

Keep Your Thumbs Up

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Date: 27 March 2024

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[0 : 0 0] of Maine do they study about Mainers and they found out that one out of every three Mainers is ugly. So let me tell you how that works. If you would look at the people either side of you, if they look okay, you're the problem. That is totally made up. Good to have you here tonight.

You're good looking. And how many of you, how many of you in your lifetime have ever had the courage here in New England to give somebody a track? Would you raise your hand please if you've ever done that? The Bible says you're gorgeous. How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel. When you give out a track, you're preaching the gospel. And good to have all of you here tonight.

And I have thoroughly enjoyed my half a week with you. It's good to be with my buddy, Pastor Steve. I hope you pray for him all the time. It's so easy to critique a pastor. We're so lazy and so slow sometimes to pray for him. And I just encourage you to pray for him that God would keep him strong, keep his marriage strong. I like to tell congregations that J. Vernon McGee, that great radio preacher who's with the Lord now, had a friend who pastored in Texas. And that church in Texas had a middle-aged couple join the church. And it was one of those couples, you've all seen them, where the wife controlled everything. She controlled her husband. She controlled everything she was involved in. She controlled the pastor. And she joined this church and the pastor would have none of it. He would not let her control. And finally, she got so frustrated, she said to her pastor, pastor, if you were my husband, I would poison you. The pastor very calmly said, ma'am, if you were my wife, I'd take it.

Hope you pray for the pastor. Yeah, and he needs it. And I see no cause for concern. But boy, if I were the devil, and I've been called that before, but if I were the devil, boy, I'd love to mess up that marriage. I'd love to mess up that life. And I hope you pray for him all the time. But good to have you here tonight. And thank you, so much for your kindness and your hospitality. Your pastor and I have lined up for me to come back in two years in April. And hopefully the snow will be melted by then. And boy, a lot of melting went on today, didn't it? And aren't you glad to see that? We have out there what we call Indian snow. Apache here and Apache there. But good to have you here tonight. And I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with you.

If you should take my prayer card and pray for me every now and then, I would greatly appreciate it. I really need it. And my itinerary is on my website. My address is on the back of my prayer card.

[2 : 2 8] Next week, I'll be home. I'll be preaching in a church in Greenville this coming Sunday on Easter. And then the Sunday after that, I'll be in the Pittsburgh area. And then after that, I will be in... I don't remember. I don't remember. Oh, yes, I do. I'll be in Denver. I'll be in Denver. Then I'll be home for a week and then off to California. And so that's my immediate...

But anyway, if you'd like to see my itinerary, it's on my website, MikeShark.com. But thank you so much for your hospitality and the chance to rub shoulders with you and get reacquainted and make some new friends. And I hope that you'll have a great Easter Sunday. Folks, what a wonderful opportunity you have, every one of you. If people are going to go to church in Maine, it's usually on Easter. They're ripe. And what a great time for you to invite and encourage them to come. And there's a meal involved. I mean, people love food. And what a great opportunity you have. I'd like to encourage you to come out of your shell a little bit. It's a loving thing to do. Come out of your shell and invite people and invite your neighbors. And I hope you have a testimony with your neighbors and invite them to come to church. But I'll be praying for you and hope that you have a great Friday night service. Pastor Mike, hope things go well.

Hope they're nice to you. And I hope they take their five-minute time limit. It takes me longer to do my introduction than that. And I can't imagine having to do that. But we've been memorizing a verse.

And it goes like this. Psalm 119.97. Now, the Jews would have said this. This is from their hymn book. But it goes like this. Psalm 119.97. Oh, how love I thy law. That word law there is referring to the Bible. That's a euphemism for Bible. Oh, how love I thy law. It's my meditation all the day. Not just on Sunday. Not just on Sunday morning. All the day. You know, I heard a statistic recently that said that one hour after a pastor has preached a message, the congregation has forgotten 90% of it.

Boy, I hope you meditate on this book. What a great thing to do, teenagers. What a great thing to do, children. What a great thing to do, adults. Pondering on this book, what it says, and applying it to the way you live. We'll talk more about that here in just a few moments, okay? But let's say together, could we? Let's say, in reference before and after. Psalm 119.97. Oh, how love I thy law. It is my meditation all the day. Psalm 119.97. Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, I need help tonight. Lord, I'm no better than anybody in this room, but would you use me anyway? Father, help me to connect to this congregation.

[5 : 02] Would you help them to connect to me? As together, we look into your infallible, preserved, eternal, living book. Lord, I pray that we would love it all the more as a result of our time together tonight. In Jesus' name, I ask it because I know it's your will. Amen. I like to do this with teenagers, but I think adults need to hear it too. There's a very well-known verse, perhaps most of you haven't memorized. It goes like this. All scripture, and that word all is the Greek word pas, and it means every book, all 66 of them, every chapter, every verse, every letter, every word, all scripture is given. It's a gift. The Bible's a gift, people. All scripture is given by inspiration of God. That word inspiration is fascinating, and it literally means breath, breath. Now, in order for us to understand that tonight, let me have a little fun. I am told that if you would like, in the dead of winter, you can hop on an airplane, and you can fly to northern Alaska, and the conditions can be just right. The humidity level can be just right that when you land at an airport like in Kodiak or

Fairbanks, I mean, way up there, you can step out of the airplane, and when you exhale and that little vapor cloud appears, it will freeze instantly with a popping sound like milk on Rice Krispies and will fall to the ground. Can you imagine? Stepping out of an airplane going, ticka, ticka, ticka, ticka, ticka, poof. You're looking down at your breath. For some of you guys, it's green and glows in the dark, but you're looking down at your breath. And may I suggest to you folks, in a very simplistic way, that's what this book is. God came up and said, hey, losers, hey, all of you that are sinners and on your way to hell, let me help you.

ticka, ticka, ticka, poof. Bible. There it is. It is literally God's breath, people. Literally God's breath. Here is the problem. Many, many years ago, I got married. Now, that's not a problem.

That is for her, but not for me. I got married, and according to the Bible, it's my job as a young husband, and young people, I hope you're listening carefully. Men, I hope you're listening carefully. It's my job as a husband to learn about this bride that God had given me. He that findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and favor from the Lord. It was my job, according to 1 Peter 3, 7, to learn about this little gift that God had given me called a wife. And 1 Peter 3, 7 says, to dwell with her according to knowledge and what you learn about her, lest your prayers be hindered. There's no doubt in my mind that some of you may come from homes where your daddy's prayer doesn't get any higher than the ceiling tile because of the way he treats your mama. Men, we are very, very commanded to treat our wives very, very respectfully and lovingly. And so, God gave me a wife. And I learned very quickly in my marriage that she's nothing like me. Opposites attract. She's sweet. She's easy to get along with. And I learned very quickly that a good button in her life, a good button to this day, it'll happen tomorrow when I get home, I can say to her, Lori, and it's always good to remember their name. Lori, would you like to go out to eat? Oh, people, what a great button. She loves to eat out, not having to prepare a meal, not having to wash the dishes. You can understand that, can't you?

She's not a chow hound, but she enjoys eating out. And that's always a good button. And when we were first married, we'd go to a restaurant. I mean, we still do, but we'd go to a restaurant. And then later on that evening, maybe I would get close to her and I would do this. Ooh, Lori, your breath is bad.

[8 : 32] Bad button. Folks, it was bad. Let me tell you what she's like. She's nothing like me. When she goes to a restaurant, and I have found that most women are like this, when she goes to a restaurant, she never gets the same thing twice. She likes to experiment. She likes to try new stuff. She'll even say to the waitress, what's your favorite dish here? Well, ma'am, my favorite dish happens to be fried fish guts marinated in eyeball juice. My wife will try it. She'll try it. She'll try it. She's very very brave. But let me tell you about men. I think most men are like this, and I would appreciate an amen, gentlemen, if it's you. When we find something on that menu we like, we get it every dumb time we go to that restaurant. Yeah, you're right. Amen. Yeah. Well, so I would get close to her later and she had eaten something really exotic and I was just being truth of the Lord, it was bad.

And friends, it takes a man a long time to learn a new trick. But I learned after many, many failures, I learned that I never say anything to my little wife about her breath. But whenever we out, we eat out, I've always got something like this in my pocket. And I'll say, here, sugar, would you like one of these? She'll say, well, yes, thank you. That doesn't offend her. It's saying the same thing, isn't it? But it's what we call tactful. Now, my wife, my life got more complicated. God gave me a son and folks, he's got breath in the morning, would knock a moose over to 100 yards. I mean, he is, wow, it is rank breath. And I used to say to him, I would say, Andrew, honey, go brush your teeth, go chew some gum, go get some candy. Your breath is terrible. Okay, Daddy. The last time I ever said it to him, he was a teenager. He looked at me eye to eye and said, well, Dad, yours doesn't smell like roses either. I offended him. I had to learn it, even my son's life. Hey, Drew, it's like one of these. Yeah, thanks, Dad. But I wonder how many of us tonight, hear me carefully, I wonder how many of us offend God by our attitude towards his breath sometimes. Unlike your breath sometimes, unlike my breath a lot of times, his never smells bad. Young people, I want you to hear me carefully. There is not a single verse in here that was written to make your life miserable. Everything in here is for your good, for your help, for your edification, for your joy. God wants you happy. And he said, let me give you a guidebook.

And he breathed on us the Word of God. What a privilege. And I wonder here tonight what your attitude is like towards the Bible. And may I remind you churchgoers tonight that the number one reason that we have a church is so that you can come and learn doctrine. That's the number one purpose of the church. Not to make friends, not for fellowship, although those are nice perks, and that's another purpose of the church. But the main reason we're here is for doctrines, for learning about the Bible. I think that most American Christians have gotten that backwards. They go to church so that they can see, find out the latest gossip and find out what's happening in it. And doctrine seems to be way down on the priority list. How sad. We're all about what the Bible says. We're all about doctrine. And what I want to visit with you folks tonight is what is your attitude like, Christian? This is a message tonight for people that are saved.

What is your attitude like towards the Bible? Does it need adjusting? May I challenge you tonight to take temperature, to lift the hood of your spiritual engine and find out just exactly what are you like when it comes to the Word of God? And I'm going to show you a verse where we have some example of a great attitude. And you'll find that in the book of Acts. Would you turn there with me please tonight? The book of Acts. And if you'll get your Bible open there, you'll be all set to go.

Acts chapter 17. Acts chapter 17. And would you look with me tonight at verse number 11. That's where we're going to camp out this evening, all right? So get your Bible open there and you'll be all good to go.

[12 : 22] By the way, while you're turning there, I forgot to say this earlier. I've got CDs for sale, trumpet CDs for sale that still have plenty left. The more you buy, the lighter my load tomorrow, okay? Help me out. But, all right? But that's available to you along with my prayer card, which is free.

Okay, here we go. Acts 17, 11. Are you there? Would you look at your neighbor, people? Would you just look at your neighbor and say, wow, I'm glad you're here? That's the first nice thing that some of you husbands have said to your wife today. Acts chapter 17, verse 11. Watch this. He says, these were more...

Would you look at me please? Let me explain to you what's happening. Do you like your middle name? Does anybody here not have a middle name? Are you like Harry Truman? Harry just took the letter S.

You don't have a middle name? I don't like... I never liked my middle name. I have never liked my... I had no choice in the matter, as you can understand. But I have never liked my middle name because everybody, it seems like anybody I've ever met that had my middle name as their first name, their elevator didn't go to the top floor. You know what I mean?

The wheel was turning, but the hamster was sometimes gone. You know, the skylight leaks, you know, kind of those kind of people. And my middle name... But as I started to learn the Bible and got more and more knowledge about the Bible, I discovered that my middle name really is kind of cool. It really is. And it's in Acts 17, 11. It's in Acts 17, 11. It's a Greek word. You're not going to read it in English. But it's a word here in Acts 17, 11. Look at it with me again, would you please?

[13 : 59] The Bible says, these... Verse 11. These were more... And there's my middle name. Noble. But it's not noble. It's the Greek word for noble. And it happens to be Eugene. Eugene. My full name is Michael Eugene Schrock. Whenever I've had my name said in full like that, it was always because I was in trouble. But Eugene is a Greek word, people. And it's the Greek word for noble. And what's so interesting about this is that God is saying you can be noble. You can be Eugene-like. In fact, he wants you to be Eugene-like when it comes to the Bible. Let me read the rest of the verse. Could I please? Verse 11.

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Okay, now, would you look up this way? Let me explain to you what's happening. Kasson, would you help me, please? Would you come here for just for a moment? Let me use you for a minute, okay? Kasson, would you come here and just stand right there facing the eyes? You don't have to say anything. Just stand like a statue.

Lucas, come stand here, would you please? I don't know if all of you know this, but these guys are brothers and they're both really good trumpet players. But I'd like you to meet Kasson. And I want Kasson, because he's the older of the two, I want him to represent a group of believers called Bereans.

Bereans. Have you ever heard that term before, Bereans? I was raised in Seattle, and we attended Berean Bible Church. And the reason we were called Berean Bible Church is because we kind of wanted to model ourselves after these guys right here. You also have another group of believers called the Thessalonians. Now, these guys are believers. These guys are believers. God loves these believers.

God loves both of them equally. Okay, now, try to keep that in the back of your mind. God is not showing preference in verse 11. He's just saying, oh, Christians throughout all the ages, look at the Bereans. Well, what happened was that Paul had gone to Thessalonica, and he had been persecuted. I mean, it was rough. He could only stay there for three weeks, and they ran him out of, and I mean, it was a rough deal. But a church got planted, and let me tell you about that church. Eventually, it became a great church. They were under intense persecution. Whenever the church suffers persecution, it always gets stronger. Isn't that interesting? They had intense persecution at Thessalonica. But a church got started here, but it was rough going. When Paul got to Berea, he found a group of believers there that were so very much hungry for the Word of God. They wanted the Bible. And friends, what I want us to understand is that God says these guys were more Eugene than these guys. Did God love these people?

[16 : 34] Absolutely. Adored them. Did he love these people? Absolutely. He loved them equally. So this has nothing to do with how much God loves you. But it has everything to do, people, with your attitude. And what made these guys here so much more noble, so much more Eugene-like than these guys is the fact that they had a better mindset, they had a better attitude when it came to the Bible than these guys did. Now, they changed. They got better. But God is saying to you tonight, Christian, be like a Berean.

He's holding them up as an example to all of us when it comes to the Word of God. Have the right kind of attitude. Now, let me tell you why, folks. Whenever the Bible is preached, whenever it is read, whenever it is memorized, you at that moment are some kind of receiver. These guys were amazing receivers.

These guys weren't so good. If Paul had the opportunity of coming to Hancock, and he had the privilege tonight of being a preacher instead of me, I wonder if he'd walk out of here going, hmm, those believers at Bible Baptist and Hancock, they're Eugene-like. Oh, I like them.

I wonder if God would say that. I wonder if Paul would say that if he knew you. And friends, again, I repeat, God is holding through his Word these believers right here as an example of you.

They were good receivers. Thank you, Kasten. Thank you, Lucas. Thank you very much. Your dad's going to buy you a milkshake on the way home for doing that tonight, okay? And if you need some money, pastor, let me know, okay? But anyway, folks, whenever the Bible is preached, would you hear me carefully? Whenever the Bible is preached, you are some kind of receiver.

[18 : 15] Young people, you're some kind of receiver right now. Ladies, men, you're some kind of receiver. When I hear the word receiver, please forgive me, but I can't help but think of football.

I love football. I played high school football, and I played receiver. I also played safety and the defense. I love catching the ball. I like throwing it, love catching it. That was my favorite position, receiver. When you're in a football game, no matter what position you play, if the ball is thrown to you, you at that moment are some kind of receiver. Well, let me tell you what happened a number of years ago, people, that I think that you'll appreciate because you live in New England. Back in 1984, when my wife and I were two years into our marriage, we moved from Greenville, South Carolina, to Boston. Ever heard of it? When we got there, I went to a big university there working on a master's degree and started becoming very, very active in a little tiny Baptist church.

Probably about the same size as yours. And I was, they immediately made me the youth pastor and music pastor. Okay, and they gave me a little stipend, which was very nice of them.

But let me tell you what happened, folks. I had a really nice choir of about 20 voices. It was often, Bonnie, there were more people in my choir than there were in the congregation. And it may happen here, too. But when I would, folks, when I would stand in front of my choir, and by the way, I was a choir leader for 14 years, so this was a good experience for me.

But when I would stand in front of my choir, and they were good. I mean, we went to the local mall and did Christmas music and stuff. I mean, I was so proud of them. They were good, about 20 voices. But folks, when I would stand in front of my choir, right here in my alto section was a lady who was very, very famous.

[19 : 56] In fact, when I say her name, her last name, some sports fans may recognize it. The reason that she was famous is because her husband was big-time famous. In fact, you can still hear him on the radio in Boston.

He played wide receiver for the New England Patriots. Ever heard of him? Wide receiver. Now, folks, you've got to understand. I know it might be hard for you to put yourself in my shoes. But here I am. I love football.

And I got to be friends with his wife singing in my choir. His son, his little four-year-old son, had a crush on my wife. She was a Sunday school teacher. Kind of cute. But I got to know him. By the way, let me tell you what his name is.

His name is, and raise your hand if you recognize it, okay? Because it goes back a number of years. His name is Randy Vitaha. Anybody remember Randy Vitaha? He was Jim Plunkett's favorite receiver.

Just so you know, I'm not pulling your chain tonight. Here's his football card. There's Randy's football card. He played six years for the Patriots, set all kinds of records. You're welcome to come and hold my card after the service for a dollar.

[20 : 56] But, folks, I got to know Randy really well. We kind of became friends. And you've got to know, I was absolutely tickled pink, as they say. I got to spend time sitting, you know, feet under the same table with a receiver in the NFL.

It was so fun. I just love it. I hope you can understand that. I know some of you are probably rolling your eyes on the inside. I understand that. But I really, and I used to bombard him with questions.

Randy, what's it like to score a touchdown in front of 75,000 half-sober fans? And he, I mean, he just told me all kinds of stories, all kinds of stories. But I want to tell you about one he told me.

I think you'll find this very interesting. At least I hope you do. Randy told me, he said, one day he told me, he said, Mike, in the NFL, they make us do something that all of us hate. No matter how much we're worth, no matter how invaluable we are to the team, they make us every August go to Rhode Island and to go to training camp.

No matter how famous we are, no matter how decorated we are, we have to go to camp for three weeks. We hate it. We have to leave our wives. We have to leave our girlfriends. And we're there with just men. And we have two-a-days and three-a-days in the hot pads under that August sun.

[22 : 04] He said, we absolutely hate it. But he said, the reason they send us to camp is because we work on the fundamentals. We work on the fundamentals. People, there are fundamentals involved if you're going to be the right kind of receiver for the word of God.

But I'm ahead of myself. Let me back up. Randy told me, he said, they will often take all the receivers, the wide receivers of the team, and they'll take them to a separate section there in the campground there where they're having camp.

And he said, they work on the fundamentals in receiving a football. And he said, Mike, there are two fundamentals in the NFL. I don't know if this is still true. We're going back to the 80s. He said, there are two fundamentals in catching a football in NFL.

And he said, our coaches scream at us. They scream at us. They do everything they can to just get into our heads. They scream at us about these two fundamentals. If I were to go around the room, if we had time and ask you what you think they are, probably most of you would get one.

None of you, I promise you, none of you would get the second one. And I'll tell you what it is. First of all, he said, Mike, they scream at us. Keep your eyes on the ball.

[23 : 13] Well, that's kind of obvious. But let me help you. When you play in the NFL, according to the rules, when the ball is thrown at you, if you have the courage, as it's coming through the air right at you, if you've got the courage to touch it, at that split millisecond, you are fair game for a knuckle-dragging, gorilla-breath, slobbering linebacker defenseman to hit you so hard that, as Dick Butkus used to famously say, I want to hit a guy so hard his head rolls to the sideline.

That is their mentality. And so when you're in a play and the ball is being thrown to you, it's very tempting to kind of shoot glances at where death is coming from.

And you've all seen it, if you've ever watched a football game. You've all seen a wide receiver who can catch a football far better than anybody in this room drop a pass that your grandmother could have caught.

And you go, oh, no, no, no, don't do that. So Randy said, they scream at us. Catch the ball. Keep your eye on the ball. We don't care if you die. We're paying you millions of dollars to catch that ball.

Keep your eyes on the ball. And if you go to a football game, I don't know if you've ever done this. If you go to a college game like the University of Maine, or I've been to a Harvard game, and I've been to a Boston college game, and if you watch the warm-ups, the receivers when they're warming up, they literally do this.

[24 : 40] They watch the ball into their numbers, just like this. And then they look up. It's kind of weird looking. But what they're doing is they're trying to ingrain into their mind, keep my eyes on that ball.

Isn't that interesting? So Randy said, they scream at us. Just keep your eyes on the ball. The second principle none of you would ever get. Randy said, they scream at us about positioning our body so that we can receive the football with our thumbs out.

With our thumbs out. They have found that your inside fingers are softer than your outside fingers. And they talk in the NFL about soft hands. They talk in the Major League Baseball about a soft glove.

What that means is, people, is that when the ball comes in there, it sticks in there like Velcro. Don't bobble it. You don't want to bobble it because you're going to get hit immediately. And if you're bobbling it, you're probably going to drop it.

So they try to work at these receivers about just like having Velcro on their fingers. That ball just comes in there, and it sticks, and it doesn't get bobbled, and it makes you a better receiver. And so they talk about the best receivers in the NFL having soft hands.

[25 : 46] It doesn't mean you walk up to them and, ooh, you must use palm oil of gold. That's not what it means at all. It just means they never bobble. A good receiver never bobbles. And they have found that if your thumbs are out, you're less likely to bobble.

Isn't that interesting? I found that fascinating. I've never forgotten that. But what is so interesting, Bible students, is that in verse 11, God gives you, through Paul, through Luke, I should say, Paul gives you two fundamentals in catching the Word of God.

Two. And you read them there in verse number 11. And Luke very clearly lines them out for us. All right? Verse number 11. And what are they? Would you look at verse 11 again? He says, these, talking about the Bereans, these were more noble, Eugene-like, than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind.

Folks, that is God's will for every one of you. Whenever you walk in those doors, whenever you have your devotions at home, when you open the Word of God, may you have a readiness of mind.

You know what that means? Soft hands. Soft hands. Your attitude is right. You're hungry. You realize, I'm not there yet. Even though I'm a Christian college graduate, even though I'm homeschooled and I've been taking Bible, even though I've been a church member for 30, 40, 50, 60 years, I'm still hungry.

[27 : 08] I'm not there yet. My heart is soft. Lord, talk to me. I want to know more. I want to know your book better. Folks, every one of you should have that attitude. Every one of you should have the same kind of mindset that the Apostle Paul had in Philippians 3, where there in a sports metaphor, Paul says this.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. The very next verse he says, not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.

What he's saying there in that sports metaphor, that sports picture, his church, Philippian believers, I'm not there yet. Folks, this is the Apostle Paul talking who makes the rest of us like brain dead when it comes to theology.

And his whole attitude was, I'm not there yet. And it comes right after that very well-known verse that I may know him in the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death. I'm not there yet.

I'm still hungry. Folks, every one of you, I don't care who you are, every one of you should have that attitude. What's fascinating, people, about that sports metaphor in Philippians 3, you know how old Paul was?

[28 : 14] Paul was in his 60s. Philippians is a prison epistle. Paul will be dead within a few years. He's at the end of his life, and he's still hungry.

Are you? Do you have a soft heart? Do you want, when you come into church, are you thinking, yeah, I want this. Yeah, I'm glad to be here. Lord, talk to me. I don't care who else is here.

Lord, I want it. Folks, as a believer, you and I, you and I, I'm so convicted by this myself. Every one of us should be just like a wide receiver in the NFL that nobody liked.

He's in the Hall of Fame. He was phenomenal, but nobody liked him. His teammates hated him. His name was Terrell Owens. He played for Dallas for a number of years, and then he played for Philadelphia. He was a phenomenal wide receiver, but nobody liked him.

Let me tell you why. He would come to the huddle after a play, or he'd come to go to his coach after a series of plays, and he'd look at his coach, or he'd look at his quarterback, and he'd say, Do you want to win?

[29 : 12] Hey, coach, do you want to win? Hey, quarterback, do you want to win? Then throw me the ball. I'm the best player out here. Throw me the ball. Get me involved.

I want the ball. Throw it to me. Ladies and gentlemen, could I suggest to you that every one of you ought to have the same attitude? I don't care who's coming to church on Sunday. I'm going to be there, and God would just throw it to me.

I'm open. I want to know your word better. I am hungry to know your word. My friends, am I describing you? Are you Eugene-like? May I repeat? That's God's will for you.

God wants every one of you to have an attitude. Lord, I'm open. I know I got sin in my life, and forgive me, but would you speak to me anyway? Lord, I want to know your word.

I'm not proud. I'm not arrogant. I'm not a superstar. Would you talk to me, Lord? I'm open. I'm open. I would challenge you people to be praying that God would help you to have that kind of attitude.

[30 : 09] Every time, I don't care who the quarterback is, whether it's your pastor, a Sunday school teacher, your devotions, I don't care who the quarterback is. You need to have an attitude. I want this.

I want this. My heart is soft. I'm not proud. I'm not arrogant. Lord, I want to hear your word. Please talk to me. Could I get an amen? Amen.

Now, let me talk about principle number two. Look at verse 11. He says, These, referring to the Bereans, were more noble, Eugene-like, than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, now watch this, and searched the scriptures every Sunday.

Is that what it says? And searched the scriptures while they were in school. And searched the scriptures when they were a deacon. And searched the scriptures so they could get a Sunday school lesson. Is that what it says? No.

They had a daily appetite. Could I liken that to, my friend, to the principle of keeping your eyes on the ball? Their eyes were always on scripture.

[31 : 08] Every day. I want the Bible. Every day, saints. Every day. How much time today have you spent in the Bible? What do you like? Are you Eugene-like? Are you noble?

Are you hungry? Is your focus? Now, folks, let me tell you what you're like. If your focus is on the Bible, if you're like these Bereans, let me tell you what you're like. Everything that's in your life. Everything.

You compare it to what the Bible says. Oh, I'm about to watch a TV show. Hmm. What does the Bible say about it? Oh, I'm about to hear a music group.

What does the Bible say about them? Oh, I've got an attitude right now about my pastor. What does the Bible say about it? Oh, I've got an attitude right now towards my wife. What does the Bible say?

Oh, the way I'm talking to my parents behind their back. What does the Bible say? Oh, the way that I'm talking about that officer of the law. What does the Bible say about it?

[32 : 07] Oh, I've got an unsaved workmate, and I have an opportunity to give him a trap. I have an opportunity to talk about the Lord Jesus Christ. What does the Bible say about that? Folks, you're constantly focused on the Bible.

You want to know what the Bible says in every area of your life. You bring it to bear on the way that you live. Folks, that is a Eugene-type Christian. That is a godly Christian. That's the kind of receiver God is looking for.

Am I describing you? Are you very, very careful to catch the Bible? And folks, let me tell you about the word receiving. The word receiving, young people, does not mean to just catch.

The word receiving here, adults, literally means to catch and run with it. It changes the way you live. It's your ability to hear it and then live it.

If you just hear it, that's called dropping. You dropped it. You don't want to do that. When you are a good receiver, you hear the Bible, and it affects the way you think. It affects the way you live.

[33 : 05] It affects the way you talk. It's all very pervasive in your life. That's a good receiver. That's what God wants in your life. He wants his word to come into your life, not just memorize it.

Oh, how love I thy law. It's my meditation all the day. Okay, good. I'm glad you know that. Now, live it. Many of you will probably drop it. I wonder how many of us here tonight are like a wide receiver that some of you will recognize.

Let me tell you his name here in a moment. But before I do, I want to set the stage by letting you know something. That I was raised on the West Coast. I miss the West Coast.

The most beautiful part of this country is up in the Northwest. It's just gorgeous up there. I like New England. I really do. But it is beautiful on the West Coast, more so than here. But don't be offended by that, okay?

That's my opinion. But there's a perk to living on the East Coast. I'm glad that God has called me to be a missionary to you here on the East Coast. I was raised on the West Coast, but let me tell you, I hate this moniker, Super Bowl Sunday, but you understand what I mean.

[34 : 07] On Super Bowl Sunday, if you live on the West Coast, the game starts at 3.30 in the afternoon. If you're a godly Christian who's right with God, you go to church during the second half, and you don't know who wins.

And when I was living on the West Coast, we didn't have cell phones yet, so you couldn't cheat in the choir or in the back pew while the pastor was preaching and check on the score. You couldn't do that. And so, as a big sports fan that I've always been, I would be frustrated.

Who won the game? Who won the game? Because you can see the first half. The best part of any game is always the second half. Could I get an amen? It's frustrating. Then God called me to the East Coast.

One of the nice things, and there are many, but one of the nice things about the East Coast is on Super Bowl Sunday, if you're godly, you're in church, and you don't see the kickoff.

But if your pastor has mercy, and he doesn't... Heard about a pastor that would purposely preach twice as long on Super Bowl Sunday. What a jerk. But anyway, I probably shouldn't have said that.

[35 : 08] Please forgive me. But if your pastor has mercy, and he lets you out on time, you can get home, I've discovered, in time to see the end of the first half and all the second half. That's a nice perk on the East Coast.

I like that. When I was a youth pastor in Springfield, Massachusetts, one Super Bowl Sunday, we had a youth activity after the evening service at my house, where all the teenagers came over.

We were going to watch the second half of the Super Bowl and have pizza, you know, and soda and all that stuff. And they came in. It was one of those Super Bowls that the Buffalo Bills were in.

And they were in four. And this particular Super Bowl, I got home and flipped on the TV just in time to see the end of the first half. And what had happened is that the Buffalo Bills had marched down the field and they were literally about from me to Jared from the second touchdown, about two yards.

It was third down. You get four. It was third down. And let me tell you, I'm going to act out what happened. I'm going in... Our team's going in this... The Buffalo Bills are going in this direction. I just got to get there to score a touchdown.

[36 : 10] Jim Kelly, Hall of Fame, phenomenal quarterback, walked behind his hiker, put his hands down, said something to the effect of, Hey, Red Bull, Red Bull, slant left, slant left, five, six, six, two, one, three, go, go, go, which is a fancy NFL way of saying, Could I please have the ball?

Well, the hiker hiked it, and Jim Kelly immediately started fading backwards, which told all football fans, Oh, this is a pass play. Jim Kelly's going to pass the ball.

Well, just as Jim Kelly was fading back, looking for a receiver, something very bad happened. One of the linebackers for the New York Giants broke through the protection and was bearing down on little Jim Kelly.

They showed him in slow motion. Jim Kelly's eyes went, bah! And he took off. He did what they call in the NFL. He scrambled, which is a fancy way of saying he ran for his life.

He's about to die. He's running in this direction. He's looking for a receiver. There was nobody open. He couldn't find one. He did a little and went this way and reversed his direction.

[37 : 18] And the linebacker's getting closer and closer to him. And he's running and he's frantically looking for somebody to get rid of the ball to. And about from me to, what was your name? About from me to Zachary, Jim Kelly spotted his favorite receiver.

Hall of Fame receiver by the name of Andre Reid. Phenomenal player. Phenomenal. Had a wonderful season. Andre Reid's standing right there. All by himself. Jim Kelly did not have time to plant his feet.

He didn't have time to get his shoulders in the direction that he wanted to throw the ball. He didn't have time to bring the ball back behind his ear and have a nice follow through with a tight spiral. He's about to die. So he just took the ball and he went, pfft.

Played it. The ball went through the air. Deedle, deedle, deedle, deedle. Folks, it was the kind of pass. It was the kind of toss that when you're playing catch with your five-year-old. And you say, okay, Andrew, put your hands out.

I did this with my son all the time. It was a Nerf football. Put your hands out there and I would make sure that I would toss it right in there. He would cradle it and be so proud. Be so happy. That's the kind of pass it was. So the ball went through the air.

[38 : 21] Deedle, deedle, deedle, deedle. Right here to Zachary. And you can see Andre Reid. You know what he's thinking. Oh, baby.

I'm about to catch a touchdown pass in the most important game in my life. My wife is watching. My cat is watching.

My dog is watching. My hometown is watching. I've already got my end zone dance all planned out. Probably involves the moonwalk. This is going to be great. And that ball hit him right in the numbers.

It was a perfect toss. And guess what happened? He dropped it. Even though I was 200 miles away, I could hear Buffalo going, oh, no, no, no, no, no.

It was fourth down. So the Buffaloes then proceeded to kick a field goal. And so instead of getting seven points, they got three. They went on and lost that game by one point.

[39 : 23] You think, oh, oh, how tragic. How sad. But could I share with you something even sadder tonight? How many of us know people that sat right here where you're sitting?

They had the eternal word of God thrown at them. They dropped it. They dropped it. Went out. And they're living for the world.

Turned their hands. They were taught. They dropped the ball. And it has eternal consequences. It's not just a little trophy. Nobody remembers who won the Super Bowl four years ago.

Very, very temporal. But, boy, when you drop the word of God, my friend, it's going to affect you for eternity. God's going to hold you accountable for all the passes he's thrown to you. And you've dropped all.

I'll share with you a statistic, people, that will scare you if you're godly. But the latest statistic on your church, a fundamental Bible-believing church like this, 75% of your young people, when they graduate from high school, will stop attending church.

[40 : 26] You know what they're doing? They're dropping the ball. How sad. How tragic. How much more tragic than some stupid little pass in a stupid little game called Super Bowl that nobody cares about four years from now.

How sad. Friends, God is throwing to you every time you sit in this blessed building. God is throwing to you passes. The word of God is so wonderful. It is so amazing.

It is so supernatural. Young people, could I remind you that the Bible is a supernatural book. It does stuff in your life that no other book can do. It is an amazing, amazing gift that God has given us.

And God wants everyone of us to have an attitude just like the Bereans, where you're Eugene, like, Lord, I want to live it. I want to bring it into my life. And I want it to change. Folks, I'm not a weirdo.

I'm a real Christian. And you show me a real Christian who's right with God, I'll show you somebody who wants the Bible. They want to live it. They want to obey it. They want to ponder it. They want to meditate on it. They love the law.

[41 : 26] Oh, how love I thy law. God is my meditation all the day. Our number one hobby, people, our number one hobby, the Bible. Yeah, sports is fun, play them, sure. Music is fun, sure.

Play your instruments. Sing it. That's great. But our number one hobby ought to be the word of God. And I want to challenge every one of you to take inventory of your own life. Are you Eugene-like?

That's what God wants. And if you're not, may the Lord convict you. Would you bow your heads, please, and close your eyes? While your heads are bowed and your eyes are closed.