tell me, Jan, does that excite you? It doesn't excite you a bit, does it? I know you're tired, and I am, too. It's not a paraphrase. I'll talk to you a little bit about that tomorrow morning. What I did do...but there's something I did insert, and hopefully, if this ever gets printed, and God willing it will, these words will be in italics, just like they are in your King James. Those italic words mean they're not in the text. The only thing I've added here, really, is the word "all." One, that's one of them. I often say, "all of you" and "you all" to remind you, the reader, that this was not written to an individual. This is not a place where you dig for blessings. The only other thing I think that I have in here that I recall, at least, it says "those of you who gather in Colossae," to remind you that it was written to a church. That's all.

Now, what I want you to do is go home tonight; you have this done by tomorrow morning. I want you to take your version of the Bible, and I want you to underline every word in chapter 1 that has not been mentioned any other time in that chapter. You will be amazed. You should also know that in chapter 1 in Greek, there are only two sentences. The first sentence is the greeting, and the second sentence is the rest of the chapter, and I am never going to forgive Paul of Tarsus. You cannot understand chapter 1 of Ephesians. It's a mystery hidden in an enigma. I only know of one person in the world who really understands Ephesians 1, and that's Peter (laughter). So, if you have any questions, you're going to ask him.

It'll drive you crazy trying to understand chapter 1 because he keeps switching subjects and piling superlatives on superlatives. Another word you'll find in chapter 1 written over again and again is "riches." The word "glory," the word "grace," and the word "riches." He just can't say it enough. There are three anthems in chapter 1 when Paul stops and says, "To the praise of the glory of the grace of God," or "To the praise of His glory," or "To the praise of the glory of His grace." And if you ever try to figure that out, it'll drive you crazy. "To the praise of the glory of His grace." Very difficult to follow.

Two things. You read your own version. Well, let me do it again. Underline or circle or list all the words that don't appear again that are a subject, like revelation, wisdom, knowledge, things like that. We'll find out how many you come up with.

The second thing I want you to do between now and tomorrow morning is compare my chapter 1 with your chapter 1, and just let it soak in. Now, you would be nice to me if you would come in here tomorrow and say, "Gene, I like my King James clearer than yours." Or you might say, "Gene, oh, I began to see when I was reading it that this was really written to more people than me." But any reaction you have to it, I do promise you that it won't be read like this when it's in the New Testament, but it'll give you some idea where my heart and hand are.

Two things. Circle words that appear only once. Go ahead and list "riches," how many times, and "glory," and how many times, and "grace," how many times. There's one other word in there that's repeated frequently, and the words that are introduced without explanation.



Secondly, compare chapter 1 of your Bible with mine. You'll find yours listed under Ephesians. If you ever read my New Testament, it's going to be listed "2nd Colossians." Because it should have never gotten the name Ephesians. Thank you for staying up late with me tonight. We won't have another meeting this long. I figured that while you were stronger tonight than you will be the rest of the week.

Now then, I have one other thing to say to you, and that is, get ready to spend some time with another brother and sister at least three times a day for the rest of this conference. We are going to learn how to touch the Lord. Not to be preached to, but to know how to touch the Lord. A week is not long enough, but we'll at least get started. Does anybody want to say anything? Okay.