

Signs of an Apostle

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfreda, Georgia. This is the next message in our series in the book of 2 Corinthians, entitled, We Faint Not.

Thank you, Bibles, if you would, and open them to 2 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians chapter 12. I'm excited today to be able to take you through the Word of God and to show you that there was a great problem in the day of Paul with people that were fake preachers, fake apostles, fake prophets.

They imitated being men of God, but they weren't really men of God. And we are given instructions on how they were to look out and how they knew that Paul was one and some of the things that God did.

Do you understand that everywhere you turn, all around you, there are people in the name of Jesus, in the name of the church, in the name of religion, in the name of Christianity that aren't telling you the truth.

And you need to know what the Word of God says. So we've come chapter by chapter, verse by verse, down to 2 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 11. And I want to read with you from verse 11 down to verse 12 only today.

[1 : 10] And if you would, take your ink pen and be ready to mark some things. We're going to talk about the signs of an apostle. There were signs given to apostles that aren't available today, that aren't real today.

And there are a lot of people seem to think they are. You can find out preachers that call themselves apostles. You can find people that seem to think they have the same powers that the apostles had. And I think you'll know from the Word of God today a little bit more about that in just a minute.

The Bible says, I am become a fool in glorying. You have compelled me, for I ought to have been commended of you, for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience and signs and wonders and mighty deeds. There's a verse, verse 11 is an extremely interesting verse.

The apostle Paul has been telling them of the things he suffered. He's also told them the great things that God has allowed him to see. And he says, I have really been acting like an idiot, a fool, to tell you about all this stuff and brag about what God's done.

[2 : 13] But you guys made me do it because you're listening to the wrong kind of people. You're hearing wrong doctrine. You're spending too much time on the internet and too much time on television and too much time reading the wrong kind of books.

And you're getting bad information. And so I had the glory so I could make you wake up and realize what I'm saying. And then he said, and by the way, you should have been one bragging on me. You should have been the one commending me because I am not behind.

I am just as much an apostle and just as much used of God as every other apostle, the original apostles, even though I am nothing. In verse 12, he said, there's the signs of an apostle.

So if you put a circle around that, you'll have the title of the message. And you can work your way through some scriptures with me and learn just a little bit about that. Father, I pray you'd open our hearts. I pray you'd open our minds.

I pray you'd help us to hear spiritually. I pray you'd help us to listen. And I pray you'd help us to search the scriptures and find out if these things are true. And I pray you'd help us to apply them to our lives for your honor.

[3 : 14] And I give you glory for all that you do in Jesus name. Amen. Up front, I'll tell you that I want you to know before the day is over, there were only 14 apostles that you're going to find mentioned in the Bible that are real apostles, that men that claim to be apostles today aren't.

And men that are claiming to do many signs and wonders and miracles aren't really doing that with the power of God. And it is very easy for you to be deceived by them. And it's very easy for you to say, I attend Vision Baptist Church.

And yet I haven't seen Austin heal anybody yet. And I haven't seen Austin make any food appear. And I haven't seen Austin do any of these great things. And so I'm beginning to wonder if we have a spirit-filled church.

I'm beginning to wonder if we have a spirit-filled church because that's not happening. But the honest truth is the spirit-filled church will be a Bible-filled church. And if you're honest in every service that is open to you and preached to you, and there are so many verses that you go home thinking, I didn't know you could cover that many verses in an hour.

So stay with me and let's look at some things from the Bible, if you would. Jesus was a great miracle worker. There are about 35 specific miracles that he works in the Bible. Many of them have no real details, but he was a great miracle worker.

[4 : 25] He had a reason for working miracles. And the Word of God tells us why he worked miracles. In John chapter 7 and verse 31, the Bible says, When Christ comes, will he do more miracles than these, which this man had done?

Well, the guy said, we know that when the Christ comes, he'll work miracles. And check out this Jesus guy. He's working miracles. I don't think anybody could ever do more than that. In John chapter 10, verse 25, the Bible says, Jesus answered them, I told you and you believe not.

The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. Jesus said, you know I am who I say I am because you've seen me do great works that prove that I am the Son of God just like I claim to be.

Acts chapter 2 and verse 22, the Bible says, A man, talking about Jesus, a man, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as you yourselves also know.

So I want you to take four little notes down today before you go home and some verses you can write down. And the first one is this, there's confusion over who is really an apostle. Confusion over who is really an apostle.

[5 : 39] And you ought to know the Bible answer. It ought to come from the Bible. And you ought to be able to say, I know who an apostle is. I know what the word of God says. In verse 11, 2 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 11, the Bible said, I am become a fool and glorying.

You have compelled me for I ought to have been commended of you. For in nothing am I behind the chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Now watch this. In the early days of the church, they had a problem.

There were a whole lot of guys running around claiming to be apostles. Kind of like today. There were a whole lot of guys running around saying that. And in Revelation chapter 2 and verse 2, when he commends the church of Ephesus, he says, I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience and how thou canst not bear them which are evil.

And you have tried them that say, you have tried them, tested them that say they are apostles and are not. And you have found them to be liars. Hey, church, I want to brag on you.

There were some guys running around saying they were apostles. You put them to the test. You found out they weren't really apostles. You found out they were liars. And you call them exactly what they were. The church in those days was infiltrated by false apostles.

[6 : 49] In 2 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 13, just like it is today, by the way. The Bible says, for such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

There were people who figured out, man, there's some pretty powerful stuff going on there. Seems to be a good lucrative way to make a living. Think I'll jump in this religious business and see if I can't make money.

Don't forget that they come from their father, the devil, who is a liar and the father of all lies. In John chapter 8 and verse 44, Paul defends himself. He tells them, I'm an apostle.

And he brags about being an apostle. But the reason he does it is because he didn't really want to. He said, I'm a fool to do it. But I've got to wake you up and realize they're not really apostles. Sometimes I feel like that as a preacher.

I feel like, you know, you come up and I stand up here to preach. And you look up and you say, it's okay. We go to church and we listen to this guy open the Bible and preach the Bible. But if he was really good, there'd be a gazillion people here. And there'd be people getting saved every week.

[7 : 46] And there'd be tons of people getting healed and dead people being raised. And nobody'd need dentures in his church because he'd be making new teeth appear. Nobody'd need glasses because he'd be taking them all away.

And it's pretty easy to fall into that trap if you watch enough TV, enough religious TV. Paul shouldn't have had to defend himself. And he said, the Bible says in Proverbs 27, 2, Let another man praise thee and not thine own mouth.

A stranger and not thine own lips. And here's what Paul says to them. He says, guys, you ain't got many dads. You haven't got many fathers. In 1 Corinthians 4, 15, you have 10,000 instructors in Christ.

Yet you have not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you. You should be bragging on me. He said in the passage that we just read today. Paul defends himself because he knows that if they follow the wrong people, they will get into wrong doctrine.

If they follow the wrong people, they will get into wrong doctrine. And so he says, hey, guys, I hate to say this, but I'm going to have to tell you that I am an apostle and they're not. I'm going to have to say it even though you ought to say it about me.

[8 : 50] I got to say it because you need to wake up and realize you're making a mistake. Paul said in verse 11, I am not behind any of the apostles. I'm not one step behind, not one whip behind.

I'm not a silly millimeter smaller than any of the other apostles. I am God's man. You should be listening to me. That's what Paul was saying. That's important because you need to understand that there is a clash for your attention.

There is a clash. There's a war going on to get your attention, to get you to believe certain things and to hear certain things. There's a clash to get your heart to decide what's right. And Paul said, hey, you need to listen up to me.

The second thing, if you would, there were signs given to the apostles and they were like credentials as to who they were. They were signs given to the apostles and they were like credentials.

Look in your Bible at second Corinthians chapter 12, verse 12, second Corinthians chapter 12, verse 12. He said, truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience and signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

[9 : 54] Now look this way a second. You see, Jesus had given the apostles certain abilities and powers as a way to say, hey, hey, hey, wake up and listen.

Hey, hey, hey, this is important. There's no way to prove what's true to you unless you see something miraculous and you're about to see it. I am giving them great power. There are miracles in your Bible.

There are quite a few miracles in your Bible. We'll talk about some of that, but you need to know that the apostles were given the ability to do miracles that other people weren't. And you will know that if you'll follow along in your Bible.

Matthew chapter 10, Matthew chapter 10 and verse 1. The Bible said, and when he had called unto him his 12 disciples. I wish you'd open your Bible there and underline 12 disciples.

I wish you'd write it down. He says my 12 disciples. He didn't say 13. He didn't say 11. He didn't say my apostles or my disciples. He named a very specific number.

[10 : 49] He says in verse 10, chapter 10, verse 1, right on the screen right behind me. You can see it. And when he called unto him his 12 disciples, he gave them what? Tell me what he gave them.

He gave them what? He gave them what? Power. He gave them power against unclean spirits. He gave them power to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Now, in case you don't know who they were, verse 2.

You got your Bible open. Matthew chapter 10 and verse 3. He said, now the names of the, what? Say it with me. The names of the 12 apostles. By the way, go down to verse 5 and underline this in the verse.

It said, these, what? These 12, Jesus sent forth and commanded to say, go and preach. In the Bible, the word apostle is primarily used to describe only 14 men.

12 original apostles, Judas being one of them. So, Matthias and Paul. That adds up to 14. There are some references that a couple of times that a person is mentioned with an apostle or like an apostle.

[11 : 50] But the original apostles were trained and sent by Jesus. They were trained and sent by Jesus. In John chapter 13 and verse 20.

But Jesus said, verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me. And he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

So, when you receive an apostle, you receive Jesus. And when you receive Jesus, you receive him that sent him. And that's God. The apostles were specific people. Those are trained and sent by Jesus.

The church does have sent ones and messengers mentioned in the Bible. But not apostles. God chose the apostles. I'm not an apostle, by the way.

I'm just a brother. I'm just one of you. I don't have any special powers. I simply study and pray. And that's the Holy Spirit to help me understand scripture and preach the Bible.

[12 : 46] I'm not an apostle. Listen to what it says in Acts chapter 9 and verse 15. The Lord said unto him, go thy way. He is a chosen vessel unto me. He's a chosen vessel unto me.

He chose Paul to be an apostle. 1 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 28. God set them in the church. God set them in the church. First the apostles and then he names other people.

It was Jesus who personally chose who the apostles were going to be. And he appointed them. Luke 6 13. Are you keeping up with me? How many of you are awake? Say amen.

Luke 6 13. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples. They went out and of them. He chose how many. It's behind my head. What's it say? And of them, he chose how many? 12. Whom he also named.

Hey, how many did he choose? And what did he call them? How many did he choose? What did he call them? By the way, he chose them for specific reasons. By the way, there were other disciples there.

[13 : 43] Are you looking at the verse? There were other disciples. A disciple and an apostle aren't the same thing. Read the verse with me. And when it was day, he called unto them his disciples. And of them, he chose.

There's a bunch of disciples came along and he chose. How many did he choose? 12. And what did he name them? Apostles. In John chapter 15 and verse 16, he said, I have chosen you and ordained you that you should go forth and bear fruit.

By the way, he knew exactly who he was choosing when he chose the apostles. He knew he chose Judas. In John chapter 6 and verse 70, he says, Jesus answered them, have I not chosen you 12 and one of you is a devil?

He knew who he chose. Paul wasn't sent by men either. And Paul makes that clear in Galatians 1.1. Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead.

I want you to stop and listen to this. Men don't make apostles. And y'all can name me the apostle of the church at Vision if you want. And that'd be real nice if you want to go ahead and start calling me Apostle Austin. I mean, it kind of has a rhyme, Apostle Austin.

[14 : 51] That kind of sounds really good. But Jesus named 12 and Jesus named the 12 names and said, these are my apostles. Jesus chose them to go and do certain things in the world.

Jesus is the one who chose these apostles. You say, I don't know where you're going with all this. Hang on, you'll find out. Watch what it says. There were certain qualifications for who would be an apostle. In Acts chapter 1 and verse 15, Judas has now hung himself and he's dead.

And his guts have bursted out in a field. And Peter has got all the guys together down at the church in Jerusalem. And he said, guys, we're missing an apostle. And the Bible told us that was going to happen in verse 16.

Somebody needs to take his place. The scripture must needs to be fulfilled. And they said he was numbered with us. If you would look at verse 17. You're looking at Acts chapter 1 verse 17.

Judas was numbered with us. And the book of Psalms said somebody else would take his place. And they understood that. So listen here. It was prophesied in the Old Testament that God was going to have these special people.

[15 : 56] They got these special people in the New Testament. Judas is one of the bad guys. And God has prophesied somebody will take his place. And Peter's going to say these are the things that need to be true of this guy.

I'd like to take a pause right here for some of you that are just not faithful to church. I'd like to show you a special word. You know, I'm not trying to be ugly to you. But you know that the word church means assembly.

It doesn't really mean building. That's why some of you are put off when you walk into a warehouse. You walk into a warehouse and say, this don't look like no church. Well, just to be blunt and honest, the Bible has no idea of what a church looks like.

That's your American culture that tells you what a church looks like. The word church is a simple word meaning assembly. The get together. It's the get together. So hey, welcome get together. I'm glad all y'all got together.

If you didn't get together, you wouldn't be a get together. Amen. If you wasn't assembled, you wouldn't be assembled. Can you say amen right there? And notice who they're going to pick that's going to be apostles. Look down at verse 21.

[16:52] Acts chapter 1 and verse 21. Wherefore, of these men which have accompanied with us all the time, that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us. You see, would you put a circle around the word accompanied with us?

These guys like to hang around together. They accompanied together. How many of you have ever had company over to your house say amen? Y'all understand the word company? And here's what he said.

Peter said, now guys, we're going to pick a new apostle, but it needs to be somebody been accompanying with us. Somebody's been hanging around with us. Somebody's always with us, been with us, that's accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us.

They said, there's some guys that hung around all the time. Man, you're underfoot, ever service, ever meeting all the time. They were hanging around. That's who he was going to choose as an apostle. That's who they were going to choose.

And he said he ought to have been with them since the baptism of John. And he was a witness, verse 22, of his resurrection. Verse 26. And they came forth, the lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the 11 apostles.

[17:57] They had seen the resurrection. They had accompanied together. I just hope you get that word, accompanied. Because some of us, and the modern thing is, let's don't go to church anymore than we have to.

You know, Sunday morning services would be enough. Why don't we go to sit a once-a-week services? How about let's try once a month? That'd be really nice. The only problem is, they accompanied together.

You know who they like to hang around with? They like to hang around with each other. You know, it wasn't about all the preaching. It was about, let's get together. They love Jesus. They like talking about Jesus. They like praying together. They accompanied together.

Paul saw the resurrected Lord. You see, everybody's going to be an apostle who had to see Jesus resurrected. In 1 Corinthians chapter 9, 1, Am I not an apostle?

Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? I have seen Jesus Christ our Lord. That's what he says there. Verse 15, 1 Corinthians 15, 8, And last of all, he was seen of me.

[18:59] I saw him. See, the apostles saw Jesus. There's nobody alive today that saw Jesus. And not only did they see Jesus, They got their instruction directly from God.

In Galatians chapter 1 and verse 11, Paul said, I certify you, brethren, That the gospel which was preached to me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, Neither was I taught it, But by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Jesus taught Paul, And Jesus prepared Paul. When he gives the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 23, He says, I have received of the Lord that which I deliver to you.

The apostles were and are the foundation of the church. There were only 12 that had that official position. 14 counting, one that went bad, And one that got elected to take his place, And another guy, Paul, that God made an apostle.

They're the foundation of the church. They're the foundation of the church. They were used by God to write the scriptures. It was either them or an extremely close associate of them who wrote the scriptures.

[20 : 07] God used them as the foundation. In Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 12, They matured the saints. They perfected the saints for the work of the ministry. In Acts chapter 2 and verse 42, When the church got together, Look what they did.

When the church got together in Acts 2, 42, Guess what they did? They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. They got together and they said, Hey, we're here to meet.

Let's talk about what the apostles taught us. Jesus taught the apostles and the apostles taught us. Guess what we're going to do today as we're here. I've got the apostle Paul's book open. And I'm explaining to you the apostles' doctrine.

And you have a copy of the apostles' doctrine in your lap. And you're looking at a copy of the apostles' doctrine on the screen. We're gathered together studying the apostles' doctrine. He called them and he sent them forth to preach.

Now, man, my time is gone. So let me just give you some things quickly. Maybe I'll preach some more of it another time. Are you ready for this? Are you ready for this? In the Bible, there aren't very many miracles.

[21 : 12] You thought they were everywhere. But watch this. Go study your Bible. I love it. We got Q&A; tonight. Bring it on. Bring it on. Ask your question.

In the Bible, miracles aren't common occurrences. That's by definition. If miracles happened all the time, then a miracle wouldn't be a miracle. It'd be just a regular thing.

Amen. I mean, is the sun coming up in the morning a miracle? Well, not really because it did it yesterday. And the day before and probably will tomorrow. So none of us go around and say, man, it's a miracle the sun came up today. We don't really go around saying that.

The signs of an apostle wouldn't have meant much if everybody was doing it. Miracles are seen in special times of God revealing himself. Miracles are seen in special times of God revealing himself.

When God needed to make a change, when God was saying, wake up, people, and listen to me, he sent miracles. He did it in the time of Moses and Joshua. Don't have time to go through all of it because of time.

[22 : 09] But Exodus chapter 4 and verse 1, Moses answered and said to God, they will not believe me, nor will they hearken to my voice. For they will say, the Lord hath not appeared unto thee.

And the Lord says this in the passage, if you read it. He said, what you got in your hand, Moses? He said, I got my rod. He said, throw it on the ground. Threw it on the ground and turned into a snake. That's a miracle. How many of y'all thrown a stick on the ground and turned into a snake?

Say amen. I didn't think so. And then he said, reach down and grab it by the tail and pick it up. He picked up the rod by the tail, the snake by the tail, and it turned back into a snake.

To a rod, excuse me. Thank God it wasn't a snake. Verse 5, Exodus chapter 4, verse 5, that they may believe. That's why he did the miracles. That they may believe that the Lord, God of their fathers, and the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has appeared.

In Exodus chapter 6 and verse 6, Moses said to the people. Wherefore, God tells Moses to tell the people. Wherefore, say to the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgment.

[23 : 15] Said he brought 10 plagues on them. In Exodus chapter 34, verse 10, he said, I will do marvels. So Moses and Joshua saw miracles. Not until you get to them do you see those.

Then Elijah and Elisha saw miracles. In 2 Kings 1.10, Elijah answered and said to the captain of 50. This guy came and told Elijah. This guy came and said, the king says you to get yourself down to the palace.

He wants to see you. Man of God. And Elijah responded and said to the captain of 50. If I be a man of God, let the fire come down from heaven and burn you and all 50 men with you alive.

And the fire came down and burned them. Next guy came up and said, hey, president said, get your rear down to the palace. He said, okay. You call me a man of God. If I'm a man of God, let the fire burn you. Next guy came crawling up.

He said, hey, man of God. Please don't burn me like you did the rest of them. Just wondering if it's possible that you might make an appearance. I'm not here to threaten you. He said, okay, I'll go. That didn't happen with regular guys.

[24 : 15] That didn't happen with regular guys. Then in the ministry of Jesus and the apostles, great miracles took place. In Acts chapter 4 and verse 30, the Bible says that signs and wonders may be done by the name of the holy child Jesus.

In Acts chapter 5 and verse 12, the hands of the apostle were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. First Thessalonians chapter 1 and verse 5, also in power. But before the book of Acts is over, miracles start dying out.

After Stephen, no miracles. Stephen, that's Acts chapter what? 8? 7? 8? After Acts chapter 7, no major miracles are done.

In 1 Timothy chapter 5 verse 23, Timothy gets sick. You would think that Paul would simply say, kaboom, it's gone. Before they could walk by and their shadow healed them.

Before they actually took pieces of cloth. All the junk you see being done on your TV show, they'd take their t-shirt and cut it up in chunks and mail it to them and it'd heal them. But Paul said, better take a little wine for the stomach's sake.

[25 : 22] Take some medicine. I don't know how to get you healed. I had that sign of an apostle, but it's not happening now. Their miracles are written about in Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 3 as though they were past tense.

How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed? Confirmed, was confirmed unto us. It's been confirmed.

We don't need them anymore. By the way, the apostles, we don't find them controlling the elements, stopping the wind and stuff like that. We don't find them making food. There were very few other people that did any miracles in the New Testament.

The 70 did some miracles that were sent forth to witness. In Luke chapter 10 and verse 17, the devils were subject to them. In Acts chapter 6 and verse 8, Stephen was full of faith and power and did great wonders.

In Acts chapter 8 and verse 6, Philip does some miracles. Guess who did no miracles? Probably the greatest guy in the whole New Testament after Jesus.

[26 : 18] John the Baptist. No miracles. John 10, 41. And many resorted unto him and said, John did no miracle. But all things that John spake of this man were true.

Timothy didn't do miracles. Titus didn't do miracles. Luke didn't do miracles. Silas didn't do miracles. There was nobody outside the apostolic era and no one that was connected. No one that was not connected to the apostles.

Here's my last thing. And I know it's going to be late. Boy, I've been doing this a lot lately. I'm probably going to get fired. But I'm going to go ahead and tell you the truth. You know what the devil is going to use in the last days to deceive people?

Fake miracle workers. And aren't you a bunch of suckers? 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 9.

Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders and all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them.

[27 : 18] Revelation chapter 13 and verse 3. There will be a satanic trinity. There will be the devil and the false prophet and the antichrist. And the antichrist will receive a mortal wound to his head.

And he should have died from that wound. And the false prophet, the religious leader that Satan has set up, will heal him. And everybody will be like, must be God. Revelation chapter 13 verse 3.

I saw one of the heads as it were wounded to death. And his deadly wound was healed. And all the world wondered after the beast. I mean, everybody's fooling you because you're believing junk.

Verse 12, his deadly wound was healed. Revelation chapter 16 and verse 14. They are spirits of devils working miracles. In Revelation chapter 19 and verse 20.

And the beast was taken and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles, that worked miracles before him and those that got deceived. Now you listen to what I'm about to tell you. We don't need miracles.

[28 : 20] Because we have the written, preserved, inspired word of God right here. I don't need anybody to come up here and put on any magic show and try to prove to you anything.

Here's our simple. This is why our church is such a simple church. Here's what we do. Would you open your Bibles, please? We're going to look at what this book says. Guess what happens when you come next service? Well, I'm going to work another miracle.

Here it is. Would you open your Bible? And that is a miracle in today's conditions, you know. Because most preachers, man, they got slideshows and light shows and smoke and magic and mirrors. And they're healing people and they got TV stations and they got glittery gold stuff.

And their wife's got more junk in her hair than our church is worth. And you fall for it. And here's what the Bible says. Paul said, guys, you should listen to me.

I work the signs of an apostle. Well, that screams this. That was the signs of an apostle, not the signs of a preacher. Why was old Timothy? Hey, Tim, how'd you get left out?

[29 : 25] Hey, Tim, why'd you get left out? Hey, Titus, why'd you get left out? Hey, Silas, why weren't you? Why didn't you get to do any of it? Hey, how come so many of y'all got left out? No telling how many times people have come to me and said, Austin, you know, you just never work any miracles.

I said, I know. The only miracle ever happened in my life is he saved a worm like me. It's the only miracle ever happened in my life. God worked a miracle in me. But I don't work miracles. This guy came to me in Prue one time and he told me, he said, I can heal people.

He said, I'm a healer. He said, I got the power of God to heal people. His wife was dying of cancer and he was asking me for an offering. And I said, you don't need any money. So don't be asking me for money. He said, well, why wouldn't you help me?

I need to take my wife to doctor. I said, won't you whoop one of them healings on her? I said, you got it. Why don't you use it? And I said, biblically, those don't happen.

I said, Paul tells Timothy to take a little medicine and Paul has other associates that get sick. And he says, let's pray for him. He's sick. And I said, so I said, so the healings didn't continue.

[30 : 30] And this is what he said. Well, just because Paul lost faith, don't mean I will. Today, I tell you, you need to be careful who you listen to. You need to be careful who you listen to.

You need to become an ardent student of the word of God. And listen, you shouldn't even listen to me without taking your Bible, writing it down, getting a copy of the audio, looking it up in the Bible and checking it out.

Because no preacher has a right to tell you anything. You need to check out what God's word says. This is the authority. This is the authority. I am not the authority. Vision Baptist Church is not the authority.

This is the authority. The word of God is the authority. So let me just tell you today. Stop listening to everybody. Start studying your Bible and asking God to show you truth.

Start really seeking God. And let the word of God speak to you so God can grow you. And don't get sucked in. Where religion is going to get more and more popular.

[31 : 39] And less and less Christian. Everybody is going to get together and everybody is going to be friends. They are all going to be holding hands singing kumbaya. But they won't even know Jesus when they do it.

Know the book. Father in heaven, I love you. And I praise you. And I challenge you. I ask you to challenge your people. Excuse me. I ask you to challenge your people. I ask you to call us to holiness.

I ask you to call us to serve you. I ask you to call your people to trust you and believe you and get into your Bible. I pray God that you'd help us to be aware of what goes on as we watch it on television, as we read it in books, as we see it on the internet.

I pray God you'd build a church of people that love you and trust you and look to you. And I will give you praise. You have been listening to Austin Gardner, pastor of Vision Baptist Church.

For contact information, location, service times, or more audio and video recordings, log on to www.visionbaptist.com. Thank you.