

Ask Jeff 5.3.17
Bible Drill Edition
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Pastor Jeff Meyers. Gentlemen, hopefully you have the yellow sheet of paper in front of you. This is our prayer sheet, otherwise known as the circle of concern. If you're a guest or a visitor with us tonight, please understand that you do not have to be a member of First Baptist to be a part of our prayer ministry. If there's anything that's taking place in your life or someone connected to the life of someone in our church life, we want to be praying for you.

A couple of things let me remind you of. 1. If you know of something we need to be praying about, please let us know in the office, we'll get it to the sheet as soon as possible. 2. Do not throw this away when you leave. Please take it home, make it a part of your week where you pray for the needs and concerns of people on a regular basis. 3. On the back there's a special section for those that are serving A in the military, and B on the mission field. Please make it a special place in your life to pray for those who are being so selfless on our behalf.

Let's pray tonight and then we have something very special that I think you're going to enjoy. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, tonight as we gather in the name of Jesus Christ, we are so grateful for your love, your compassion, your mercy that you extend toward us and, Lord, that's what we're praying for everyone on this sheet of paper. Lord, we're praying for love and for grace and mercy, for compassion, Lord, for healing, for restoration. God, you know every situation so much more than we can even conceive and so, God, we're praying that you would just be God in their lives and for those that are caretakers and for those that are affected on the outside of these situations, Lord, would you minister into their lives as well. Lord, for those that are serving overseas and stateside on behalf of the mission field as well as the military, God, we pray that you would be their comfort in times of turmoil, Lord, that you would be their peace in the time of struggle and, God, that if at all possible, Lord, you would allow them to see the fruit of their labor. Tonight as we open your word, as we study your word, as we are challenged by your word, may it be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Alright, tonight we're gonna have some fun. I'm going to welcome a good friend of mine and hopefully a good friend of yours to the stage, Mr. Jeff Rourke. So Jeff Rourke, come

up here on the stage for just a moment. Jeff has a very distinct purpose. He and his wife, Stephanie, lead an exciting ministry in our church known as Bible drill. So as they're making their way up, any of you adults that were in Bible or Sword drill growing up? Do we have any Bible or Sword drill? Ah, we have a few graduates by which we can pick from. So Jeff, I'm going to turn it over to you and let's go for it.

Jeff Rourke. Alright, hey, I'm Jeff Rourke and this is my wife, Stephanie, and we are the Bible drill leaders here at First Baptist Church. We've done it now for, I guess, four years and amazingly it's coming back again. When we first started, we averaged maybe 7-9 children every Sunday, this year we averaged about 28 every Sunday morning at 11 o'clock. So and of those 28, we had 22 compete in our church drill, and of the 22, 14 qualified for the state competition and we took them there two weeks ago in Montgomery. So they represented our church incredibly. As you'll see tonight, we have some, we didn't get all of them here, all 14 that went, but we've got 9, I believe, 8-9 that are going to be here tonight to show you what they've learned.

And Bible drill, and I'll explain a little bit before each drill what we're going to do. So we're going to invite the kids up here and then we're going to have Pastor Jeff and Taylor and Casey and then I'm going to ask for two more volunteers, some of you that raised your hands that did this, I'd like for you to come up here so we have a full drill of 12. And what I'm going to do is we're going to explain each different call, there's four calls, types of calls in the Bible drill. So I'll explain each one and we're just going to have a little bit of fun and we're going to do two calls from each type and we're going to see how well our staff does or how y'all do against our fourth through sixth grade Bible drillers. And we did have two young men that got perfect scores, 24/24, at state. And I think all 14 got 18 or more correct out of 24 at the state level. So we were well represented and it is growing. Every year we go to Montgomery, there's more and more churches in the state that are getting back into Bible drill which is really exciting for us.

So, kids, why don't y'all come up here. Do I have two volunteers? I need two volunteers to come up. Who's brave enough to come up here and face these fourth through sixth graders? Anybody?

Pastor. Come on, misery loves company. Come on. Come on. You realize this is a fixed fight, right? This is a fixed fight. Alright, guys.

Jeff. Mr. Sledge, you want to come up here? I saw your hand.

Pastor. Hey, Jeff, not only are they smarter than I am, they're as tall as I am.

Jeff. That's right.

Pastor. This is just not right. This is fourth through sixth grade.

Jeff. This is fourth through sixth. Come on, do I have two volunteers? Mr. Murphy, come on. Larry Murphy is going to come up here. I need one more.

Pastor. Oh, come on, Larry. Here we go.

Jeff. Come on, one more. Who wants to come up here? It won't be as bad as you think.

Pastor. Yes, it will. Come on. This is what we call a good old-fashioned wuppin here in the South.

Jeff. Tamara T. is being summoned to the stage. Come on.

Pastor. What? Can I tell you [unintelligible]

Jeff. No, you've got to use this Holman Christian Standard right here. Everybody has to use the same one. You might have tabs in there. We don't trust you. And I have not told the children or anybody....

Pastor. But I know my Bible. But I know mine. I know the way it's laid out.

Jeff. Well, these children have to use these at the drill there in Montgomery. And you can actually put your Bible down behind you for right now because we're not going to use the Bibles to begin with. So the way Bible drill works is that we have different drills, like I told you, and so the first drill that we're going to do is the quotation drill, and in the quotation drill, I will give you a scripture reference from the 25 scriptures listed on the Bible drill card. So we give them a card, it has 25 scriptures that they memorize throughout the years. So if you know the verse, step forward one step at the call of "Start," prepared to quote the verse and give the reference. You'll have 10 seconds in which to think and to step out. Everybody understand that? You don't have to step off the stage, just step forward and then we just call on one person. And let me tell you this for these, my Bible drillers know this, if you step forward and then somebody else, I call on them and they get it right and you thought in your head something different, you've got to raise your hand. It's honesty, raise your hand and step back so you don't get a point. Everybody understand?

Alright, so when we say "Attention," Bible drillers, what do we do when we stand at attention? That's right, "Attention." Matthew 5:16.

Pastor. Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

Jeff. You've got to wait. Start. Alright, let's see, who do we start with? Let's go with Taylor.

Taylor. This is the TTV, the Taylor T. Version. "Therefore let your light shine before all men so that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Jeff. Well, that is correct in your version. How about one of these Bible drill, how about Tristan? Can you tell us your version?

Tristan. "In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16.

Jeff. That is correct.

Pastor. Show off.

Jeff. Alright, so everybody stays here until I say, what? I say "Attention," everybody steps back. Alright, here's another one. Are you ready? Psalm 119:105. Start.

Pastor. Lamp. Lamp.

Jeff. Alright, let's go with Pastor Jeff.

Pastor. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

Jeff. That is correct in the King James version.

Pastor. Psalm 119:105.

Jeff. Alright, how about for Holman Christian Standard. Who can...? Alright, Jackson.

Jackson. "Your word," is this thing on? Okay, "Your word is a lamp on my feet and a light on my path." Psalm 119:105.

Jeff. That is correct. Attention. Alright, now we're going to go on to another part of the drill which is called the completion drill. In the completion drill, I will quote the part of the verse that was underlined on your Bible drill card, if you can complete the verse and give the reference, step forward after the call of "Start." Be prepared to quote the entire verse and the reference if called upon. You will have 10 seconds after "Start" is given.

Attention. "The grass withers...." Start. Alright, everybody step forward. Alright, Mr. Murphy.

Mr. Murphy. "The grass withers and the flowers fade but the word of God lasts forever."

Jeff. That is correct. Oh, the reference. Yeah, the reference was....

Mr. Murphy. Psalm.... yeah. I don't know the chapter and verse.

Jeff. Alright, let's go to Michael. Go ahead.

Michael. "The grass withers and the flowers fade but the word of our God remains forever." Isaiah 48.

Jeff. That is correct. Alright, attention. "Honor your father...."

Pastor. Amen.

Jeff. "Honor your father..." Start.

Pastor. Oh, you've got this, Larry. Come on.

Jeff. Alright, Walker.

Walker. "Honor your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the Lord your God has given you." Exodus 20:12.

Jeff. That is correct. That is correct. Attention. Alright, now you may pick up your Bibles. Alright, the next part of the drill is called the book drill. In the book drill, this is important, you've got to listen to directions, in the book drill, I will call a book of the Bible, upon the call of "Start," you will have 10 seconds to find the book, any page in that book, place your index finger on the page and step forward one step. Be prepared to name the book that comes before the one called, the book called, and the book that comes after the one called. Does everybody understand?

Attention. Alright, now on this one we're going to say "Present Bibles" and y'all show them how to present Bibles. There you go. Jeremiah. Jeremiah. Start.

Pastor. I think you made it. Go. Get on up here.

Jeff. Come on, Walker. Come on up. Chris, let him up. Alright, let's say Christopher.

Christopher. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations.

Jeff. That is correct. Attention. Present Bibles. Philippians. Start. Time. Alright, Jarrod.

Jarrod. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians.

Jeff. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians. That's correct. Attention. Good try, that's right.

Pastor. E for effort.

Jeff. Alright, the next part of the drill is called the key passage drill. In the key passage drill, I will give you the title of the key passage from the 10 listed on the Bible drill card. You'll have 10 seconds at the start of the call of "Start" in which to find the key passage. Place your index finger on any part of the passage and step forward. If called upon, state the key passage, title, and reference. I will then ask you to read one or more verses aloud. Does everybody understand?

Attention. Present Bible. "A Psalm of praise...." Start.

Pastor. I got your back, Taylor.

Jeff. Alright, Pastor Jeff.

Pastor. Psalm 100, sir.

Jeff. That is correct. That is correct. Will you please read verse 2.

Pastor. I don't have my glasses, hold on. "Serve the Lord with gladness, come before him with joyful songs." And a kazoo.

Jeff. There you go. Attention. Present Bibles. "The parable of the sower." Start. Alright, Taylor. You missed it. Alright, Jackson.

Jackson. Mark 4:1-20.

Jeff. That is correct. Can you please read verse 9?

Jackson. "Then he said anyone who has ears to hear should listen."

Jeff. That is correct. Attention. Alright, I said we were going to do two of each, we're going to do one more just because we're having so much fun. Present Bibles. "The 10 Commandments." Start.

Pastor. Just checking.

Jeff. Alright, let's see, Michael.

Michael. Exodus 23 through 17.

Jeff. Exodus 23 through 17, that's correct. Can you please read verse 8.

Michael. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

Jeff. That is correct. Alright, good job, guys.

Pastor. We're done?

Jeff. Yes. So that's what Bible drill is all about and we have 25 verses that we, there's three cycles so you have a green cycle, a red cycle, and a blue cycle. So it's made where the kids come in fourth grade, fifth grade, sixth grade, by the end of three years, they've memorized 75 verses, they've done 30 key passages, and they've memorized the books of the Bible and know where they are, they know how to find them, and they can quote them where they are and find them quicker than most of us in this room. So it's pretty

impressive and it's a lot of fun teaching these kids. They're very competitive and we're competitive people so we enjoy getting them in there, having a good time.

Are there any questions? Well, thank y'all for your time.

Pastor. Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. You know this is Ask Jeff?

Jeff. That's right.

Pastor. And you're Jeff.

Jeff. That's right.

Pastor. So tonight's going to be the Ask Jeff plumbing edition.

Jeff. That's right, plumbing, anybody have any plumbing questions?

Pastor. So we're going to take questions on the Bible and water issues.

Jeff. That's right. Or sewer.

Pastor. Or sewer. Or sewer.

Jeff. That's right. That's right. I don't know what that odd smell is in your house. I'm sorry.

Pastor. I'm kidding but in all seriousness, thank you, Jeff and Stephanie. Thank you so so much. And the reason I allowed myself to be humiliated up here, I am a huge fan of Bible drill because as Jeff said, over the course of several years dozens and dozens and dozens of scriptures, key passages, the ability to know the Bible literally frontwards and backwards. A lot of times people come to me and say, "How do you know the Bible so well?" Well, obviously I've studied for years but it started in Bible drill, folks. That's where it started. It started as a young child learning to handle the word of God, memorize the word of God, find passages in the word of God, and thankfully as I became a young adult and now an adult, I'm building on that foundation.

So here is my shameless plug. If you have kids or grandkids that you would like to be able to see demonstrate what you saw tonight in these young people, we begin a new cycle in the fall. It meets at the 11 o'clock Sunday school hour. A great opportunity for our young people. I cannot say enough for Jeff and Stephanie and that ministry, an incredible thing to do or have in somebody's life.

So because tonight we had the Bible drill and the focus on the word of God, isn't it amazing, have you ever heard the word providence? Do you know what providence is? Providence is a big fancy theological word that means God knows better than you do. Okay, he's orchestrating things. Tonight in our Revelation study, which hopefully you got

an outline on your way in, we're going to begin with Revelation. In chapter 3, beginning in verse 7, is the church of Philadelphia. Now the church of Philadelphia is one of only two churches of the seven churches of the book of Revelation that receive no condemnation. The Lord doesn't say anything negative about them at all, alright? He said something positive but not negative about the church at Smyrna, the second church, and the church at Philadelphia, the sixth church.

Now what we're going to see about the church of Philadelphia is simply this: what they did, kind of the overall theme of their, and I hate to use this term in this context, the overall theme of their success was their faithfulness and their fidelity to the word of God. We're going to see tonight that when we are faithful to the word of God, he opens doors that no other man can shut and he shuts doors that no man can open. And so tonight, we're going to turn to the book of Revelation 3, beginning in verse 7, and yes, tonight is my inaugural glass-wearing opportunity with y'all. I'm facing my age now. I've been fighting wearing the glasses and I've just got to do it. So here I am. I can do no other. So Revelation. My arms got too short. Y'all know what that means? Some of y'all? Yeah. I don't know if y'all saw me Sunday morning, I was like way out here and I was like, "I've got to do it." So it's so nice to be able to read.

Revelation 3, beginning at verse 7. I can actually see the letters. They're not fuzzy. It's beautiful. What did you say? They make big print. Large. Okay, okay, real quick. I've had numerous people through time tell me, "Well, just get a large print Bible." Let me tell you why I use a little bitty Bible and you may have noticed when Bible drill started, that I had it back here. The very first church that I pastored, a little bitty country church in the middle of Texas, I had a young man in the church come to me and say I want you to go and talk to one of his relatives. A man lived up one of those long, windy, dirt roads. He said, "I want you to go and talk with him for me." So I showed up and I did what any young, and I'll just say it because I was, young, dumb, 21 year old pastor, can you believe they hired me? I look back and say, "What were they thinking?" 21 years old, I'm the pastor of this little church. I go be-bopping up this dirt road to this guy's house and I've got a big, old study Bible with me because I'm about to give it to him. I'm ready. When I show up to his door, he meets me with a 12 gauge. It's not aimed at me but it's in his hand and he said, "I told So-and-so not to send you up here. Get off my property." Then and there I said, "You know what, I played my hand just way too early." And so beginning that day, I started going to little bitty Bibles that I could tuck in the back so that when I would go up to somebody's house and I'd knock on their door, as soon as we got to a spiritual conversation, I'd say, "You know, it's funny you bringing that up. I just happen to have a Bible right here." And so this is kind of my smaller version. So when people say, "Well, just go get a big Bible," but then you can't come in incognito, you can't sneak up on people.

Revelation 3:7, it says,

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; 8 I know

thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. 9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Now as we've been studying these churches that are contained in the book of Revelation, allow me to remind you there's multi-layers of understanding. All seven of them are a local church there in Asia Minor. Also beyond that, we see that all of the seven letters were written to all of the seven churches that are all dealing not just with a local specific issue, but a generalized cultural issue.

The other thing that we've been studying about these churches is there is an interpretation thereof and I think we're seeing that there is some accuracy to be said to seeing these seven churches as a 30,000 foot, kind of a look at the history of the church from the ascension of Jesus unto the soon return of Jesus. We're going to begin on kind of a local level, how does the church of Philadelphia not only encourage us as believers and share with us how we're to live our lives, but then I want to take a step back and see how does this play out into that 30,000 foot level, because if we look at it from a historical perspective, there is an amazing perspective that we can have tonight.

So we look at the church of Philadelphia. It means "brotherly love." The only one or the second one with Smyrna that has no condemnation. I've just kind of given you a brief outline here understanding the power of Jesus. It begins obviously, all of the seven churches, it speaks of an attribute of who Jesus is to all these seven churches. In this one in verse 7, it says that he has the key of David. Psalm 22:22 says that the key of David is he who opens and no man can shut, and shuts that no man can open. That passage of scripture that we read in Revelation 3 is actually a quotation of Isaiah 22:22.

Why is that so significant? Because in Psalm 110:1, we have the most quoted Old Testament passage in all the New Testament where King David in one of the inspired Psalms makes this statement, he says, "That my Lord," referring to the Messiah, "will sit on my throne for all of eternity." And so when it says that Jesus has the key of David, it is stating that not only is he the fulfillment of those prophecies, the initiator of those prophecies, but that whatever he opens nobody can shut.

Now this is a great life lesson for us. If God is in it, you can't stop it. You remember a guy over in the book of Acts called Gamaliel, the early start of the church? The church was beginning to make an impact and a difference and those religious leaders were struggling, and they came to Gamaliel, who, by the way, was a teacher, an instructor of the Apostle Paul, and said, "What do we do with this?" Do you remember what he said? "If this is of God, you can't stop it. If it's not of God, don't worry about it, it'll fade away eventually." How many times even in our lifetimes have we see these people who supposedly speak on behalf of God rise and fade away very quickly.

So it says he has the key of David, uncontested power. Nobody can stop it. If God wants to do it, nobody can stop it. Secondly, the proclamation of Jesus in verse 8, it says that there is a door that he opens, no man can shut. Remember, Jesus said in John 15:5 that he was a door, that he was the one by which we have access not only to forgiveness and salvation and grace, but he is the key, he is the door, he is the opening to life. He says, "I am the true vine." He says, "He that abides in me and I in him shall bear much fruit."

Secondly, nothing hinders his or our door. Matthew 16:18, when he spoke to Peter about when he made the declaration that, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God," remember what he said? He said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail." What we're going to see in just a moment when we look at the church of Philadelphia from a 30,000 foot level, is that throughout time, the church has waxed and waned. It's increased, it's decreased. It's been of great influence, and it's been of very little influence. But the gates of hell have never prevailed against the church. So here it says that when he opens, no man can shut, when he shuts, no man can open.

So now what are the prerequisites? What are the things that must take place for this to happen in our life? Verse 8, he says, "I know thy works. Behold, I have set before thee an open door. No man can shut it. For though hast little strength and you have kept my word." The success of Philadelphia, the criticalness of the church of Philadelphia was not their creativity, not their innovation, not their natural giftedness, not even their zeal, their vigor, their zealousness, it was their fidelity to the word of God. You kept my word. What a life lesson for us, that there is a door that he opens that no man can shut, or if he shuts, no man can open. What's that based on? Our energy level, our excitement, our zealousness? No, it's based on our fidelity to the word of God.

So what is the word of God? Now this is going to be a basic introduction to hermeneutics which is a fancy word for a scientific study of scripture. The word of God is two basic simple things in your life. 1. It is inspired. 2 Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is inspired of God, it is profitable for rebuke, for correction, for encouragement, exhortation." It is inspired. It is given by God. What that means is simply this: the guys that we know that the Lord used in scripture whether it be Moses, David, Isaiah, Paul, Luke, Mark, Matthew, you name them, they didn't just sit down one day and say, "You know what? I've got a pretty good idea and I think people might want to hear this." The Lord actually spoke into their lives, communicated with them, and inspired the message.

That's important but maybe equally as important is the word of God is preserved. I put on there Psalm 12:6 and 7. It says that the word of God has been purified seven times, and has been preserved for this generation, listen, forever. The word of God is not only inspired, it's been preserved.

Now let me talk about preservation for just a moment. We are in the South and for those of you that may be watching by way of internet that do not live in the South, we have something that we do down here that they don't necessarily do other places. It's called canning. Y'all know what canning is. Canning is when you take some type of item, typically it is a vegetable or fruit, and you place it in a container, you seal it, you put some sugar and some other goodies in there, and you put it on the shelf so that a long time from now you can have them. Whether they are peach preserves, apple preserves, I've had jalapeno preserves, watermelon preserves, there's all...you can pretty much can anything in the South, alright? That's what we do. But the purpose of canning is so that you can have something out of season when you can't have it fresh, you can give it a shelf life, and it's just as good then as it was originally. However, listen to me, it's in a little bit of a different context. Would we all agree that when you take a peach fresh off the tree and you take a peach that has been canned for a year, it is still a peach but there's a little bit of a twist, is there not? There's a little bit of a difference. It's still a peach. It still has the nutrients but it's a little bit of a twist.

You say, "Well, what is the twist?" It's not the meaning, it's not the context. When we talk about scripture, listen, the New Testament was inspired in Greek but it has been preserved for us today so that we still have access to it, we can read it and we can understand it. It may not be as it was originally inspired but it has been preserved for us. That is what is so critical because and I don't want to get into a big, fancy, theological, hermeneutical discussion tonight, but if someone says, "Well, I want to see the original autographs. I want to see the original manuscript that Paul wrote to the church at Romans." We don't have it. We have copies and we have reliable copies, and I could get into all that tonight. What we have is we have preservation. You cannot have preservation if you do not have first inspiration. You say, "What do you mean, pastor?" You can't can something you didn't first pick. Does that make sense? You have to have picked it, then you can it to preserve it.

So if you have something that is preserved, it is because it has been inspired, and so that is what is so important for our understanding today, just like the canning process here in the South, we have the scriptural fidelity process that has been given, inspired, it has been preserved.

What is it not? I love what I put on here. I know I wrote it but here's what I like. It's not based on feeling, fairness or geography. In other words, we have a real bad habit of going to the word of God and saying, "Well, I don't like what it says." I don't care if you like it or not. "That's just not fair. Or that's not this, or this isn't that." Understand that this is inspired by God, preserved by God, the word of God. You and I are the ones who rebelled against God. He is the one who created us. He is the one who was willing to save us. He is the one who one day will come back for us. I think we ought to have at least

enough humility to say, "God, you know what you're doing and I don't." So when we talk about the word of God and being faithful to the word of God, we need to take our emotions out of it, we need to take our feelings out of it. We come subject to it, not able to make it what we want it to be.

Now I will give you two fancy words today. Those of you who play Scrabble, are you ready to get some points? Here we go. Exegesis means taking meaning out of scripture. Eisegesis means putting in what you want scripture to be. We don't want eisegesis, we don't want to make it say what we want it to say, we want to eisegete or pull out what does it say to us whether we like what it says or not. Now why is that important to the church of Philadelphia? No condemnation. What does he say? "You kept my word." Let me tell you what he's saying. You didn't fight it. You didn't argue with it. You didn't claim, "Well, that's just not how our culture is. Well, it's a new day today. Well, where we live, we don't do it that way." That's what I mean by geography or fairness etc.

Moving onwards, they did not deny his name. 1 John 2 talks about those that left us were never ever a part of us. They were faithful to the word of God, they were faithful to their faith. Here's the paradox: if you are faithful to the word of God in your personal life, your family's life, and particularly in the 21st century Western civilization, do you know who the first group of people who will be against you? Religious people. Religious people. You say, "Well, it's the secular world out there." The secular world may be attacking you for your biblical beliefs but it started within the religious realm.

The scripture I've given you, Amos 7, the prophet Amos, he's speaking to what we know as Israel, the northern kingdom. He speaks the truth of God to the people of God. Do you know who the first people that got mad at him? The priests. The priests got mad at him. Do you know why? Because they were twisting the things of God. They were making religious behaviors and machinery that was against the things of God and the word of God messes up the religion of man every single time. So when we stand for the truth of God's word, oftentimes it is the religious folks who are against us and then, secondly, the world who one day according to 1 Corinthians 6:3, will actually bow down to us. It says that we shall judge the world. There is going to be opposition. Notice even here the church at Philadelphia, there was opposition.

Last but not least, we have hope and a promise that he will keep us from temptation and he will judge his and eventually our enemies.

Now allow me to look at the church at Philadelphia from a 30,000 foot view. Remember this idea, this concept that you have the cross, you have the crucifixion event with the ascension of Jesus, and then the idea of the seven churches: the church at Ephesus, the church at Smyrna, the church at Pergamos next, right? Pergamos is next? This is interactive. Pergamos. I'm just making sure I get it right here. Church at Pergamos, church at Thyatira, church at Sardis, church at Philadelphia, church of Laodicea. Alright, the idea as we've shared before is there is this concept that the seven churches are not just these local churches in Asia Minor constrained to the first century, but they also give us a

picture, they give us an idea of the history of the church of Jesus Christ from the ascension of Jesus to the eventual return of Jesus.

Now the church at Philadelphia which we're studying today, is very critical to understanding this concept or this theory and just allow me to rehash for a little bit and then we'll get to the church at Philadelphia. Remember the church at Ephesus? Strong doctrinal convictions, they purified themselves, they didn't allow any doctrinal error, but they lost their first love. The church of Smyrna, remember that it was small in number and heavily persecuted, much like the second and third century church in church history. The church at Pergamos, remember that meant "much marriage," they married the world much like the fourth century when the church of Jesus Christ became the official state religion of the world and the marriage of the church and the world produced in technical terms a theocracy, in theological terms it created a mess, is what it did, because you had the secular world appointing the pastors, the pastors appointing the presidents, and vice-versa, and what did we create? An absolute royal mess until we got to the point of Thyatira. The church at Thyatira, remember this is where Jezebel shows up. It talks about her fornication and continuing to take the church or the people of God down through the doctrine and the error of Balaam and all these things. Finally we get to Sardis which means "the red ones," heavily persecuted and, listen, a few faithful ones. If I were to diagram this, what you would see as far as a level of influence or impact, you have this, you have this kind of uptick with Smyrna. Remember he said, "You're small in number but you're great in faithfulness." And then it just goes on a downhill slide until you get to the church of Philadelphia.

Now I'm going to skip the church at Philadelphia for one quick second and go to the church of Laodicea. Anybody know anything about the church at Laodicea? It is pretty bad whoever just said that. It is messed up. It is lukewarm, alright? We're going to get to it next week. Nothing good. It's all messed up. He says, "You're seeing things with the wrong perspective. You've got everything bad." In fact, according to this idea or theory, this is what the church of Jesus Christ looks like when Jesus comes back, that though they have church and they're gathering in church, he's standing at the door knocking because he's not been invited into the church. When we get to the church of Laodicea, it's going to look eerily like what we see out there in our world today.

So allow me to connect the dots. The church at Sardis if we were going to look at this from a historical perspective, what would begin the church at Philadelphia what were they known for? They kept the word of God. Anybody know what happened in the early 1500s, 500 years ago this year? The Reformation. For hundreds of years the word of God was not present in the churches, it was not prominent, it was not something that was a part, and when what we know or who we know as Martin Luther, when he established that time period where he said it is by grace, through faith alone, do you remember what he did, the first thing he did? He took the scriptures, he translated it into German so people could read the words of God, and beginning in that time period with what we know as the early 16th century, from then and I'm just going to go ahead and put some rough dates, from the early 1500s to the early 1900s, do you know what we had in the

world? We had revival, awakening and the movement of God. We call this the missionary period.

So beginning and this is rough dates, beginning roughly about 1500 to about the year, I'm just going to say 1900, do not over-literalize that, please. This is just general concepts of looking from 30,000 feet, we see the word of God gaining prominence, we see the missionary movements beginning, we see the first great awakening, the second great awakening. We could go through all those historical movements of God. Once you get into the early 1900s, guess what? It all falls off. In fact, I would challenge you to find a national or global revival that has occurred in the last 100 years. Try it. Now you can find some localized ones and you can find some general ones and some somewhat specific ones, but nothing like what we had for these 400 years.

Interesting when you get to the early 1900s, now I'm going to make this a little more specific to our land here, anybody know what happened in the early 1900s when it came to the Bible, what we did? We put it on trial. It's called the Scopes Monkey Trial. We actually debated is the Bible right or is something else right? Y'all know how that turned out, right? Now incidentally what public perception is is very different of how the court case actually worked out but I'll let y'all flesh that out later. But what happened is we began to be a people, and this isn't just in America, this is across the whole world, we began to be a people who no longer held to the things of scripture, in fact, we began to fight against the things of scripture.

So going back to this kind of idea or concept, if you look at these seven churches in Revelation as a picture of the history of the church from the ascension of Jesus to the return of Jesus, there is nobody here in your right theological mind that could say that we're in the age of Philadelphia today. There's no way you could say that the world is faithful to the word of God, propagates the word of God, and it rules the things of the world. There's no way, which means where are we if this theory is right? Right over there which means what's next? He's coming back.

So when we look at the seven churches of Revelation, all of them have specific issues, all of them have lessons to teach us, but they even have bigger lessons to teach us, and the church at Philadelphia in this concept right here is so critical in this concept because it is so specific that it is the word of God that opens a door that no man can shut, or shuts a door that no man can open.

Now interesting, church at Philadelphia and then I'll open it up for questions. It says because of their faithfulness, I will keep them from the time of temptation. I will keep them from, as we go through the book of Revelation, this time period that is coming in the future of great horrific issues and things on earth. Now that being said, I'm going to be quiet as far as the teaching side. We're going to shift into the Q&A side. Obviously we've been dealing with the book of Revelation.

Ideas? Concepts? Thoughts about either the church of Philadelphia or anything else that we've discussed tonight? Go. And you're scared we're going to call you to quote a verse. I

can tell. Nothing. We're all good. You got Philadelphia. It's easy-peasy. Alright, ya'll got Philadelphia, we'll move on to the database. Here we go.

And question 1. It says in 1 Corinthians 11:27 taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, how do you take the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner? There you go. Alright.

So 1 Corinthians 11. This is a very intriguing passage because you're dealing with one of what the Bible calls two ordinances. Ordinances are those practices of which we, the church of Jesus Christ, irrespective of place, location, geography, age, are to follow in the footsteps of the early church, that being baptism and that being the Lord's Supper, when you get to 1 Corinthians 11, I'm going to begin in verse 23. I know it's specifically referencing verse 27 but we have to get the context here. It says,

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. [Next verse, but,] 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

What that means is the Lord takes the Lord's Supper very seriously. When we come to a time and a place as a church body whether it be a small gathering or a large gathering, where we're taking elements that represent or symbolize that which he gave on behalf of our sin condition, it's not something we do, oh, just because we're supposed to. Oh, I'll just do this because I want to make sure everybody sees that I'm doing it too. It says if we eat it unworthily, for this cause many are sick and some are dead. What that means is in light of verse 28 when it say but if you judge yourself, when we take the Lord's Supper, we should make sure that we are confessed up to the Lord. What that means is that we have confessed our sins, we have come clean, we are saying, "Okay, God, I'm not worthy but neither am I worthy of the grace you gave me on the resurrection, so that being said, I confess it all and I want to remember that the only reason that my sins are forgiven and can be forgiven is because you gave your body and your blood." This is why, I'm going to go ahead and play my cards here, this is why the Lord's Supper should not just be done on the spur of the moment. We should give it thought. We should prepare for it. We should allow ourselves not to just show up to church one day and go, "Oh, I forgot. Today's the Lord's Supper. Okay, why not." That's dangerous. It's incredibly dangerous

because you are not, according to the next verse, you're not judging your sin before participating in the remembrance of his body and his blood.

I take the Lord's Supper very seriously in my own life. I never ever want to come to that place where we take of those elements and do it just because it's on the church calendar or just because we're doing it in a service, or just because anything. I want to make sure that I have taken time personally to judge myself, say, "Okay, God what is in my life?" By the way, King David gave us a great example in the Psalms. He says, "O Lord, if there's any iniquity in me, show me what it is. Just let me know, God." Guess what? He will. I guarantee if you go to God and say, "God, I don't know of any sin in my life. Will you show me what it is?" Get ready for a movie. Here it comes. He will tell you. If you ask him to show you, he will show you.

By the way, let me go back to here. Did you know that it was about this time period that we finally got the Lord's Supper right again? For years and years and years, in fact, for hundreds of years most people thought that taking the Lord's Supper is what actually saved them. They thought that that is how they received the grace of God, and what we began to realize as we study passages like this and others when we came back to the word of God during this time period, we realized that we take it, what does it say? In remembrance of.

So yes, you can take it unworthily. The Bible says there can be some pretty bad consequences for that, and so I'm must going to give you some advice. The next time that you have the privilege and the opportunity to take the Lord's Supper, take some time beforehand and prepare yourself. By the way, when we do that as a corporate church, that is why when we do it in the service we have music and a time of reflection in advance thereof, to give you the time to prepare before actually taking it.

Any Lord's Supper questions? Thoughts? Concerns? Issues? What abouts? Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Yes.

[unintelligible]

Okay, the question, it's a great question if you couldn't hear it: what do you do about children, those who are not yet saved? I've had three of those in my home. The Lord's Supper is for those who are already believers, those who already understand and have confessed, "I'm a sinner. Jesus is the Savior." It says do it in remembrance of. You can't remember something that's not applicable to your own life. I can tell you and, by the way, due to my position, I rarely take the Lord's Supper with my family. I'm up front. However, I have facilitated many a conversation and watched my wife, I'm going to go ahead and say this, I know we're being televised, my wife in my opinion because I saw it out there, has done the best job I've ever seen, of course, I watch her particularly throughout the years with our boys, because we have had times where one of our children

could take and the other two couldn't, two could take and one couldn't, and then all three could. Oh, there was a time where all three could not. And so she has had to demonstrate to them when she would take it but none of them would. You know why I'm going through that dynamic? What an unbelievable teaching tool to your children. "Well, why did my brother get to and I didn't?" Well, let's talk about that.

It's a wonderful opportunity. Sometimes parents come to me frustrated saying, "Well, they're just innocent kids." Kids aren't innocent. They're under grace but they're not innocent. "They're just innocent kids. What can it hurt?" I think it can hurt because then once they do understand and they are saved, it doesn't have meaning anymore and it's something that where when you say, "You cannot and here's why," what a great lesson, what an opportunity to pull them aside and explain the significance, the importance. And sometimes it is when a child is not allowed to that it really pricks their interest of why.

I will tell you, we're talking about ordinances here. When I was 7 years of age, one of my dearest friends growing up, in fact, I tell my boys all the time, he may be watching, his name is Aaron, smartest guy I ever knew in my life personally, just so sharp, so smart, I remember when we were 7 years of age, I remember walking to church one day and he got baptized, and I remember saying, "Well, why did he get baptized? Why him, why not me?" Do you know what it did in my life? It began me asking questions and thinking. What if my parents had just said, "Well, it's not fair that he got... Yeah, I think you should too because that's just not fair." You understand? It used a great lesson for me and my parents were able to talk about it, Sunday school teachers were able to talk about it, and so the not participating in isn't a punishment as much as it is a great teaching tool for them. And by the way, I have had this privilege, what a great opportunity it is when you see your child take it for the first time. It means a whole lot to them.

Does that help a lot with kids? But my wife's been the best at it. I've just been up front at the church. I saw another hand. I thought I saw another hand. Did I not see another hand? Oh, it was the same question and that's a tough one when it comes to kids. And by the way, because I've facilitated the Lord's Supper a lot of times in a lot of places, I've seen some mommas get upset, and you say, "What do you mean you've seen mommas get upset?" I saw an incident a couple of years ago where a mom was in the service and she had a couple of, well, she had a child in her arms that could not have been older than two, and she got one for the two year old, and one of our very wise, godly men stopped, gave his tray to another guy, and took this young lady aside in a very loving manner and had the privilege of explaining to her what the Lord's Supper is, why you take it, and that a two year old, this is not something, this isn't a snack at church. And it was wonderful and do you know what it did in her life? It turned on the light bulb because it was handled in such a wonderful manner as a teaching tool and not a place of condemnation.

So any other Lord's Supper questions? Alright, moving onward.

[unintelligible]

Yeah, go for it.

[unintelligible]

Oh boy, now in Bible drill I don't have that one memorized. I'm going to have to look it up. Proverbs 26:4-5. It says, "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." Now that does very much appear as a contradiction, however, I'm wise enough to know that the Bible doesn't contradict itself, I've got to be smart enough to figure out what's going on.

[unintelligible]

That's why you asked the question. Yes. My immediate response to that question is don't go down the same road the fool is going down, show him the road he needs to go down. In other words, don't answer him to his own folly. In other words, don't walk with him down the wrong road, but in light of his folly take him down the right road. You still have to answer his issue. In other words, instead of walking down the wrong road with him and saying, "This is why you shouldn't be on this road," you're walking on the right road saying, "This is why that road was the wrong road." You're still answering his folly but you're not on the road of his folly.

[unintelligible]

You just said it better than I did.

[unintelligible]

I should have given you the microphone. You should have answered. You did a much better job.

[unintelligible]

Yes.

[unintelligible]

Sure.

[unintelligible]

Correct. Correct.

[unintelligible]

Oh, somebody hating on the Baptists. I know, yeah.

[unintelligible]

You answered him well. You did.

[unintelligible]

Yes.

[unintelligible]

No. Right, and what he's addressing if you couldn't quite hear due to a lack of volume, not only the whole, his statement was and he said it better than I did, was basically in not going down the road there, don't fuel their skepticism. And people are going to be skeptical about our faith whether we're dealing with the fact that you're a part of a Baptist denomination, or about the fact that you hold to a certain belief system, the exclusivity of Jesus, the inspiration of scripture, we could go through 100 issues. People are really good at trying to poke holes in things that they know a little bit about but not a whole lot thereof, and they don't want to really receive what the truth may be.

Now again, I made reference to on Sunday morning a movie called "The Case of Christ" that is based on the life of Lee Strobel. There's a great book called "The Case for Christ" that he wrote years ago, and I want to give another illustration from that movie that I think is very pertinent to this question because he's talking about the fool and his folly. The event that, okay, so Lee Strobel is this Chicago Tribune writer whose wife due to a circumstance, I'm just going to unpack it for you tonight as we kind of wrap up. They're married, they are practical atheists and what I mean by practical atheists is they're not on stumps preaching philosophy and atheism but there's nothing about God in their life at all, and they think everything of God, "church," the Bible is just pure mythology. They have a young girl in their home who they're at a restaurant, their young daughter begins to choke, a woman who's in the restaurant who happens to be a nurse at a local hospital from a medical perspective saves her life.

Well, the mother is eternally grateful and begins to go to the hospital and thank this nurse and begins to spend time with the nurse. We find out the nurse is a believer. The nurse invites her to church. The mom, Lee Strobel's wife, goes to church over a period of time and she gets saved. When she gets saved, Lee gets mad. He's not happy because now he believes his daughter is going to be raised with all this mythology and false teachings and, I mean, there is turmoil in the home.

Well, he goes because he's a journalist, he begins the process of proving that Jesus did not raise from the dead because if Jesus did not raise from the dead, then it all falls apart. Over the course of time, you know the end of the story, you can't disprove it. It's one of the most known historical facts in the world, even secular historians have a hard time disputing this. Well, kind of the crutch in his life as he's doing the research because he doesn't want to believe it's true but he knows it is. There is a case, there is a police shooting case that he wrote an article for for the Chicago Tribune and a young man is

sent to jail. The problem is he discovers later that he was sent to jail on bad evidence and Lee Strobel realizes his article and his bad research allowed this young man to get convicted and he is at fault.

So he begins the process of unpacking the case. While he's unpacking the case, the young man gets beat up in jail real badly, is put in the hospital and he's not on life support but he's in bad shape. Lee Strobel goes to the hospital and begins to talk with this young man and apologize to this young man and says something about the fact, he says, "I just didn't see the facts. I just didn't see the facts. I'm so sorry." The young man opens his eyes a little bit and he says, "Sir," here's the key, "you didn't want to see the facts."

To your question: when you answer a fool to his folly, you answer a fool to his folly. In other words, you can show him all the facts, the right road, ultimately they've got to want to see the facts. You cannot make them want to see it. From where I'm from, you can take a horse to water but you can't make him drink. You cannot do it. And so there's kind of that, you're walking down the right road, to use that illustration.

Anything else before we close? Alright, any of you adults who are interested in Bible drill, y'all might want to show up next year. It might do you some good. So if you see any of those kids running around, congratulate those guys. They have worked so hard this year on their Bible drill. They did a great job.

Let's pray and we'll close.

Lord, as we go out of here, we are grateful, we are thankful for your word, Lord, not just what it has taught through the ages but what it has taught us tonight, that we can glean truth, we can glean understanding, Lord, that we can have answers to our questions, Lord, that you can show us not just about the Lord's Supper and about those that we struggle with answering questions thereof, but all of the issues of life. Lord, your word made it very clear in Psalm 119:105, it is a lamp to our feet and it is a light to our path. It is in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

God bless. I love y'all but I've got to go to a meeting so I'm not hanging out for a real long time.