

I'll talk to you about nothing but what those 12 men learned from living with the Lord Jesus Christ, but I'm not sure you care. I'm not even sure you're interested, I'm interested, but it's all right if you're not interested, that's okay. Will you please just get one thing clear? They watched Him, watch Him, and after He ascended to the Father, they were still watching Him, watch Him.

That was the foundation of their Christian life. That was the foundation of the church. And that was their preparation for the gospel ministry, toward the gospel. I have to add, because I may not have the chance to do this again. There are a thousand things they learned from Him, but I always want to mention this. Let me tell you what they learned from Him that was very practical. They learned how to be persecuted with dignity.

Now, this has got nothing to do with anything. I just want to throw it in because this is important to every one of you. At some point in your life, you're going to be abused by someone who's a fellow Christian. I don't know of anything that destroys people like being persecuted by a fellow Christian. It's coming Wilbur, in your life, and it could be me who does it or maybe it'll be Lance. It's more likely to be Tom. For all of you, there will come persecution.

I just want you to know that for four years, three and a half or four years, they watched Him get persecuted and they watched Him carry it with dignity. I'm not going into all of it with you, but it didn't make Him bitter, and it didn't hurt Him, and it didn't destroy Him. I've asked the question, did you notice after the resurrection how much Jesus Christ damned and spit fumes and bitterness at those who had just three days before killed Him? Did you notice how he talked about Him, and what the dirty things they did, and how they lied about Him, and had Him crucified? It's not even there. They beheld that fact.

I had the privilege of beholding a Christian, a real Christian, a woman. By the way, I watched her. I wasn't present when she died, but I watched her die. At the time she died, she was being persecuted. She was 76, as I recall. Surely, if the Lord loved anybody, He wouldn't be picking on them at that age. It was the worst experience she had ever gone through. It killed her.

We all need a Christian to look at. You know what? We really do. And I'm really going to be practical, we all need a Christian to watch. I hope you get one, but I also want to arm you with watching the Son and watching the Father, beholding them and fellowshiping with them, but it wouldn't hurt if you also had a Christian thrown in, and I hope you find one. And you know, I know what you're thinking, Gene, I think I'll elect you and I'll watch you. Please don't. Come back in about 30 years. I think I'm going to make it in about 30 years. I'll be 83. Oh, I'm sure by then I'm going to be godly, but sure, we need to see people really catch it and not be hurt by it.

There are 10,000 things we need to watch in another Christian's life. We're really short on Christians to watch. We're really running short on Christians to watch. We're almost fresh out of them. Especially a Christian in the church, that's where it really matters. You can find some godly soul out there to watch who's out there all alone. Good night. I could be godly if that's all there were to it. I think maybe not. Well, if you can't find one, be one.

When you get old, I hope there'll be some godly Christians to look around to watch. That's never going to happen if you're going to get old, and bitter, and cynical, and mean,

and resentful because somebody did you dirty, you never been as done dirty as Jesus was or Paul and they handled it really beautifully, and they will be the two people that as I go along here I will say to you they were two men that got watched.

God send the day where we got Christians to be watched. God send the day when we have young men who will watch, and God restore the day when our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Lord, make this again the foundation of our faith and the foundation of the church and the experience of the young men, and the young women who have been called by You to the gospel. Lord, haste that day. Amen.

If I start with Galatians or Romans or Corinthians to establish my faith and say this is what I am and what I ought to do, and how things should be, I've started in the wrong place. The Christian faith is very ancient. It started long before Pentecost, long before Galilee, long before Nazareth, and even before Bethlehem. Now, I have taken you through many, many things up till this point, but I am still. So, you think you're normal? So you think you're normal? Have you seen that? Have you, Charles? All right. Well, you're not normal. You are abnormal, which is normal. And you are fallen, which is the status quo, and these brothers, they're worse than you think they could have been.

I want to drive a point home to you, the Lord knew this. But He also knew what it was like, what your church was like in your town, or what your next church experience is going to be. Who knows? You don't know, and Christian people who start out in homes and they're going to have these wonderful experiences together, underestimate how bad off other Christians are. They ought to go live with Jesus Christ for three and a half years in Galilee, and by the end of those three and a half years, they'd know how bad off they were.

I've already told you here are men who pick fights with one another, who drag their mother in to try to settle a fight. Picky over what throne they're going to sit on, and which throne it's going to be. Do you think on the day of that eternal day when they assign thrones, you're going to be measuring yours from there to how far it is to God's throne? You say, "No, I wouldn't do that." Don't be too sure. What if yours is the very last throne? How will you feel about that? Well, right now I would be very grateful, but I don't know how I will feel on that day.

The Lord knew men were like this. He knew they'd rain down fire on a village and burn it up just because of doctrinal differences. They were having doctrinal differences with that community, and they were ready to burn it to a sender. As unbelievable as that is, that went on from the year about 550 all the way up to about the year 1700. That's 1,200 years, isn't it, about? Christians burning up other Christians towns because they didn't agree with them doctrinally, this is in you. I want to just pause and tell you, brothers, I want every one of you to look at me right now. I want you to stare into my eyes and I'm going to look at you.

Every fellowship of people who get together have within their group, whether it be 12, 20, or 50, some of the most ugly, the potential of some of the most ugly, vicious falling outs, some of the most horrendous conduct that is imaginable to have. That is true of any 20, 40, 50, or 100 people, and I can almost hear some sweet little lady in the back. Oh, Gene, but won't the Lord save us from that? He wouldn't call us out of the religious system and meet here in this wonderful place and have all this love and then leave us to have a

big ugly fight and treating one another bad, would He? My answer is, yeah, He would. And if He doesn't with your group, yours will be the first group in history He doesn't.

When I can see another, someone very pompous saying, "Oh, but you see, brother Gene, you're in error about our group." Because you see, we know something the other groups, these tens of thousands, and thousands, and thousands of other groups don't have. We've learned eco philia. What's Eco philia? Well, it's something like koinonia, or maybe it's like ??? or maybe it's like glossolalia or maybe it's like cosmetology, or maybe it's like transubstantiation, or maybe it's like discipleship, or maybe it's like submission, or maybe it's like the truth of the church. I'm sorry, but there is no doctrine and there's no truth that will banish these goats, these goblins from our lives.

Young brothers, listen to me. When you go back home, your church is going to split. Your people are going to be ugly. They're going to do ugly things to one another. They're going to excommunicate one another. They're going to scream at one another. They're going to be mean to one another. They're going to insult one another. They're going to get mad and leave, and when they leave, some of them are going to take a half a dozen other people with them, and they're going to put people under the law, and others are not going to get under the law, and some are going to sin and they're going to sin terribly, and others are going to get their feelings hurt, and others are going to pout, and others are, while all this is going on, and others are not going to understand what's going on. What's going on? I don't understand what's going on.

You know, there ought to be something that precedes church life, and that is Galilee. That's what ought to precede church life. These 12 men living with the Lord four years from now are going to be facing what I just described, with 3,000 brand new converts. They made it. You know why they made it? Because preceding the church, there was Galilee. A time when a group of men were trained. Trained in the Christian life, trained in church life and trained to be workers. And there were others who were not workers who were also getting in on the church life and the Christian life. And if you don't have a few people around like this, your group is doomed. It's doomed, and all the grace and mercy, and praying, and any trick, and any doctrine, and anything you've got up your sleeve, and all the mercies of God won't help you.

The foundation has got to be laid with broken men, patient men, broken men. Well, you say spirit-filled men, men who know the Bible. Oh, but brothers, just put it this way. A group of men and women who've lived together and then been terribly, terribly exposed for being a bunch of first-class donkeys. I want to take a little bit closer look at these three and a half or four years because they're very important, and just two or three things.

I'm going to meet one of these apostles four years from now. I'm going to be a brand-new Christian, and I will have no idea what they have been through these last three and a half, four years. They will know. I will not, but I will respect them, whatever they give me is what I'm going to believe. So I really need to know what they know. At this point, I really need to know what these men have been through. If the church of God is to go on, I need to know what they've been through. And I've already told you what they've been through. They've been through exactly what the Lord's been through in Nazareth and in eternity past.

They don't have the foggiest idea what the church is. If you were to go out to the Bedouins in Saudi Arabia and pick some Saudi Arabian up off of a camel who had never

heard of a Christian in his life and ask him what a church was, he would know about as well as these disciples do right now. What do they know? Do they know they're going to found the church? They don't know that. What do they know? Is it important that they know, or for them to know? You bet your life it is important that they know because they are the foundation and pillar of the church, but they don't know. That's frightening.

They could come up with the idea that the church was a vase full of oil, that it was a gold box, that it was a camel-haired suit, that it was a package full of locust leaves, wings. I don't know what they might think the church is, and it's very important that you know what they know, or you are going to be messed up on what the church is. Kevin, I'm not sure you know what the church is. Rich, I'm not sure you know what the church is. I'm not sure you know what you're going to do when you take a little experience you've had here back. Scott, what is the church? Timothy, what is the church? Don't quote the epistles to me. Don't tell me the book of Revelation. Don't go to the book of Acts with me. Go back there to Galilee with those 12 men and ask me there, "What do those men understand the church to be?" That's where it came from. Do you understand? Oh, I can read the epistles and say, "This is the church." I can read Revelation and say, "Revelation 1, 2, and 3, show me what the church is." The book of Acts opens and reveals the church to me. Don't tell me that the church was built on 12 men. What did they understand the church to be?

They are the headwaters. Well, they understood it to be. What they saw inside their Lord. What was the church to 12 picky, undisciplined men who were about to live with the Lord for four years? What? Scott, what was it for them? They didn't know. But what was it? And 12 men. Let's look at it.

What is the church? What ought the church to be? What was the first church life ever experienced by a fallen man? It was a hot dusty road, where about 20 people all gathered around the Lord, walking from one town to another, singing along the road, a psalm along the road, stopping and eating lunch together, maybe really rejoicing and telling one another over and over about this story about this child that rose from the dead and just being euphoric over the fact that they had lived to see someone raised from the dead. Cooking the meal together in the joy and glory of the wonderful hour after they had fed 5,000. And now the magic of food is gone, and they're having to sit there and eat food. Look, it doesn't divide anymore. I would have declared it kept that up forever, but it's not. One of them telling what they heard one person say on this side of the hill when they fed 5,000 people, what some old lady said over here on the other side of the hill when she sat down and ate the food. What someone thought about the taste of the fish, and these 10 or 12 or 15, 20 people retelling to one another the story of what they saw Jesus do.

Have you ever been in something really exciting as a Christian? Have you ever had something exciting happen? Where was it? It doesn't matter where it was, but when you went home, do you remember retelling it to one another? You've surely had that experience, have you not, Scott? You've had that experience. Roy, do you know why I'm talking now? Well, did you ever see a bunch of fireworks go off somewhere and you got home and retold one another how beautiful it was? Did you ever go to a circus and come home and retell one another what you saw?

Where these people were retelling what was the glorious things that were happening while they had been with Jesus Christ. Not the healing, not the multitudes being fed, but their fellowship together with the Lord after it was over. Sitting in a place with a thousand people and the Lord telling a parable no one understood. The people all go

home. Two or three healings take place. A lot of who knows what else. Everybody goes home. The Lord's very tired. He gets back to the living room. He sits down. It's been a wonderful day, everybody's just in the afterglow of seeing things they never dreamed would be seen, astonished that an entire town emptied out to hear Him. The rejoicing and the praising of people who were healed or people who were enlightened or people who had hope, seeing even Gentiles appear coming to hear Him speak. No, they sat down in a room. They're crowded around.

Mary Magdalene comes out with some water and some fruit, and they all sit down and they drink the water and eat the fruit and they're telling one another stories and the Lord says, "Did any of you understand that story I told out there?" And they all kind of drop their heads to say no, and one guesses and another one guesses and one of them gets something right and someone else gets a little of it right and they try to put it together and finally they look at the Lord and say you tell us about it. What did you really mean? And He says now I'll tell you, I'll tell you what I meant.

The kingdom of the heavenlies, it's like this. What's it like? It's like this and He tells it, where we've read the stories so we're no longer astonished but they hadn't read these stories. So they're really astonished and then they talk, and they share and one of them tells the Lord, "Lord, you said something today, is this what you meant?" And when He gets through speaking and sharing it, everybody in the room goes, "Wow" and they know that He got it. And the Lord says, "Yes." And another one says, "You, you mean, Thomas? Do you mean?" And he shares it, and everybody else says, "Wow" again, and this brother really knows he's clear, and then Thomas is clear, and then three or four more say something. They share. They ask some questions. The Lord explains a little bit more and they say, "Wow" again.

They don't have a foggiest idea what the church is, but they know what that is. It's the thing they live for every day. To sit down and fellowship with Jesus Christ. Sing a little, share a little, all a little, rejoice a little, get confused a little, be dumb a lot, but just being there, just being there with Him and with fellas you started out liking, then got to hating, and then started forgiving, and then began to tolerate, and finally began to understand a little bit, and then started liking again and lo and behold, now you're even loving the guy again. You've gone full cycle and you're really beginning to appreciate this brother.

The only difference is now you know a lot of weaknesses about him that you didn't know six months ago when you all started out, but this you know, you may not know the church but you know what it's like to sit in a living room with Jesus Christ and talk to Him and share with one another the excitement and the profound awe of discovering things. He said, He meant, but most of all, learning more about Him from what He said and what He did. Say, "Praise the Lord." Say it again. These people said it. Why don't you say it?

I heard it all the way, out of that tape, and back this way. I heard someone back there say. Brothers, that was the church. That was the church. It wasn't the fullness of the church, but it was the embryo, the forerunner, the microcosm, the prototype, the foundation, the embryonic beginnings of the church.

It is important that you know that, and if there's anyone out there who has some dream of one day being an apostle or a Christian worker, brother, that better be your concept of what the church is. Brothers, that's when you go back home, that's what your concept of the church has got to be. The daily discovery of Christ and sharing the

discovery of Christ with one another. Watching Him, discovering Him as you watch Him, listening to Him, and discovering Him as you listen to Him, and then sharing with Him and with your brothers and your sisters what you've discovered.

It begins that primitive. It begins that primitive. It begins that simple. It begins that small and that uncomplicated. That's what they understood the church to be. That is what Jesus Christ understood the church to be before He ever met any of them. He understood that in Nazareth over a bench He was making. This is what He understood the church to be in eternity. In eternity, that was the church to Him. The only difference now is it has been complicated by the fact that a lot of fallen people are getting involved and they are messy, and they are going to mess up everything. They're going to want something else or better. Someone's going to want to make sure that 10 people get healed every day. That some new glorious revelation happens every time you meet. That there will be no downs, there will always be ups, that this, you remember what we had back in Galilee with the Lord. I miss it so much now with what's going on. He's hanging on a tree over there. He's dead.

That's also part of the history of the church. They took Him out of a garden and took Him away from them. That's also part of the experience of the body of Christ. The people of God. Three days He lies in a tomb, and there is no God in this universe. That's also an experience of the brothers and sisters. There's the loss of Lazarus and Mary and Martha's confusion. That's also part of the experience. The fact that Jesus is called an illegitimate, a man with a demon. The fact that He was persecuted, that was also part of their experience. Hey, you know something else? Going from one town to another, it rained, and they got soaked to the skin and the wind blew and it got cold and they didn't have any food that day. That's also part of the experience of that little group of people.

They got out in the middle of a boat one day and the boat got swamped. You know what a swamp boat means? I know you know what that means. The boat got swamped and it began to sink. That's also part of their experience. Well, you say yes, but the resurrection was part of their experience, too. Praise the Lord. That's true. But don't forget that preceding the resurrection was three days that seemed like forever, and that was part of the experience of those men together, and that is going to be part of your experience, too. So don't always think it's going to be 5,000 people miraculously healed or 3,000 people gloriously converted, or every day the Lord's going to rise from the tomb. I'll tell you something else that was part of the experience of the first body of believers. Did you know what it was?

Judas. Judas Iscariot was part of the experience of that body of believers. And you really can't have a church unless you've got at least a half a dozen good old first class Judas Iscariots in there. The problem is nobody knows which one Judas is, if we knew that'd be fine, but it's the opinion as to who Judas is that really causes the problems. Brother Scott, would you come up here, please, just for a moment? I would appreciate it. Now then, I'm going to show you something. Come here real close. You see, I am sure that he is Judas. He is sure that I am Judas, and that's where the fun comes. You know what? It may be found out that neither one of us are. Oh, maybe brother, but it's more likely that both of us are, especially if we start calling one another. Okay. Thank you, brother. You're right, Scott.

Oh, you don't know how many people have been branded Judas, the devil, an angel of light, an angel of death, and what else, Timothy? What else? There must be a lot

of other things that he has a demon, a false prophet. Come on, help me here. A heretic. What? All right. A real troublemaker. Who knows what? These things are also a part of the experience of the body of Christ. Are you hearing me? But that's not going to happen to you when you get back home, is it? Everything those brothers went through is exactly what you're going to go through.

Open your eyes and see. I don't like it here. I'm discouraged. There's money missing out of the treasury. Did you know that there was money missing out of the..., did you know that they had a little? This is in the Gospels. Money was missing. People would give them money to keep the work going. Judas would put it in a sack and there was some money missing. I guess you can guess who took it, but believe it or not, no one was sure. You know, sometimes you'd say, "Here, I got to help this old lady. Will you hold that?" And he'd say, "Well, here you hold it." Well, I'm going to help her, too. Well, here, that man's got to be let down from the roof, you hold that thing, and they all trusted one another.

I suppose I'm going to tell a story here. I'm always reluctant to tell stories while that thing's running, but once we had the opportunity, privilege, and disaster of living in common, we had a lot of money stolen, and the offering box was often broken into. So, we built an offering box that was about that deep, put a slot in the top of it, and we didn't know it, but somewhere the best I can estimate around \$5,000, at that time, that would have been about 2/3 of a year's salary. One person's salary. It had been stolen out of that thing. It just disappeared. And we did not know why until about 3:00 in the morning. A brother had some reason to go down in the basement where the offering box was kept. It was tied to a post. You couldn't have gotten it loose for anything on earth. And there was a brother, I guess he was a brother. He had a pair of tweezers that long. That's right. And he was sitting there, standing there with those tweezers. You know what he did? He was supporting his drug habit. And there we were, God's people, working our fingernails to the bone, supporting someone's major addiction to a terrible drug and had been for months without knowing it.

You know what? That'll discourage a guy. It's part of the experience of the body of Christ. It's part of the experience of the church. If it's not Judas, it's Ananias and Sapphira. And if it's not them, it's that brother I just told you about, if in fact he was a brother. And you've got every kind of problem facing you, ahead of you, and they understood that to be the experience of about 20 people, and you know, for some reason beyond my understanding, with all the good, and all the bad, and all the dark, and all the light, and all the fun, and all the sadness, on balance, they thought it was wonderful. So wonderful that they wanted to give it to a group of people. Was that you, Chuck? Praise the Lord. Chuck, you and I have been through garbage up to our waist. We've been through more mess than almost any human beings, most humans could never imagine. You still think the church is neat? Praise the Lord. So do I. I think she's worth living for and dying for. And they had never even seen her, and they believed it. It was simply an experience they were having with one another.

Listen to me carefully. They were watching Christ fellowship with the Father. They were watching Him behold the Father. They were watching Him hear the Father and respond to the Father, and they were watching the Father love Him, and they were watching Him love the Father back. And they were watching Him obey the Father, and they were entering into the fellowship of being with Him, being with the Father, and something glorious, forgive the use of the word. I know I'm using the word improperly, but

the magic of it, the chemistry of it. What a chemistry! Yes, and the wonder of it, the glory of it, the chemistry was wonderful. And they loved it. And they did not want it to stop.

Now that's the primitive basic thing of the church. It was not people telling people what they ought to do. It was not a bunch of folks being dictated to. It wasn't submission and authority. It wasn't do this and don't do that. And it doggone sure wasn't Sunday morning at 11:00 a.m. with the doxology and a bunch of people sitting in a pew. It was mostly the life of God corporately experienced and shared. May I repeat that? It was mostly the life of God being corporately partaken of and shared with one another.

That is what they understood. And it had no name, but it was so real and so different than anything else, they knew it to be a living entity that was nameless. Later they would give it the word assemblage, getting together, the gatherings, the ecclesia, and then unfortunately we stuck a very mundane dural word like the church on it. I'm sorry we did that. We should have stayed with the word gathering. This was the gathering. This was the assembling. This was the assemblage. This was the ekklesia.

Now you know something you got to do? You got to figure out how to have that back in your hometown, and you got to figure out how to keep it. Get it and keep it, but you're going to have to go through some of the embarrassing experiences those brothers did. You're also going to have to learn how to fellowship with your Lord. And you're going to have to learn how to share your fellowship with your Lord with others, and your brothers and sisters are going to need to learn how to fellowship with the Lord and share their fellowship with Him and with you. And then there's kind of an explosion that happens when you share what you share and he shares what he shares, and then he gets a little from your sharing that you didn't get from your sharing, and you get a little from his sharing that even he didn't get from his sharing. He shares with you what he got from you that you didn't even get. You share with him what you got from him that even he didn't get. And it's the church, and it's caring, and it's disliking, and it's getting hurt, and it's getting deeply hurt, and it's forgiving, and it's being forgiven, and it's getting caught, getting caught really big, and it's repenting, and it's forgiving. I'd almost say it's sinning, but it also includes the fact that we are actively presently engaged in being sinners and discovering that about one another. It's enormous weaknesses.

I don't think it's a lot of meanness, ugliness. I don't think it's constant correction. I don't think it's the church is this, this, and this, and you got to have this, this, and this. Do you have any idea how hard I worked to get those fingernails? Charles, do you have any idea how hard I labored to get those fingernails? Do you know how hard I worked to get the toenails on the end of my feet? You cannot imagine how difficult it was for me to produce this nose. Do you know how much I had to learn and study and strive and work and strain to get two eyeballs and get them to open and close and work and see? Do you have any idea how hard I worked at that? How hard did I work at that? I would say I didn't have anything to do with it. I would say that it is the nature of my body to produce a fingernail, and an ear, and a nose, and two eyes.

And the 10 administrations and the 12 duties of an apostle, and the 15 duties of a deacon, and 20 things an elder ought to know and do, and the qualifications of an elder and the difference between an elder and a bishop. There ain't no difference. Two people get together in a graveyard. We're going to have a human being. Let's get an eyeball out of that grave and a foot out of that grave. Let's get a neck out of that grave. Let's get some

hair out of that one over there. Let's get a stomach over there, and you get it all put together and you sew it together and there it lays.

One hideous monstrosity made up of 150 concepts from 150 different dead places. And there it lays, and you stand up straight and you look real proud and you say, "Ah, now there is a human being." That's not the way you get a human being. The best way you get a human being is to start with a little bitty baby and let it grow. Feed it and let it grow. If by any chance that thing that you made there in the graveyard were to come alive, you know what it'd be? A monster. They got a name for that already. That's right. His name's Frank. Frank Stein. And yet, all over this country and all over the world, people get together and put their noses in a book, and they write it down. We got to have an elder. What does he have to do? He has to do this, this, and this. We got to have deacons. Yeah. And how many? Seven. What do they do? This, this, and this. And we're going to have elders. and they sew it all together and bless it and say that's the church.

Take a little baby and feed it. Let it grow and eventually it'll have an eyeball and a neck and an arm and a leg and fingernails and hair just by being what it is. You'll take a group of people and show them how to live by a life not their own and let them share with one another, and sing with one another, and care for one another, and hate one another, forgive one another and talk with one another, and go back and repent. That's very divine. That is really divine when a man can repent. You know what's even more divine, is to forgive. And what's really divine is to be forgiven. Praise the Lord. And if you can hold together, what you need is you need somebody who spent four years in Galilee to be there to help you. And what is needed so desperately is workers who were not workers but who were brothers in the church. We need some saints who lived in Galilee. Do you follow me? Do you understand what I'm saying? Then you might have the church.

We keep wanting to start off with Jerusalem. The Lord started with Galilee. Then He got Jerusalem. There were 12 men there to keep it together. I'm really sad to tell you this but getting a group of people together and showing them how to live by the Lord's life and fellowshiping with Him, there's something needed. You need a worker, but not some guy who stood up and said, "I'm a worker," but some guy who came from Galilee who's already been through this before you did. We desperately need someone who's been there and been through what you've not been through yet, and the only reason we don't have it, is we don't have enough humble workers who go back to Galilee first. Do you understand what I'm saying? Everybody wants to start off being a worker and kind of learn how to be one on the job. He doesn't want to be a pre-worker. He doesn't want to sit down and go through Galilee. He wants to start leading at Jerusalem with no past experience in church life. That is the big mess of the church of God today.

Everybody wants to be an apostle with nothing previous to him. I am telling you, what they thought the church was. If you had asked them and if you'd said to them, "What is the Christian life?" They would have had no idea what the Christian life was, and you know why they would not have known? Because they were not Christians. They were not Christians. They did not have the life of the Lord in them, but they had believed on Him, but they had not yet been indwelt by His life because he had not yet died as a grain of wheat that came up to be many grains of wheat, but this thing Christian was captured in one being, one human being, one visible person and had not yet been transplanted into other people, other visible people, but boy, they had a ringside seat watching a Christian.

For three and a half years they watched a Christian mirror Christian. This thing Christian was captured in one being, one human being, one visible person and had not yet been transplanted into other people, other visible people, but boy, they had a ringside seat watching a Christian. For three and a half years, they watched a Christian be a Christian. They knew how He lived the Christian life, and when on the day of the resurrection and after the Lord rose from the dead, He planted that seed in them and they became Christians because they had the life of God in them, they knew how to live by that life, wouldn't it? They knew what a Christian was. They had watched one.

I'm going to talk about this, some more, only it will be clearer to you, I think, when we get finally to the city of Jerusalem. You know what you need? You're young, you're all young. There's not one of you in your 30s. In fact, ... is the oldest among you. How old are you, brother? The oldest among us is 27. You know what you need? You need to watch, you need to watch some Christians be Christians and you really need to watch them. Oh, I would really admonish you to stare a hole through them. Not the fact that they have a post-nasal drip or dandruff or a limp or when they speak, they sometimes fissile with their words but not a lisp. Watch the Christian part of them, and just watch. Don't try to imitate it, just watch it. Don't imitate it, just watch it. Just watch. That's one thing we need.

Another thing you need to do is to hear and to see and fellowship what you hear and see and share it. The rest kind of takes place, takes care of itself, the exposure, the getting caught and all your problems. I guess if there's anything else I would really say to you brothers that you need is, when we find out what your weaknesses are that instead of getting mad and stomping off the scene, taking up your toys and going home, going back and telling mama, telling us all about you hypocrites, but when you really get found out when your weaknesses are finally discovered that you be with some help, there would be some help around and it will be there because praise the Lord there are some people who did go to Galilee. If you want help, you can find it. There have been some people who have been to Galilee, who know what church life is and its embryonic ways. They know Galilee. They can help you and will help you if you are willing to be helped.

Now, I talked to you about two things here. One of them was about what the Christian life was at this point and what the church was in their understanding by now. I did not mention to you preparation of the worker. I want to think for just a moment. What was the Lord doing to prepare these men to be workers? And boy, it's just kind of unbelievable. Timothy, listen to me. The Lord was putting Himself in the middle of the room and He was saying to them, "Watch Me. Live with Me and watch Me. Watch the problems I have, you're going to have them. Watch the crises I go through, you're going to have them. Watch what I preach. Make it real in your life first. It was real in my life before I preached it. I did not preach it after I heard it. I preached it after it was real to Me. Did you hear that?"

Most preaching today is sermon stealing and hasn't been processed through the speaker. It's just been processed into his notes. What Christ spoke had been processed through Him for eternity plus 31, 32, 33, 34 years. Hear what I have to say. Experience it and proclaim it. You know something I'm a little surprised at, I have seen brothers who have watched and have experienced but don't have the courage to proclaim. That's a new experience for me. Don't be ashamed to proclaim that which has been made yours. Don't be so humble.

They were being prepared to be workers by simply having lived with Him, listened to Him, and they were processing the experience with Him. I'm going to make one little short note of this. They were not passing out tracts in the street. They were not preaching the gospel. To me, this is the most fascinating thing in the world, and I wish I could tell it to everybody on earth. It consistently holds truth throughout the whole New Testament. Young men didn't serve the Lord, they grew in the Lord. It was the old men who served the Lord and burned their lives out. That is just wonderful, in your young enthusiasm. Forgive me. Let me start somewhere else. All youth are enthusiastic. You heard the term youthful enthusiasm. Today, youthful enthusiasm is used to preach the gospel and build movements.

My dear brother, I made you use your youthful enthusiasm and getting enthusiastic about knowing Jesus Christ more than nothing else and then knowing Him with a group of other people and sharing Him. Now, Kevin, if you want to be idealistic, if you want to do something that will change the world, don't go preach in ... or out in Africa or don't go to Russia and pass out, sneak out Bibles to the Russians. Get to know the Lord, get a firm foundation built, and then when you're 30 and you're 50, then go work yourself to death for the Lord, and if you see me trying to get you to do all the Christian work, you say to me, don't do that. You're big. You're mean. You're tough. I'm scared to do things like that. I can't do them. I don't have the background for it. You could do that. The only thing I'd say to you is, "Brother, when you get to be 40, I hope to goodness you'll shake a leg. We'll go for it then." And you can, and you should, if you're built right, if your foundation is strong, I'd like to see you have a very primitive concept of the church. Very primitive and very simple.

I'd like to see you enter into fellowship with Him and with others, and I'd like to see you do that for at least four or five or six years and keep your service down to a minimum, and your experience with Christ, and your experience of sharing Christ up to a maximum. Try to stay out of the limelight, stay out of the light of a lot of friction and problems, fights and feuds, but when they come, try to go to a cross and then remember that the church has got as many downs as it's got ups. It's like an elevator. With one down, there'll be one up. With one up, there'll be one down.

I hope you are fortunate enough, lucky enough, blessed of God enough that you can have a very simple primitive experience of the church, shared with other brothers and sisters, and that your ambition and enthusiasm in your youth will be in getting to know Him. And I'm going to tell you two things. One of them is, this business of getting to know Jesus Christ and letting your enthusiasm be channeled there doesn't sell well. I could rally you guys out to the streets to pass out tracts a lot easier than I can get you up at 6:00 in the morning to spend your time with the Lord. Say amen. Is it not true? It sells better. It's easier to work till you sweat than it is to put your spirit in operation.

Anybody can go out and work. Build a pyramid. The other takes a little enlightenment and vision, a sight of Christ. And the other one I'm going to say to you, and I wish I had the nerve to say this to everybody who comes to visit here. Everybody wants Jesus. Everybody wants the deeper Christian life. Everybody wants to know the Lord well and get blessed. There are very few people who want the church, and you can't separate them. If you were to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, that has got to come out of the church. Someone said to me yesterday, "Oh, but I'm just so happy being a Christian alone." That's just like saying, "I'm just so happy to be a fish without water. I'm so happy to be a human being without air. I'm so happy to be an airplane without wings. I'm so

happy to selfishly take all the blessings of God without the problems that come in interaction.

You cannot separate the Christian life from the corporate Christian life. You cannot separate being a real, genuine, true Christian from being a Christian with other people. That is part of the very organic expression of the life of God. The life of God has never been shared alone. Even in the beginning there was the fellowship of the Trinity, and in Galilee there was the fellowship of Christ with 20, and those 20 who knew Him best did not go out and take their little gold and jewels and put them together and say, "Wow, look what I got from Christ." And miserly keep it the rest of their lives. Their instincts fifty days later got them together in an upper room. And when the Lord's glory fell upon them and a lot of people got saved, church was the instinct of their nature. Just like a nail on the end of my fingers, the instinct of my body and barking is the instinct of a dog and flying is the instinct of a duck, that the instinct of the Christian is toward the corporate.

You don't get a choice. Eventually, the solo Christian life ends up being a tailspin. You don't get a choice. If you want Christ, you take the church. You can't have one in real, living reality without the other. You're going to have to have it, unless they put you behind bars, then you can have the Lord and say, "Oh, it's just so really nice just to have the Lord and nothing else, just really enjoy Him alone." You cannot be his faithful follower. There's no way for Jesus Christ to be the faithful follower of God without coming to the ekklesia. You must come ultimately both to Him and to her. She's part of your destiny. We shall watch this pattern that began in eternity past in the Godhead. We have seen it come to Bethlehem. We have watched it in Nazareth. We've seen it enlarge slightly in Galilee. And now we're about to see that pattern, that unbroken pattern, continue and enlarge among lost men, saved, who gathered once more around the fellowship of Jesus Christ. And I'm driving this point home to you.

The primitive essence of the Christian life and the primitive essence of the church and the primitive essence of how workers should be raised does not really ever change. I am inviting you to understand this because I intend to invite you into that fellowship, the fellowship with Him and into the fellowship of the body of Christ.

This is where you're being taken by me, in case you're not clear. And if I see one of you out some years from now paddling along in your canoe all the more and saying, "Boy, you I sure enjoyed that week." Boy, that was nice. I really enjoyed that. You're a good preacher, Gene. So good, but you're out there paddling your canoe all. I assure you I will check you off as having failed. I will have failed in your life. I am astonished at how many people want to know Christ, but do not literally crawl over cut glass if necessary to have the church. You ought to have both, and you ought to burn for both.