

1Tim 24-02-28a

Greetings, it is the 28th of February in this leap year of 2024. We've got one more February day tomorrow. We are continuing our special study in the gospel of the mystery as preached by the apostle Paul, delivered to him by the Lord Jesus Christ personally for our benefit.

And we are looking at the words of the Lord Jesus Christ the application phase of this, this seven fold revelation, seven facets of the gospel uniquely entrusted to Paul are not only interesting in and of themselves, but they have application value. What should we do understanding these truths? What difference should it make in our view of the world? What our responsibilities are as believers? What should we do? What should we not do as stewards of our time and our resources? So this is our study. We are two thirds of the way through the words of the Lord Jesus, because without those, we can't begin to fulfill the mystery.

Part of what the Lord Jesus introduces this new phase, this new dispensation, this new covenant with is the emphasis on having his words and keeping them, his words. And Paul emphasizes this as well. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and studying.

We'll dive in. Father, we're so grateful for another opportunity to spend this time receiving the powerful supply that comes from your word. We know that in the hands of the Holy Spirit, this is what makes it possible for us to live a life beyond our ability that transcends the flesh and the earth and what is temporal and transient, enters us into eternity, lets us begin to enjoy the fruits of eternal life that come to us through the Lord Jesus.

We pray that as we look at your word together this evening, that the Holy Spirit will find us ready pupils. He will be able to impress it on our hearts in a way that produces fruit and results in application and the reflection of your glory. We ask it in Jesus name, amen.

So the words of the Lord Jesus that we have seen thus far, and I've reviewed the first portion of them already once. And of the 30 odd of these that we have, we have covered the first 20. And I'm just going to come right into the next phase, but I want to precede this by pointing out that the deception of the church today is largely predicated on the lack of understanding of what we are looking at.

The way to be deceived is to heed another gospel or to let a man deceive you. Our deceptions come through people. And Jesus said, in the last days, many will come in my name saying that I, Jesus, am he.

They will acknowledge Jesus. And this is the sheep's clothing in which the wolf is dressed. I'm a sheep just like you.

He's the Lord, he's Jesus, he's the King, he's the Messiah. And with that passcode, that entree through the door, they enter in and start wreaking havoc. It's easy to spot somebody that says something bad about the Lord Jesus.

But if they start by affirming him and supporting his identity, we say, well, okay, that's great, we're like-minded. And this is the key to the widespread, almost ubiquitous deception that is going on today. Now, we're not breaking our arm, patting ourselves on the back and saying they're all out of step but us.

It is just a fact that if you look closely at what scripture says, this is not what the church at large, believers who are in the public eye with a platform and a means of distributing their views, they are not saying what the Bible says. And I'm sorry, but we are a Bible church. We look at what the Bible says and we measure the message, whether it is me or anyone else.

Paul says, even if I come and preach a different gospel to you than the one that you heard that you were saved, ignore me. Paul says, it's possible I could fall off the wagon. If I or anyone preaches a different gospel, let them be accursed.

And there are some who began well and got tripped up. Paul tells the, who hindered you? You were running well. And even messengers can begin well and then be distracted, be deflected, be deceived themselves.

And there is a double curse on those who not only allow themselves to be deceived by failure to pay close attention to what scripture says. Warding off the devil is in the details. To modify the saying a little bit.

If you wanna be sure the devil doesn't, look at what he did to the word of God with Eve. Some of it was the word of God, but some was left out and other things were added. That's how the original deception occurred and that playbook is still in use.

So it is important. So I'm just going to read these without comment until we get to the ones we've not yet covered. Number one, when you stand praying, forgive.

Number two, remain in me and I will remain in you. Number three, let your light shine before men. These are imperatives and we should keep these before our eyes.

Are we hearing, heeding, practicing the words of the Lord Jesus? Forgive others, number one. Remain in me, abide in me. And Jesus reiterates a lot of this in the upper room after Judas leaves and he is introducing the transition, the beginning of the church age.

And he is foreshadowing what Paul is going to elucidate in detail. Remain in me and I will remain in you. Number three, let your light shine before men so that they see your good deeds and glorify your father.

If they're glorifying you, you're doing something wrong. Number four, settle matters quickly with an adversary. Settle them quickly.

Number five, and you should have these down already. Cut off the source of sin in your life. If something is causing you to sin, cut it out.

There's people we know that drinking alcohol in and of itself is not a sin, but if it becomes a cause of sin for you, cut it out. Be not drunk with wine. If it loosens your inhibitions and you do things you shouldn't do, if your judgment gets suspended, stay away from that stuff.

It's better to lose out on a glass of this or a shot of that now than be shorted for eternity in areas of blessing and reward and opportunity. It's just not worth it. If your eye offends you, pluck it out.

Hand offends you, cut it off. That's number five. Number six, don't invoke God to bolster your integrity.

Don't swear. Swear not by heaven, it's God's throne, or by the earth, it's his footstool, by Jerusalem. This is all an effort to reinforce something that you say.

You're giving someone an assurance. You're making someone a promise. You are invoking your oath, your vow.

And your demonstrated integrity, your past history and example ought to be enough. If you have to say, by God, I will be there, there is something wrong. Jesus said, do not do that.

That's number six. Number seven, don't resist an evil person. And this needs a little bit of explanation.

We are certainly to resist evil. We resist the devil and he will flee from us. This is resistance for the sake of personal preservation.

This is turning the other cheek. And that is, it requires judgment. If the insult is to us personally, we can let it go.

This is akin to don't bear a grudge. Don't seek vengeance on your own account. Don't try to give as good as you get because of your own pride, because of your need for respect from others and so on.

There are conditions surrounding this. This is specifically if someone slaps your cheek. They're not kidnapping your child.

They're not assaulting your wife. They're not robbing your house. They're not damaging the property of your neighbor.

Jesus didn't say anything about not resisting evil people who are perpetrating genuine crimes. Slapping someone's cheek is not a crime. There is no law against slapping a cheek.

You can say, well, it's assault. Jesus says personal, this was an insult. And if someone is insulting you, Jesus said, don't take measures to try to make sure they never do it again.

If they slap you on one side, let them slap the other. Let them perpetrate their insults. But this is evil that is aimed directly at us personally to humiliate us.

Being slapped in the face was designed to shame or humiliate someone. Remember when Paul was on trial before the high priest and Paul called him a whitewashed wall because he commanded that he be slapped in the presence of, remember that episode in Acts? And when Paul found out he was the priest, he said, I take it back. As rotten and corrupt as you are, you hold an office in the authority structure that God ordained.

And even though the guy was illegitimate and a rascal and was in fact commanding that Paul be slapped contrary to the law, and yet he was trying to judge Paul according to the law. This gets back to this idea. Don't resist an evil person when you yourself are the target and the purpose is humiliation.

There are conditions on this. Number eight is similar and is in the same context. Someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.

Someone forces you to go a mile, go with him too, giving more than is demanded. Once again, this is a personal burden. This is a personal onerous duty that is imposed unfairly and unjustly.

That was number eight. Number nine, love your enemies. You've heard it said, love your neighbor, hate your enemy.

I tell you, love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you. Do you see that this is also of a piece with the preceding two? Those who are your enemies are trying to personally denigrate you, trying to cut you down, trying to damage you, cancel you.

Don't do the eye for an eye and be dragged down to their level. Love them, pray for them, that you may be sons of your father in heaven. When people blaspheme God, he doesn't strike them with lightning and turn them to individual atoms.

They're given space to express that. And this is the idea that Jesus illustrates. God causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

There will be a day of judgment, but it isn't every day. And there is this common grace. And we should be sons of our father in heaven in not taking personally what is an

expression of rejection of God.

So that was number nine. Number 10, give to please God not to be seen. Number 11, pray privately not to be seen.

Number 12 was the Lord's prayer, the disciple's prayer, the model prayer. Number 13, don't fast to be seen by men. All of these are sort of a piece as well.

14, do not store up treasures on earth, moth and rust, thieves, store up treasure in heaven. Take the long view, play the long game. Remember that everything in this life is transient.

Whatever you get, you can't keep. Much better to lay up treasure in heaven where it is permanent. Where your treasure is there, your heart will be also.

And this is actually of a piece with the earlier ones about personal insult and personal attack. If your heart is all about yourself, then you're gonna take personal offense and you're gonna enter into the same kind of evil and sin as is being perpetrated against you. If your heart is with the Lord, you are more interested in His glory and representing the Lord Jesus as a part of His body than personal defense.

And well, nobody can do that to me and get away with it. So where your treasure is, and treasure can be material, it can also be, well, my reputation. What the opinion that others hold of me, I've got to defend, I don't want to be seen as a wuss or a wimp.

I don't want people to believe these false accusations so I've got to take action because I place great stock in how I am perceived by others. The idea is I am much more concerned with how God is perceived as I represent Him on this earth. I am more concerned with how the Lord Jesus is perceived as I represent Him on this earth.

That's the issue, where your treasure is, where what you value resides, that's where your heart is. And your heart will dictate your priorities and your goals and purposes. That was number 14.

Number 15, don't worry about your needs. Don't worry about your life, what you'll eat or drink, your body, what you will wear. Isn't it interesting that the sheep and goats judgment is eating and drinking and what you wear to a large extent in terms of concern for others? So that was number 15.

Don't worry about your material needs. Look at the birds of the air. They don't sow or reap or store away in barns.

Your heavenly father feeds them. Where is your heart? Where is your faith? On what do you rely? Are you confident that my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory? If you are outward looking and interested in the needs of the brethren

and so on. Number 15, number 16, don't worry about tomorrow.

Borrowing trouble from the future is forbidden. We are commanded by the Lord Jesus as one of His words. And this includes all kinds of things.

Well, what if we're wrong and we're not raptured and we enter into the tribulation or the first half of it? Or what if things get really bad? What if it really is an apostasy? What if the economy goes in the handbasket? What if the wrong guy gets elected? What if, what if, what if there's an EMP? What if there's a solar flare? What if the internet goes away? What if, what if? It is one thing to consider a possibility and plan for it and say, I'm gonna take a reasonable step. Ants store food in the summer, not because they're panicky, but because they know winter is coming. Jesus said, work while there's light.

The hour is coming when it's dark and no one can see to work. So while you have an opportunity to set aside, to be prudent, be reasonable, be balanced, be calm, but say, you know, any number of things could happen. It doesn't have to be the economy goes bad.

Maybe my personal economy goes bad. Some unforeseen debilitation. I get hit by an uninsured motorist or whatever.

In any case, it's prudent. This is why we pay for insurance and are glad to do so, but do not worry about tomorrow. Don't borrow trouble that hasn't even happened yet.

You can look back, all of us can look back in our lives and say, I was so concerned. I couldn't sleep. I was just gnawing on that old bone in my mind and it never came to pass.

Come to find out I had nothing to worry about and think of the stewardship of time and that time that was wasted on personal worry instead of sending a prayer up to the Lord. Lord, this seems to be a concern. If I need to do something, please put the option in my path and shine a light on it so I will know that I should do this for myself or my family.

I am relying on you to give me guidance and a prompting. If there is something I should be doing, I am looking to you to give me the wisdom. Otherwise, I'm gonna continue to march and I am not going to worry.

I'm not gonna fret. I'm not gonna stew. Do not worry, trust God.

Ask God for guidance and wisdom and it is amazing. Promptings will come, information will come, opportunities will come, and provision to exploit those opportunities will come with those potentials. And we'll say, wow, I was just thinking about this last week.

I sent it to the Lord. Suddenly, look at this. Here's this thing.

Thank you, Lord. Do that. But in no case, let the uncertainties of the future destabilize

our inner peace, our righteousness, our pursuit of reflection of the glory of God through Christ by representing the Lord Jesus as his body.

Don't worry about tomorrow. That's number 16. Number 17.

Jesus said, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. This is not the kind of kingdom preaching and talk that is going on today. Let's build the kingdom on earth.

Let's try to implement kingdom values and try to make sure there's a chicken in every pot and a milk and honey flowing for everybody. Seek the kingdom of God. This is the same as laying up treasure in heaven.

They are synonymous. They are slightly different in their perspective, but they mean the same thing because Jesus said, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. These are the words of the Lord Jesus.

Seek his righteousness. This is personal righteousness. This is not social justice, but there are, I can think of over a dozen authors who are putting forth the idea that anytime you see righteousness in the New Testament, it means justice.

And not just justice, but social justice. In the Beatitudes, blessed are those who hunger and thirst after social justice. One of the problems with that is, look at the rest of the sentence.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after social justice for they shall be filled. I don't want to be filled with social justice. I want society to be filled with social justice.

But the predicate of that beatitude makes no sense if you re-translate dikaiosune as social justice. It just doesn't. Personal righteousness.

If you hunger and thirst after personal righteousness and you access the word of God and prayerfully seek the illuminating, empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit to achieve righteousness by faith, what are you filled with? Not social justice. I am filled with righteousness. Paul says the Lord Jesus has been made unto us righteousness and peace and sanctification.

Those are personal. Those happen in my soul. They don't happen in society.

And it's the very same word. Christ has been made unto us dikaiosune, personal righteousness. Righteousness that stands up at the judgment seat of Christ.

So don't let anybody re-translate dikaiosune as social justice. It is a lie and it is a deception that has deflected many a believer from concern for their own soul and getting lumber out of their own eye to go out and try to pick moats out of society's vision. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

The righteousness that is on offer to us to be filled with because of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith in the words and works of the Lord Jesus. That is number 17. Number 18, do not judge or you too will be judged.

We talked about this last time. Number 19, do not give what is holy to the dogs. Do not throw pearls before swine.

Number 20, ask and it shall be given. Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be open.

Number 21, this is enter through the narrow gate. Enter through the narrow gate. Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction.

Many there are who enter through it. Small is the gate, narrow is the road that leads to life. Only a few find it.

Matthew 7, 13 and 14. We have covered this enough times. I don't think I need to elaborate it, but notice once again, I will just make this one point, which is kind of a new point about this particular command of the Lord Jesus.

It is an imperative, enter. If you look at the parallel in Luke, it says strive to enter. You gotta work at it.

There is the pull of the world away from the narrow road. There is the clamor of the crowd that is on the wide road and going through the wide gate. Strive to enter through that narrow gate.

But you will notice that this command, does God say, try to herd people through the narrow gate? Encourage your brothers to enter through the narrow gate. Go to the masses. The fields are white for harvest.

Harvest that grain and shove it through the narrow gate. Who is Jesus commanding to get through the narrow gate? You, me, followers of the Lord Jesus, members of the body of Christ in this age are to individually focus on getting ourselves individually down that skinny road and through that narrow gate. Jesus doesn't say, grab a few people and drag them through as you go.

It is all we can do. We have to work to get ourselves through that gate. This is not a command to look out upon society in general or the church in particular or fellow believers specifically and say, like James, instead of somebody that's in trouble, pull them out of the fire.

He doesn't say, when you see someone straying off the path, grab them by the arm and pull them along with you back onto the road. There is no command like this. We have our hands full and each believer is individually responsible for his own soul.

Let God accomplish blessing by association. Others can see our life. This goes back to

the lamp that's on a lamp stand, the city that is on a hill.

Let your light so shine before men. They will see what you are doing and be drawn. If they are drawn to light and light is reflected in our life, they will be drawn to us.

You cannot leave the light and enter the darkness and try to pull them back. It's not our job. It's not our calling.

There is not a single imperative anywhere in the New Testament that says to do this. We have our hands full, keeping ourselves straight. Let God work out whatever influence our life may have on others.

We can speak the truth to one another in love, more about one another when we get to a future command of the Lord. But our primary concern, not to say that we can't encourage one another unto love and good works it's all about the most overlooked phrase in the Bible and we're gonna cover it here shortly is one another. One another doesn't, the ones that are a part of another isn't planet wide.

It's not country wide. It's not statewide. It's not county wide.

It's not city wide. There is a specific group that is referenced when the New Testament says one another. Jesus is going to distinguish this.

And so is Paul. We'll see it here in a minute. That's number 21.

Get yourself down the narrow road through the straight gate. You enter, you. You focus on you.

This reminds me of the instruction they give swimmers. If you are a lifeguard especially, but if you're swimming and somebody starts drowning, you have got to first and foremost ensure that you are not going to sink. When the masks drop in a distressed aircraft, what do they say? You put yours on first.

Take the lumber out of your eye. You will see clearly to help someone with a small speck that's in theirs. Me first, when it comes to attention to spiritual things, I've got to be sure I'm doing well before I'm in any position to help someone else.

So that's number 21. Number 22, watch out for false prophets. Beware false prophets.

It's a command of the Lord Jesus. You say, well, we don't have prophets today, so I don't have to worry about, you know, deceit. Yes, we do.

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing. They don't put a big picture of a ravening wolf on the front of their books and say, this is me.

Read my book. They come to you in sheep's clothing. And at a glance, they seem to be

fine.

This requires some looking. We have in the past named names of people who are perpetrating deception in the name of Christ. They're saying, this is a better way.

This is, you know, a new and better Christianity. We have made progress. We are progressive.

We have deconstructed the bad, and we are reconstructing the good. We are doing for Christianity what Jesus did for Judaism. This is the argument.

And it is wolves in sheep's clothing. They come to you in that, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. And it is amazing to me.

And I could name 10 or 12 names right off the top of my head of people who have brought this message. And because it resonates with people who want a quick fix, and people who want to have a spirituality by works. Spirituality by works is always, always easier than genuine spirituality.

Because all I have to do is tick a box. The absurdly simple example is, when I was a kid going to Sunday school at a denominational church, there's a little envelope. Did you bring your Bible? Did you put in some offering? Did you bring a friend? And there's one other box, I forget what it was.

But I think, did you get here? If you attended. Well, you could check these little boxes, put a quarter in the envelope and hand it in, and stick in your thumb, pull out a plum. What a good boy am I? And I'm a good Christian.

I went to church, brought my Bible, gave offering and brought a friend. So I'm done. It's easy.

Daily attention to making sure I am on the narrow road, looking forward to that straight gate that leads to life, that I am in fact laying up treasure in heaven and not treasure on earth, that I am a good steward of my time, that I'm paying attention to my soul and thinking about Psalm 51, confessing my sins, asking God to purge me and cleanse me and thoroughly equip me for every good work through bringing to my mind by the power of the Holy Spirit, what I have learned and how it applies, stewardship of my time, stewardship of my resources, stewardship of my relationships, being what I should be with all of my personal connections. That's a full-time job and it requires dedication and it requires attention and it requires prayer. So those who years ago, they had a thing called easy believism.

Oh, you just believe in Jesus. You got a ticket to heaven and you can quit. Watch out for those who are offering.

See, you can sit in a chair on social media and support this and eschew that and praise this and attack that. You haven't done anything. You haven't gone anywhere.

You're just talking. You're talking a big fight. And you say, what a wonderful believer I am.

Look at the influence I'm having on the world. You're not having any influence at all. And for every minute that you spend analyzing and reading and quoting and commenting, what's going on in your own soul? Are you meditating on the word? Are you seeking and cultivating the active ministry of the Holy Spirit in the responsibilities you have in your immediate periphery, the opportunities, the stewardship? The internet is the biggest new way to be subjective and practice subjectivity ever invented.

There's never been such a wide road. You want to talk about a wide road? Just put in parentheses, the internet. That's the wide road.

So watch out for false prophets, number 22. Number 23, do not despise other believers on the assumption that they are not as far along. See that you do not look down on one of these little ones.

And Jesus has a child before him. Do not look down on one of these little ones. I tell you, their angels in heaven always see the face of my father in heaven.

This is a really interesting scene, and we've covered it when we did the Gospel of Matthew, especially looking down on one of these little ones because they're angels. And this is where people come to this to say, everybody has a guardian angel and children have a guardian angel and so on. Angel means messenger.

And the idea that Jesus is emphasizing here, he mentions heaven twice. If you despise one of these little ones, and it could be a literal child, it could also be someone who is young in the faith, someone who hasn't learned what you've learned, and doesn't know what you've known. But the idea is do not despise, do not look down on.

This is intrinsically arrogant. You see people do this all the time. You know, in the military, somebody came in after you.

Well, they're a boot, and it doesn't matter how many years you're both in the service. Well, they came later, they're not as far along. And there's this sort of false status that, well, I've been here longer, or I know more, or I'm somehow elevated, and you're behind me in progress, therefore you're to be despised.

It's a false arrogance. There was a time when you were that, did you want to be despised and look down on? No, but in our actual periphery, it is easy to be dismissive of the opinion, or even the advice of someone on the basis of, I know more than you. I've seen more than you.

I have more experience than you. I know what I'm talking about, and for some reason you don't. There is a danger in allowing arrogance and a lack of teachability, a lack of, they like to say vulnerability.

It's not a matter of being vulnerable. It's a matter of being a good listener and taking the opinions and the thoughts of others into account and not being dismissive of them for bad reasons. To look down on a child, to despise a child is to dismiss them for invalid reasons.

To not be sensitive, to not listen, to not think about their needs, to not think about what might benefit them. And this could be somebody that's older. Jesus could have just as easily grabbed a granny out of the crowd and said, see that you do not look down on one of these widows, one of these old ones.

It isn't that they are a child and children are somehow special. It is that they are easily dismissed. In the culture of the day, women and children were automatically at a lower plane in the arrogance of a patriarchal society that no longer understood why God made it patriarchal.

Not so that you could be dismissive and insensitive to women and children, but so that you could be their benefactor and their provider and their protector. And you had a job in being a steward of something that is valuable in God's eyes. Children are valuable in God's eyes.

Women are valuable in God's eyes. And entrusting their care to men doesn't give men an opportunity to be arrogant and dismissive. And finding them despicable and not worthy of attention, quite the opposite.

God has taken something precious to himself and entrusted it to men's care. So this applies to everyone. To be dismissive or disinterested or to despise and look down on a thing for shallow and really untenable reasons, we need to examine our life and see if we are just automatically writing something off.

Somebody's of the other political party. Somebody is of a different social persuasion. Somebody is this or that.

And we shut down and shut off communication on that basis. And we don't listen to what they have to say, is dangerous. That's number 23.

Do not despise others for invalid reasons. The example is a child. And Jesus says, remember there is a report going on in heaven of how you treat others.

And if you are being unfair, unkind, dismissive, arrogant, abusive to others, that report, the messenger is seeing the face of the father. That report goes into heaven. Don't think you're getting away with something.

And don't fail to consider the heavenly evaluation of your earthly treatment of others. Every interaction we have with someone, if we become impatient, if we become short, if we are hypercritical, if we are judgmental, what are we doing? We are failing to remember that this is being reported and evaluated in heaven. This goes back to Jesus' parable of the servant that was forgiven the great debt and then he refused to forgive his underling servant of a small debt.

The master heard about it. The angel came and reported to the master, you've got a servant that is unmerciful. And the master said, well, if you're not merciful, I'm not going to be merciful either.

And as I've said so many times, the scary thing, he unforgave that servant's debt. This is of a piece with that. Don't despise those who are seemingly beneath or below or don't have as much to commend them.

That's number 23. 24, do not exalt yourself. And so many of these connect and they overlap.

They're of a piece. It's like a beautiful rose that's got these petals that the rose wouldn't be complete without each one of them, but they reflect and they connect to each other. 24, do not exalt yourself.

This we've talked about before. Don't let people call you rabbi, master. You have only one master and you are all brothers.

Doesn't matter what your gift is. Doesn't matter what your standing is or what your function is in the body of Christ. We are all connected.

We are all saved by grace. What does any of us have that we did not receive? Shouldn't be elevating anybody and we shouldn't be de-elevating anybody. We shouldn't be looking down on anyone in the body and we shouldn't be looking up to anyone in the body.

We are all brothers. Do not call anyone on earth father for you have one father and he is in heaven. This doesn't mean you can't call your dad father.

This is one of those anyone's that doesn't mean anyone. And what is the context? He says in the spiritual realm, don't elevate someone in that community and call him a father and give him some sort of structural authority that he does not have. Don't call anyone on earth father.

Obviously exception is my dad. He's my father. I can say, I'd like you to meet my father, Denny.

But in the community that is bound together by faith in Christ, don't elevate someone

and call them master. You've got one master. You're brothers.

Don't call anyone father. You have one father. He's in heaven.

Nor are you to be called teacher. It's interesting that it gets switched. You are not to be called rabbi.

You are not to be called teacher. Do not call anyone else father. This absolutely eviscerates the entire Catholic system.

Eviscerates it. It should not exist. They have failed to pay attention to the details of what Jesus said.

It's heinous. It's blatant. It's unconscionable.

It's unforgivable. And the abuses that have been perpetrated by that humanly invented system stem from not listening to the words of the Lord. That's why we are spending so much time on them.

I, as an individual, don't want to accidentally or by failing to pay attention, perpetrate the kinds of errors that have been historically committed by not listening to the words of the Lord. The one who has my words and keeps them. He's the one who loves me.

So, don't be called rabbi. Don't call anyone else father. Don't let someone elevate you.

And don't elevate others. We are brothers. We, as body of Christ, have different functions, but we are level.

We can be grateful for all of us for various reasons. Grateful for what God might do by the function of someone's spiritual gift. And God sends grace to us through our fellow believers.

And that's wonderful. Appreciation is wonderful. Elevation is not.

Elevation is not. The only person who should be elevated in our minds is the Lord Jesus Christ. And through him, God the Father, and appreciation for the spirit that both the Father and the Son have given to us for our benefit.

Whoever exalts himself will be humbled. Whoever humbles himself will be exalted. If God decides he wants to exalt one of us in the future, that's his call.

I'm not looking at that in the present or really even in the future. If we exalt ourselves, we are gonna be humbled. And I don't want that.

So, that was number 24. Number 25. This goes back to reconcile yourself to those who have an issue, settle disputes.

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. If he will not listen, try again with a few others.

If he won't listen to them, tell it to the assembly, the ecclesia. There's no church when Jesus spoke these words. There's no such thing.

Nobody would have understood it that way. An ecclesia in Jesus' day was a larger group, the concerned group. This could be the family.

This could be members of the clan. This could be those with whom you fellowship in a local synagogue. It is the concerned and knowledgeable people, the group, the ecclesia, those who know each other.

You don't call in a bunch of strangers. You don't get a jury that's never heard the issue. There's a few who are most closely knowledgeable.

There is a wider group that is concerned and has an interest, has a stake in the outcome. Tell it to the group. If he refuses to listen even to the group, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

And this goes back to the dogs and the swine that Jesus spoke of earlier. There are those that we should identify as not practicing an active faith, not interested in fellowship and walking down the narrow road themselves. And if they are not willing to enter into and cultivate the spirit of unity and the bond of peace, separate.

Paul himself turned people over to Satan. If someone's turned over to Satan, guess what he's not doing? He's not coming to church. He's not sharing a fellowship meal.

Paul says, these guys, Hymenaeus, Alexander, Philetus, this guy that's sleeping with his stepmother or whatever, they're outside, heathen tax collector status. We are to discriminate, we are to discern and we are to separate from those whose fellowship, association with whom degrades and corrodes our own faith. It becomes a distraction, becomes a source of sin and cluster sin.

So this is how to settle disputes. Number 26, do not oppose other groups. Man driving out demons, don't stop him, Jesus said.

To his own master, he stands or falls. Who are you to judge another man's servant? It is a parallel idea. Number 27, trust God.

Say to the mountain, throw yourself into the sea. This is the basis upon which we are trusting God. We are claiming a definite and clear promise, the conditions of which we have met, a principle, a doctrine.

We are far enough along that we can make a claim on God's power and God's grace and

God's action. This is not any old thing you ask for in prayer. You believe because you are standing on the rock and you know where of you speak, having faith in God.

28, good Samaritan, when you see a neighbor, have mercy on him, Jesus said, go and do likewise. Number 29, this is so emphatic and a summary of so many of the others. This is John 13, 34, a new commandment I give to you that you love one another just as I have loved you.

You are also to love one another, John 13, 34, reiterated in John 15, 12. My command is this, love each other as I have loved you. There is an intrinsic characterization and modification in that command.

And that's what we'll look at when we come back from the break. These words of Christ are important. You cannot live the Christian life apart from them.

You cannot be approved in God's sight. You cannot experience the indwelling of Jesus Christ in the indwelling of the father without knowing, practicing these words. And to do that, we first have to know them, review them, and then we have to look at our own life in their light and ask ourselves hard questions.

Am I actually pursuing these goals and endeavoring to fulfill these commands? If I'm not, I can expect what happens when you drop off the cliff that is just inside the wide gate from the broad road, the narrow road and the straight gate that leads to life. The road itself is these words. This is the road.

Depart from these words, you're departing from the narrow road. And these are understood and are the foundation and the condition on which the gospel of the mystery that Paul preaches are founded. More about this when we come back from the break.