

What Does the Church Do for Me?

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you'll be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. If you would, and open then to Matthew chapter 16 and verse 18.

One of the most misunderstood words in the world is the church. Everybody can't, they don't understand it. They don't understand why we would go to church. They don't know why is the church so important.

What does the church do for you? And so there's this big question, do I need to be in church? Is this a big deal? You know, as a pastor, you probably think Austin sure does push us a lot to say the church is important.

What does God say about the church? I'm going to share with you three things today that I hope you'll mark in your Bible. I hope you'll go through the verses with me. The first thing is one of the main purposes of the church is to teach you God's Word.

To teach you God's Word. And so we're going to look at that and see if that's what the Bible says. And another reason for the church is to protect you. The Bible uses the church and God's people and the pastors and the leaders of the church to help you be protected from Satan and from wrong information and from lies and help you know what's right.

[1 : 11] Because you've been taught the Bible. And I'll show you that in the Bible. I think you'll see it very clearly. And then number three, it's a place where I serve. A place where I participate.

Because God gave me talents. God put me in his life and his ministry and his family. And he wants to use me. If salvation was only about going to heaven, you'd be there.

If salvation was only about going to heaven, you'd be there. If God was only about going to heaven, you'd be there. If it's only about I'm going to save a few and take them on to heaven. Because there's nothing on this earth that ever measure up to what heaven's going to be like for us.

It'll take you about one split mini second in heaven to realize heaven's a lot better than anything you ever saw on earth. You might have been to Niagara Falls. And you might have been to all the wonders of the world.

But it'll be nothing like heaven and what God has prepared. So on this earth, God expects you to be involved in serving him and honoring him and glorifying him. So Matthew 16, 18.

[2 : 11] Your Bible said, Jesus said, I will build my church. And the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Now we go verse by verse through the Bible. And I have taken a pause in verse 18 on the word church.

And I'll talk to you about that maybe one more Sunday. And get you just some ideas about what it means to be part of a church. Church and tonight, it's a vision night. You'll learn some more about that.

And I just hope that you will get the blessing it is. If you understand the Bible, church is everywhere. Once you get to the New Testament and once you get through the life of Jesus, the word church is only mentioned two times in the Gospels.

Both times in Matthew. Mark doesn't talk about the church. Luke doesn't talk about the church. John doesn't talk about the church. But from Acts until Revelation, it's all the church. Everything in the New Testament is about the church.

The book of Acts is the book of God working through the apostles, through the church, through the Holy Ghost, as he used the church to get his word around. Romans, and starting all the way through there, are letters written by leaders to churches.

[3 : 16] Or letters written to pastors. And even the book of Revelation starts out with the church. And by the end of it, the church will be back. And so you'll understand the church is important.

Jesus said, I will build my church. If you love somebody and they love something that much, and they say, it's my church, the devil will never beat it, and I'll build it, you ought to get a little bit excited about it yourself.

And so let me share with you the first thing today. And that is that in the church, you will be taught the word of God if you're in the right kind of church. Open your Bible to Matthew chapter 28.

I'm going to ask you to turn in your Bible quite a bit. I know that we have a screen up here where you can read, and that makes it easy. And I know you have an electronic device where you can look it up, and I'm not against any of that.

But I'll tell you, if you don't mark some things down and mark them in your Bible, then you might not remember the lesson as well as you could. So I would be a firm believer. Take some notes, write it down, mark it in your Bible.

[4 : 14] Matthew 28, 18 through 20 is what we call the Great Commission. It is like the centerpiece of what God wants his people doing on the planet right now.

And the Bible says in Matthew 28, 18, And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power, all authority is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Verse 20, I want you to underline a part of the verse that we rarely emphasize when we're teaching and preaching. Look at verse 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I'm with you always, even unto the end of the world.

So if you look at the verse, I want you to notice what goes on. In verse 19, we are to go. As we go, we are to be teaching. And that teaching right there is about how to be saved, how to go to heaven when you die.

We're going to be teaching people about Jesus. We're going to be making disciples. And they were going to baptize them. But they weren't just to teach. They weren't just to baptize. Verse 20 teaches what's so important.

[5 : 25] This is why every missionary has to be involved in church planning in some way. It's why every one of us have to be involved in church. He said, I want you all to go teach them.

I want you to baptize them. And I want you to keep on teaching them. Look at it. Underline it. Keep on teaching them. In verse 20, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I've commanded you.

They weren't simply to take the good news. They weren't simply to preach till people got saved. They weren't simply to get people baptized. They were to teach them to live out the new life that God had given them.

They had been taught. And now they were to teach. So that's what the lesson. That's the first thing a church does. We're Bible teaching people. Look, if you would, in Acts chapter 2 and verse 41, we don't just see him command us to do that, but we watch their practice.

As you go through the Bible, you're going to see their practice. And their practice in the Bible was to get together and study the word of God and live out the word of God. Acts chapter 2 and verse 41, they that gladly received his word.

[6 : 31] Stop right there a second. In other words, somebody came along and said to them, this is what God said. And God said you're a sinner. And God said you deserve to go to hell. But God wants you to know that Jesus died on the cross and paid your sin debt so you could go to heaven.

And you deserve hell. The gift of salvation is already bought and paid for. It is finished. And all you have to do is receive a free gift. The wages of sin are death.

But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. And they heard that. They believed that. And they received that. And when they did, they got saved. And then they were baptized.

And they were added to them. So look at the verse. They know that gladly received the word. Were baptized. And the same day they were added unto them. Added to what? To the church. To us.

To us believers. They joined the club. They got in the family. They're part of us now. They were added. Now look at verse 42. Verse 42. Look at Acts 2.42.

[7 : 29] And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. You need to underline that. And what did they do? They hung out saying, now what did they teach?

See, doctrine. Circle that word in your Bible. Draw a little line over the margin and just write down teaching. That's all it means. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching.

By the way, the apostles wrote us a New Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. Everybody wrote a book in the New Testament. Was either an apostle or a close affiliate of an apostle. The foundation of the church is Jesus as the chief cornerstone.

Jesus is the real foundation. But also built on the apostles. And the apostles' teaching. And so that's what we're doing. We're here today. And I'm going to keep this book open.

And I'm going to keep telling you all. One of the apostles said. One of the apostles said. We're going to continue steadfastly. That means we're going to hang in here. We're going to keep on doing it. We've been doing it nine years now.

[8 : 29] We've been coming together Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Thursday night. We've been coming with extra meetings. And we've been having foundations meetings. People have been having. And Sunday school parties have been going on. And youth meetings have been going on.

And every time we got one thing we do. Everything we do at Vision. Here it is. We're going to talk about this book. To continue steadfastly in the teachings of. Sorry, you can have it.

To continue steadfastly in the doctrines of the apostles. Now, go with me to Ephesians chapter 4 verse 11. Thank you, Alex. Ephesians chapter 4 verse 11. God told his pastors and teachers that they were to mature the saints for the work of the ministry.

I want you to look at Ephesians 4 verse 11. It started with some apostles. And then there was these prophets. And then these evangelists. And right now we're really kind of in the age of evangelists.

I believe in that verse right there is like the missionaries. The apostles, they're gone. The prophets, the guys that have given us the word of God. And we have pastors and teachers today. Now, I want you to look at your Bible.

[9 : 30] You need your Bible open here. I want you to look at your Bible. Here's what happens. Verse 12. Those gifted people in verse 12 were to perfect the saints. Underline perfecting.

Circle perfecting. Draw an arrow to the margin of your Bible. And write the word maturing. They were to mature the saints. They were to perfect them. They were to get them to perfection. Everybody's been working all this time to get two teams ready to go to the ball field tonight.

They've been working on perfecting them physically. They've been working on perfecting them emotionally and mentally. They've got in mind we've got to get these guys ready. And they want to walk out tonight on a ball field and say, I'm ready.

Well, here's what the church is doing. We're getting you ready. Ready to do the job. Ready to serve. Fully prepared. Matured. That's what perfecting means. Then it says the perfecting of the saints.

Now, saints, you know what that is? If you're a saint in this room, hold your hand up. Y'all ain't dead yet. But we are saints. Biblically, we're the saints. Saints aren't those images that hang on walls or pictures they have.

[10 : 29] Saints are those that have been made a saint. They've been made sanctified. They've been made holy. They've been set aside for God. That's who we are. We belong to him. We belong to him. So it's the perfecting of the born again.

Perfecting of the people that belong to the Lord Jesus. For the circle work. The work. Everybody ought to be a part of it. We'll get to that.

The last thing we say today. But we're all going to be participating and serving for the work. Of the ministry. What work? The work of serving. The work of the ministry. For the edifying.

Circle the word edifying. Draw a line to the margin. And put building up. For the building up of the body of Christ. So we're going to be in here. We're going to be taught and trained and matured.

And we're going to go to work. And God's church is going to grow. If you're a part of vision, you'd have to admit you have watched that happen. It's going to be taught. It's going to happen. Little by little. No flash.

[11 : 26] No pizzazz. Pasture's an old fat guy. It's certainly because of his good looks or his Hollywood abilities. It's just we just teach and preach the Bible.

And God does a work. Look in your Bible if you would. Look in your Bible if you would in verse 13. How long do we do this? Till we all come into unity of the faith.

Circle that. Unity of the faith. We should all know what the Bible says. We should all be able to agree. And we're not talking about nitpicking stuff here. We're not talking about whether you part your hair in the middle.

Or on the left side or the right side. Or you don't part it because you ain't got it. We're not talking about if you have a beard or you don't have a beard. But we are talking about Jesus is God. And there's only one way to heaven.

And that's through Jesus. Who takes you to the only God in the world. That is Jesus said in John 14.6. I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me. If we can't agree on that, we're not coming to the unity of the faith.

[12 : 21] Unity of the faith will be all the things we'll talk about today. We believe basic Bible truths about that. We've understood the faith. Then we don't only want that. We want to know Jesus. Look at the verse 13.

We're going to teach this till we have the knowledge of the Son of God. Man, I want to know Him. You ever met somebody? And you got to know them. You met them. After you left their presence, you turned to your friend and said, I'd like to get to know them.

How many of you have ever done that? Say amen if you have. But you know, Ken, he thinks he's going to marry this girl. You know, I've got a good opinion that he'd like to get to know her. And all of y'all, you know, he knows everything about that girl he's going to marry.

You know how that is. And all of us older married people are like, he don't know nothing. Amen? He don't know nothing. I've been married 41 years.

I'm still trying to get to know her. Amen? Amen? And so look, here's what's happening. We're going to keep learning until we know Him. I want to know Him. I want to know all about Him. I know what He thinks and what He does.

[13 : 20] I want to know Him. And it says, until I become a perfect man, a mature man. And then verse 14, until I'm not like a child anymore. Man, every time the wind blows, the doctrine changes.

Everybody's like, I believe like this. And you talk to them later, they're like, no, no, I used to believe like that. Now I believe like this. You talk to them later, I don't believe that. Don't believe that. I believe this over here now. Woo, my goodness. I just hope the wind quits blowing.

Amen? So no more children. Verse 15, till we grow up into Him in all things. Not only do I have my head straight and my heart straight, but even the way I live is like what He teaches.

Because I'm maturing and I'm beginning to live out my faith. Verse 16, from whom the whole body fitly joined together.

I need you to underline in your Bible, fitly joined together. Here's what happens. He was writing to the church. Now listen to me. He was writing to the church at Ephesus here. He's not talking about some ethereal body of believers, the invisible, universal, unseen.

[14 : 25] Nobody goes to it. Nobody gives to it. Nobody serves in a church. He's talking about a local church, the church at Ephesus. And he said, hey, we're going to get the whole body. We're all going to get fitted together.

We're all going to get fitted together so that, so that, you know, I used to think that when you saw those really big massive tables, I thought that was one tree, one slab. I thought they just cut a tree down and, you know, just one piece of wood.

And then I was down in Peru. We were getting things made. And I go over to the carpet. I said, can we get wood that big? I mean, how is that dumb? And the carpenter looked at me. We don't get wood that big. He said, I'll put it together.

I'll fitly join it. I'm like, I heard that term before. And I went in there and I saw them jagged cuts and how he put, and he glued it and shellacked it and done all that junk to him.

And the time he got through it, I was like, man, that's one big piece of wood. Fitly joined together. That's what it said. And then it said, every joint supplies. You got that underlined?

[15 : 22] Hey, none of you get to sit on the sidelines. Every joint supplies. Look at this. According to the effects of working and the measure of every part. Every part. Every part.

You let one part quit working and you'll know it. Amen? Why don't you drive home this afternoon and let just one tire go down? Why don't you drive home today and let the starter mess up in your car?

We were in Africa with Brother Keith Shoemaker. And we were at the airport and we got in the car. And we sat down and he goes, and he hit the switch and nothing happened. And I'm like, oh boy, I just got off a nine million hour trip.

Now I'm in this blazing hot place here. And he goes, he's like, don't worry. It'll start in a minute. Click. Well, I don't know. Click. And finally, click. Oh, it started.

He said, the mechanic's coming out. I'll get it fixed sometime this week. That's a really important part of a motor. Amen? It ain't that big, but I sure like it. Amen? He couldn't get the AC going until he got the starter going.

[16 : 21] So every part working. Now go to another verse. Go to 1 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 6. The purpose of the church is to teach you the Bible.

And all through the Bible, you're going to find that. You find out that he commanded us to do it. You find out that that's what they did. You find out that he gave leaders to the church to do just exactly that.

And then look what they were to teach. 1 Timothy chapter 4 verse 6. Paul the apostle is writing to Timothy, his son in the ministry, who's a pastor and getting things going in the ministry.

And here's what he told his son. If you put the brethren in remembrance of these things, if you make the brothers at the church remember these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ.

Timothy, I'm writing you a book. All right. Read the book over and over. Make sure you remind everybody of what I'm saying. He said, nursed up in the words of faith and good.

[17 : 15] There's that big word again. What's the word doctrine mean? Help me with it. Good. Good. What? Now, what's good teaching? It doesn't mean animated. It doesn't mean excited. It doesn't mean a guy who can hold your attention.

It means teaching that sticks to this book. Okay. If you understand that, say amen. It's good teaching. He said, good doctor, where unto thou hast attained. You've graduated.

You've learned. You understand. I've taught you. You're ready to teach it. And then verse 7 knows what he said. Just in the context, he said, and don't be giving me no Oprah junk. That's what he said in verse 7.

Look at it. It's right here behind me. Refuse profane and old wives' fables. Everett Tubble said it on its own bottom. Well, that's a great saying. It just ain't Bible. I don't know how many times back in the old days in the country church, they'd say, preacher, you know what the Bible says?

Him that helps himself. God helps him to help themselves. I said, he didn't say that. Now, it's a truth, but it ain't in the Bible. You can have a lot of truth in the Bible. But he said, stay away from the junk the old ladies say.

[18 : 21] Work on godliness. Work on this. Learn this book. So, Austin, when you stand up and preach, I don't need your psychology degree. I don't need you to be reading U.S. News and World Report and Time Magazine.

I do need you reading Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I'm not that worried about if you're up to date on Sports Illustrated and the swimsuit illustration, but you better know numbers and Deuteronomy. Are you understanding what I'm saying?

The church is the place where you study this book. They were to teach the truth no matter what people thought about it. Titus is another one of his boys. Look at Titus chapter 2 and verse 1.

Titus is another one of his boys, and he says to Titus, Speak the things which become sound doctrine. Tell the truth. Say what is right. Now, what's sound doctrine?

Now, what's doctrine? If you know what doctrine is, say that word. Doctrine is teaching. Teaching is explaining the things of the Bible. And sound doctrine, guess what the word sound means?

[19 : 22] It means according to what the Bible says. What did the apostles say? Continue steadfast in what we told you. Timothy, when you get down there, the culture is going to want to change your message.

You're going to be wondering about if you could have a relevant message. And here's basically what he said. No, speak that things that become sound Bible teaching. Do, just tell them what the book says.

God will worry about making it relevant. We don't need anybody cool. We just need somebody to tell what the Bible says. Look at what he said to them in Titus chapter 2 and verse 15. These things speak and exhort and rebuke.

And don't let anybody tell you otherwise. Let no man despise you. Just tell the truth. Just teach the Bible. So somebody's going to come up to you and say, I can't believe it, man.

You're just so simple. All you say is what the Bible says. I mean, really, you could be a lot cooler. Really, there's a better way to do this. Say this. Have you read the latest book on how to have a round table debate and discussion about this?

[20 : 25] And he said, don't anybody despise you, son. Just preach the book. Keep it up. That's what he told him. Amen. I think that's still pretty good advice for today. Look at what it says in Hebrews 13, 7.

In Hebrews 13, 7. We're just seeing that the Bible teaches that the church is to teach you the word of God. In Hebrews 13, 7. The Bible says, remember them which have the rule over you. Now, that means your pastors and your elders and your leaders.

But the key was not they're the boss. The key of the verse is, who have spoken unto you the word of God. Underline that in that verse.

He said, remember them that God put lead in the church. And here's the one I want you to remember. The ones that taught you the word of God. That's who you need to remember. Y'all need to respect that guy. You need to like him because he teaches you the book.

He's spoken unto you the word of God. Whose faith follow considering the end of his manner of living. His conversation. Write down, circle that and just say manner of living. It's the way he lives.

[21 : 23] It's the way he moves about in his lifestyle. There were to be men in the church whose job was to labor in teaching and preaching.

1 Timothy chapter 5 verse 17. 1 Timothy chapter 5 verse 17. Look what your Bible says. Let the elders. That's another word. In the Bible, the word pastor is only used a couple of times.

In the whole New Testament, the word pastor is only used a couple of times. The word bishop is used. In fact, when we talk about a man being called to the ministry, that verse uses the word bishop. The word elder is the word commonly used.

They're interchangeable words. Bishop, pastor, elder. They're all three of the same guy. They're guys that are supposed to be teaching the Bible. Look what it says here. They're leaders in the church. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor.

But look what they're laboring in. Especially those that labor in. Would you say that out loud to me? Labor in the word and? Oh. So here's the guy we're supposed to be worried about.

[22 : 22] Make sure there's somebody teaching this book. And he's supposed to work at it. Look at the word. Who? Labor in the word and in doctrine.

Teaching the Bible in the New Testament was more important than any impressive thing you could see. Like the flashiest thing going on back in the end was talking in tongues. First Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 4.

By the way, if you ever go to one of those churches, the pastor just starts out, Yamaha, Kawasaki, Honda. And he starts it. He says it real fast. And everybody's really impressed with it. Here's what Paul would have said. Can you preach the Bible?

That's what Paul would have said. I'm going to prove that to you right now. Look at it. First Corinthians chapter 14 verse 4. He that speaks in an unknown tongue just does it to feel good for himself. Look at the verse.

He that speaks in an unknown tongue edifies himself. I'm all about building me up. Time I get through doing this, y'all are really going to think I'm a big man of God. He says, but he that prophesies, he that preaches, he that teaches, he's building up the church.

[23 : 25] Then Paul said, I would that y'all speak with tongues. That'd be a good deal for all of you, dude. That's good. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. But rather that you, help me, what's it say?

Rather that you prophesied. For greater is he that prophesied than he that speaks with tongues. Because he, except he interpret that the church may receive edifying. So here's the deal.

Paul said, man, it's really flashy when those guys get up and start the Yamaha Kawasaki stuff, isn't it? That's really impressive. He said, but what I really want y'all to get is this. Get a guy that opens the Bible and teaches the Bible.

No, we gave you a book. We gave you the teachings of the apostles. So do it. That's what you're supposed to be working on. First Peter chapter five and verse one.

God gave the church elders, pastors. And they're all mentioned in this passage right here, but I won't take the time to show you that. The elders which are among you. First Peter five one.

[24 : 19] The elders which are among you. I exhort who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God. Feed the flock of God.

Now he wasn't talking about hamburgers. He wasn't talking about ham sandwiches. He wasn't talking about. I mean, it's not my job to get be a chef and prepare you food. I'll prove that in just a second.

In Acts chapter 20 and verse 28, he said, take he therefore into yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Ghost has made you overseas to feed the church of God. To feed the church of God.

Now, what food should a preacher be teaching the word of the church? Hebrews chapter five, verse three. Mark this down. You need to know this. Hebrews chapter five, verse 12. Hebrews chapter five, verse 12.

For when for the time you ought to be teachers. By the way, you guys should have grown up and be matured enough now. You should be a teacher in foundations. You can say, oh me, if you can't say amen.

[25 : 23] You should be a teacher by now. You should be helping teach Sunday school. You should be working in the ministry. You should be helping teach a foundations class. But when you ought to be teachers, you need somebody to teach you again the first principles.

Somebody needs to go back and teach you the very first things of the. What's the word? Help me. Read that to me. Of the oracles of God.

You know what oracles are? Words. Circle the word oracles. Throw a line to the margin and write words. That's all that means. He said, you guys need somebody to go back and teach you all the basic stuff in the Bible.

The first words of God. And are become such as have need of milk and not strong meat. Oh, that's food. Milk. So when the writer of Hebrews says, he says, he said, guys, it's time y'all be teaching people.

But you're obviously not teaching people. So somebody needs to go back and tell you the first words. Get you the basic stuff. Help you to understand salvation by grace. Help you to understand eternal security. Help you to understand what baptism is.

[26 : 21] That's what foundations is, by the way. Help get you through that. And they're supposed to be doing that. And if you don't, you need milk and not strong meat. Read verse 13 with me, if you would. Verse 13.

For everyone that uses milk is unskillful. Unskillful in what? Read it with me. Unskillful in the, say it out loud. You ready? The word of righteousness.

Now, what's the word of righteousness? Let me show it to you. This is it. It's not really hard to understand. He said, hey, if you don't know this stuff, word of righteousness. He's a babe.

Strong meat belongs to them that are full age. By the way, it's not just a preacher supposed to be doing the teaching. It's not like I'm supposed to have this job to myself. Look what it says in Colossians 3.16.

In fact, this is when we come in. You come here on a Sunday morning. Isn't this a crazy place in Sunday school? There's 192 people somewhere in this building this morning at Sunday school. And this is a madhouse.

[27 : 19] You come in. Yuppity, yuppity, yuppity, yuppity, yuppity, yuppity. All over the building. Everybody's talking. And every place they're talking, they all got a Bible out and they're all explaining the oracles. Big word for word.

Look what the Bible says. Look what the Bible says in Colossians 3.16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Fill yourself up. Get rich on knowing the book. And then look what it says.

Teaching and admonishing one another. Now watch this. He's not writing a preacher there. He's writing a church. So if he'd have been talking to you and he said, Hey, vision people.

I want y'all to get full of the book. Full of the book. I want you to fill up with the book. I want you to get full of the book. Get it all in you, man. Just get it all in you. And then I want y'all to get together and teach each other. And challenge each other.

And exhort each other. And help each other to know more about Jesus. That's what church is all about. Amen? Not one teacher. Here's a whole bunch of them. By the way, we're not supposed to sing any songs here. You want me to give you a good lesson in what kind of music our church ought to have?

[28 : 16] It better have psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Sing with grace in your heart. So Lord better be psalms to Jesus with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. It should be good Bible stuff.

Everything ought to be saying, what's the Bible say? What's the Bible say? Let's learn some Bible. Let's learn some Bible. That's point number one. I've got ten minutes to finish the rest of it. Look, if you would, in Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 17.

Second thing. Number one, the church ought to teach the Bible. Oh, if you go looking for another church, if you leave us and move somewhere else, and I know some of you will end up moving on somewhere else. You know what?

The church you go to, it's not about how good the children's program is. I mean, nowadays, it's how good the children's program, but then as soon as your kids ain't kids anymore, you won't need that children's program. It's not about how good the music program is.

It's really about how good the Bible teaching is. Not just the Bible teaching from the pulpit, but the Bible teaching and all those little classes meeting all around this room. And all the foundations classes going on everywhere else.

[29 : 16] It ought to be, man, that's a Bible-soaked place. That's a Bible-soaked place. Amen? Man, people ought to come into our church, I'll be like a sponge, stick it down in water, we pick it up, water just keeps dripping out of the sponge.

Because it's just full to the capacity. That's the church you go to, one that teaches the Bible. By the way, that's not the church people picked today. You did, but most people don't. Number two, the church is to protect us.

Pastors are supposed to be worried about our souls. Look what the Bible says, if you would. Hebrews 13, 17. Obey them that have the rule over you. That's pastors, elders, bishops. Leaders that God's put, submit yourselves.

But here's the key I want you to underline. They watch for your souls. They ought to, your pastors ought to be thinking, man, I've got to help these people.

I've got to help them understand truth. They're going through a tragedy and a crisis. And I'm not a psychologist and I'm not a doctor and I can't bring any medicine. But I can take the word of God. And I can show them what God would say here.

[30 : 18] And I can help them with the word of God. They watch for your souls. And not only that, they have to give an account. God's up in heaven saying, I need somebody to help them people. And I'm watching you, boy. Austin, son, I'm watching you.

You better take care of my people. You better make sure you're teaching them my book. You better make sure that that's what you're supposed to be doing. You better make sure of that. They give an account.

In Acts chapter 20 and verse 28, the pastors were warned that there would be people coming in with false doctrine. See, that's why you need protection. Because lies are everywhere.

There's a church on every corner. And there's doctrines of all sorts. There are people now that go around proclaiming themselves to be Jesus. And people are giving them big money. There are other people that are preaching how God wants to make you rich.

And there's other people preaching about how you'll lose your salvation. How you got to work and do this. There's other people using guilt and manipulation. There's all this junk going on. And Paul said, hey guys, I really need you to help your church.

[31 : 21] Because there's a lot of junk going to be floating around. If you think there was junk floating around in Acts 20, you ought to live in 2015. Look at Acts 20, 28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves.

Pastor, take care of yourself. Make sure you study. Make sure you walk with me. And to all the flock of which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers. To feed the church. Verse 29.

For I know this. I know this. Holy Spirit tells me this. I'm writing this. This is the Holy Spirit scripture. After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you. There will be people that come in the church wearing a sheep outfit.

They're wolves hiding inside of sheep costumes. And they will not be easy on the church. They'll destroy a church if they can.

Even some of your members, he said in verse 30. Even some of the members in your church right now. Will rise up and speak perverse things. Lies and twisted junk. And try to get people to follow after them as disciples.

[32 : 23] Verse 31. So watch and remember. In verse 32. I'll give you to the Lord that he'll take care of you. So a church is supposed to teach you the word. But a church is supposed to protect you. Somebody needs to tell you.

That that prosperity gospel is a false gospel. It is not Bible. It is not true. It just helps those preachers buy airplanes. And you're a thing bad if you do it.

Just to be honest with you. Hey, give me a dollar. That'll make you rich. If you was from the country, you'd know better. Us country people, I give you a dollar. I get rich. How about you give me a dollar.

I get rich. How about if I write a book and tell you all. I'll sell you a \$5 book on how to get rich. And I'll sell all it. Everybody give me \$5. I'll give you a book on how to get rich. And then I'm going to say, write a book.

Sell it for \$5. Amen. But I don't want you to write a book because I'll write a second book on how I got richer selling you this second book. Amen. So he said, hey, look, there's all kinds of lies.

[33 : 23] There's now the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints. The guy saw visions and got tablets given to him. There's another group saying, don't eat pig. If you eat pig and shrimp, boy, you'll not go to heaven.

That'll be terrible. You got to take care of being careful on the Sabbath. Hey, there's another church saying you need to pray through some saints. There's all kinds of jumping taught you. Somebody would say, whoa, whoa, whoa. What's this book say? I can remember being improved.

And they'd say, they'd say, people pick me up, pick taxi drivers, other people. They'd say, what's the difference in you and the church, the popular church here? I said, oh, not much. They said, really? I said, no, not much.

They said, what do you mean not much? I said, just the Bible. They said, what do you mean the Bible? We got a Bible. I said, I know you got a Bible. I said, just don't believe it. They said, what do you mean? I said, how about, I always loved this one.

In 1 Timothy chapter 3, it said, the bishop must be the husband of one wife. They said, oh, that's a Protestant Bible. I said, get your Catholic Bible out. I'll show it to you. They'd open their Catholic Bible and they'd read it. They'd go, oh, you reckon they didn't read this verse?

[34 : 23] I'm like, I don't know. I'm really more worried about, did they read that verse that says, you're saved by Jesus and nobody else and no good works and you don't have to pay any money to build us a new church.

Man, you realize how good it would be right now. I want to see us build a new building. What if I told y'all that God would let you off from some of your sins if you'd all give \$5,000? I think that'd be a good deal.

And if you'll give \$10,000, God will prosper you. God will prosper you. Fact is, if you'll give \$100,000, we'll name a wing of the building after you and get you a corner in heaven guaranteed. Hallelujah.

That would be really great. Just not Bible. Amen. The church ought to protect you. The church ought to tell you the truth. In 2 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 4, Paul said to Timothy, buddy, they're going to try to destroy my people.

Paul, 2 Timothy 2, 24, and the servant of the Lord must not strive. Don't be a fighter. Be gentle unto all men, ready to teach them. Be patient with them. And humbleness and humility and meekness instruct those that oppose themselves.

[35 : 28] Men are fighting with themselves. Maybe God will give them repentance and the acknowledging of the truth. And they may be recovered out of the snare of the devil who have been taken captive at his will.

The devil is messing up people. I always found it so interesting. I travel a little bit around the world. And in the Old Testament, if you read the Old Testament, they always worshiped in the high places.

And every false religion looks for high places. They want to be on the top of the highest hill. They want to build the biggest image. I'm always like, man, the devil ain't got a lot of plans, does he? I mean, he figured out one plan.

He just uses it with every title. Did you know that the rosary was started, the Muslims use it first? It's like the devil ain't real smart.

He just uses the same plan over and over. So go with me if you would. Go with me if you would. It's the first Thessalonians chapter 5 and verse 12. Biblical correction will protect us.

[36 : 27] I don't have an axe to grind. I really don't have an axe to grind. That's why we preach through the Bible. I mean, if you come to our church, you'd say, what's that guy preaching? Well, numbers. The other day I was interviewed.

This guy has a podcast for young ministers across the country. And they're asking older guys to kind of help maybe the younger guys. So what the older guys are thinking, maybe try to bridge the gap a little bit.

And he said, well, Brother Gardner, I'd like to know where you hope your church will be in 10 years. I said, major prophets. And he said, what's that mean? I said, well, I'm in numbers now.

I'm hoping I can get to the major prophets by then. And he said, well, that's good. He said, that's good. That's unique. Well, that's the point. It ought to be teaching the book.

Amen? Now look at your Bible. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 12. We beseech you, brethren. We ask you, we beg you, brothers, to know them which labor among you. Know them and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.

[37 : 26] That is, correct you. Very likely you came into numbers with way too much emphasis on those tablets of stone.

And you thought God spoke from those tablets of stone. But as we read that, you realize he put those tablets of stone in that ark. And above that ark, he put a mercy seat. And that's where he put the blood.

And when he got through building it, he said, and when I talk to you guys, I'll talk to you from the mercy seat. That corrected me when I read that. I was like, whoa. I've been believing something wrong for a long time. And the word of God does that.

And he says, hey, biblical correction will help you. God's men were to be preaching his word. Look, if you would, it's 2 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 2. Preach the word.

Be instant in season, out of season. By the way, preach the word. The emphasis there is not on preach. If you're a southerner, you think preaching means how loud do you yell, how fire do you spit, and how sweaty do you get.

[38 : 26] The emphasis wasn't on theatrics. The word, it says, preach the word. Announce the word. What he was saying was, I want you to tell the word.

Tell the word when you feel like it. Tell the word when you don't feel like it. And reprove them. And rebuke them. And exhort them. With all long suffering. Be patient with them. And doctrine. There's that word. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.

But after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. They shall turn away their ears from the truth. And shall be turned to fables. The day will come when people don't want to hear the Bible taught.

And then the last one I was going to say to you that I won't get to today. Is that they were to be members of a church. Like a body. And to do their part.

And to carry their part of the weight. They were to fellowship together. They were to continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. And fellowship. And prayers.

[39 : 27] So what he said. And we won't get there today. But see the church is important. Number one church is important. Because you're getting the Bible taught to you. Where else do you go?

I mean you can get plenty of evolution tales. I was with a guy this week. And he knew I was recently in Africa. And I told him that we'd been out to the elephant farm. So we could get elephant reserves.

So we could get Surgy good and saved. And saved. Scared. You need to get saved too didn't you? And he said. Yeah those elephants. They got trails. They've been walking on for a million years. I didn't say anything.

But I wanted to say. Nah. Ain't been around but about 7,000. Not a million. The world was created. Not evolutionized. But I didn't. I just let it slide. Somebody I'll teach you in the Bible though.

Goes to a good church. Quote unquote. The church is to protect you. But the church is where you fellowship. You need each other. We need each other.

[40 : 24] In Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 24 and 25. He said hey. Verse 25. He said don't you be like those guys that quit going to church. Don't you be like them. You need the challenging and the motivating.

Look at verse 24. He's popped it up there for you. Look at Hebrews 10 24. Let us consider one another. I need to think about you. I need to go. Hey Brett. How you doing Brett? I need to think about you buddy.

I want to consider you. Hey Brett. I want to challenge you man. Love Jesus more. That's what I said. Look at it. I'm just quoting the book. Hey Brett. I'm thinking about you. You need to say it to me too. Brett needs to be saying. Hey Austin.

Thinking about you today. You need to love Jesus more. I'll say yes sir. Let's just do that together. Amen. We can say that. And then he said. And let's do some good works. Yeah. Let's do some good works. And then he said in verse 25.

And don't you quit getting together. The words assembling. Let's get together. As a matter of some is. That as a matter of some is. It's like a almost like.

[41 : 21] I mean it's insulting. Let me read that to you. In Tennessee Hillbilly. Not forsaking the assembling together of yourselves. As a matter of some is.

Yeah. There's some that don't want to come to church. Yeah. Don't you do that. But exhort one another. And so much the more. As you see the day approaching.

You need the church. A wonderful thing. I know that the caricature of the church. Is in horrible shape. The caricature of the church. Doesn't have Bible preaching.

The caricature of a church. Has a good show. And a drama. To show you. The caricature of a church. Has a good political message. To give you. The caricature of the church.

Wants to tell you how to get rich. The caricature of the church. Wants the pastor. To get even richer. But the true church says. Let's open the book. Let's open the book.

[42 : 16] Our whole setup's weird. Isn't it? You sit there. And you open a Bible. We come in. You know. I wish you could go to a foreign country. Do you realize what it looks like. When a couple hundred people. All come walking in like this.

Where y'all going to that book? What book you got? Oh this is the book. This is the book. The holy book. What are you doing? Well we're going to go in there and study it. We're going to go in there and learn more about it. It's the book.

What are we going to do? What are we going to do next Sunday morning? About 930. We're going to open the book. And a whole bunch of groups. You can talk to people. What are we going to do this afternoon? At 5 o'clock.

We're going to get in the book. What are we going to do Thursday night? We're going to get in the book. What's going to happen during the week? Good godly people are going to sit down with other good godly people. And help them learn more about the book. And as they learn more about the book.

They're going to go teach somebody else about the book. And our conversations will be about the book. It'll be about the book. It'll be about the book. You should be in church.

[43 : 13] It's a wonderful place to be. I know you're here. But get in. Get in. I mean join up. I mean put on your jersey. It says you're part of his team.

We don't have jerseys. That's a joke. But I know some of you in just a little while you're going to go put on your crazy jersey. You know you're going to be doing something stupid. Paint yourself up. Act like an idiot. But you would never get excited about Jesus.

You need God's house. You need God's word. You need God's people. Father in heaven I pray you do a work in our lives. I pray you bring honor to your name. I pray you glorify yourself.

Lord I pray that your people would be hungry to be in your house. And I will give you great honor and glory and praise for what you do. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. For more information log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.