

Daniel 06-01-15a

On this 15th day of January 2006, we will continue our study in the book of Daniel, looking at some of the specifics of Daniel's vision in chapter seven and then moving into chapter eight. We cross a major dividing line in the book as we move from seven to eight, very distinctly marked, especially if you're looking at it in the original. Let's take a moment as we approach our formal study of the word of God this morning to go to the Lord in prayer.

Father, it is such an amazing blessing to live in this time in history, to live in the country in which we live, to enjoy the blessings, the prosperity, the relative peace and security that are ours as American citizens, living in this first decade of the new millennium. We thank you for all of those things. We know that you have given them to us for a reason.

There are believers around the world who are oppressed, who are persecuted, who are targets because of their faith. They are minorities in a religious atmosphere that harbors extremism and violence. We are not subject to those oppositional forces.

We are not in fear or in danger. We know that this is not an accident. It's not a happenstance.

You have given us time and you have given us potential. You've given us opportunity to pursue our understanding of your word for a reason. We know that we prepare ourselves now to grow in grace and knowledge and to lay hold of righteousness by faith.

We know that in so doing we prepare ourselves for service and for reflecting your glory in the ages that are to come. We pray that we will be constantly aware, watchful, and prayerful in availing ourselves of this great opportunity, that we will be as diligent as those who find themselves under persecution, that we will be as motivated and as dedicated as any saint in any period of human history to pursue those things that you have granted to us as potentials. We thank you for our president, our senators and congressmen, our judiciary who are believers and who seek to fulfill their duties in the light of your word and in accordance with your will, who are men of prayer, who are men of integrity, and who are doing their best to shine the light of faith in an increasingly secular world and to discharge their duties in a way that is honoring to you and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray a special blessing on them. We know that they are not always able to avail themselves of the opportunity we have of detailed and in-depth and virtually unlimited study of your word. We pray that you will be with them, lead them and guide them, activate the doctrines and principles and promises that are in their souls and enable them, like Gideon with the 300, to achieve a great victory through the unlimited power of your presence.

We pray for those who are in harm's way both at home and abroad. We are grateful that our nation and our civilization, our communities have not been subject to terror attacks. We know that this is by your divine will and according to your plan that we have been able to thwart and prevent so many of these efforts.

We pray that you will continue to give us this respite and this time to nurture and nourish our souls. We ask your blessing on us as a local fellowship in the coming year that we will see both individually and collectively the opportunities that you have put before us and the ways that we can be a light shining in a dark place. We know that you work sometimes by many and sometimes by few and we want to be ready and leaning forward in an aggressive manner to accomplish every part of your will for our lives.

We pray that our study this morning will contribute to that goal, that each one who partakes of this portion of your word will find it a source of refreshment, of encouragement, of strength, and of guidance in the days ahead. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Our scripture reading this morning comes from the letter to Timothy, the second letter to Timothy. We want to look specifically at what the apostle Paul tells Timothy, who is a young man with much of his life ahead of him. Paul is rapidly approaching the end of his own life and he is imparting the essentials of Christian viewpoint.

How do you look at life? It is increasingly difficult to maintain what we like to call the divine viewpoint of life, God's perspective on how we ought to live and what we should value and how we should choose, how we should discern, because we live in a media-heavy world. If you were David out there in Old Testament days watching the flock, you could spend days and weeks all by yourself meditating on the word of God with no real challenges and no real alternatives being presented. You were free to meditate in a deep and extended fashion on the truth that you had learned at the feet of your parents.

I think Jesse and Mrs. Jesse trained their sons in the ways of God. This is one of the reasons that family was honored and one of the reasons that Jesse himself is mentioned so many times in scripture. You have people whose parents are never mentioned, and yet David is so often called the son of Jesse.

The Lord Jesus himself is the root shoot from the stump of Jesse. This is no accident. Jesse was a great, great man of faith and trained his sons, and David would not have been David without his father Jesse.

Many of us have the opportunity, whether we are parents or those who have influence over little ones in our extended family, to serve as an example and an encouragement in that area. This is what Paul the apostle is doing for his son in the faith, Timothy. He says in chapter 3 of 2 Timothy, and this is our scripture reading this morning, know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.

For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Now those four verses, there is not an adjective in there, there is not a phrase of description in there that does not sum up conditions in our country at large today, especially in

our metropolitan areas, in our large population centers. Is there anyone that could seriously argue that men in these days are not lovers of themselves in every sense of the word? If you can stand it and take a look at what the movie awards are going to be like this year, the Golden Globes and Emmys and that whole thing, I think we've got the Emmy awards show coming up in March that's going to review all the movies of the past year.

This is going to be an unprecedented year for the glorification of homosexuality. If you look at the front runners for movie awards, and of course in one sense movies are trivial but in another sense they really sum up and in many ways distill and define the things that are popular and current in our culture. One movie that has already received a lot of nominations and a lot of buzz as they say is the biographical movie about Truman Capote who was a flaming homosexual.

It's all about his life and his love affairs and so on. Several awards for that. This cowboy movie where these sheep herding guys get interested in each other is going to be up for all kinds of awards and people are going to be touting that because homosexuality is out of the closet now and people are equating it with feminism and women's rights and with civil rights for minorities of racial and ethnic status.

This is just another minority group that has been oppressed and downtrodden and they are linked with these historic balancings of the scale. It is part of the evolution of our society that groups should come to have equal standing as our educational system and so on permits. I think it's kind of dumb to have people voting who have no education and no understanding and you can argue for all different kinds of systems on how the vote ought to be granted.

Should people own something in this country and have a stake in it and be taxpayers to vote? Should they be chipping in with money in order to be able to vote? Can you be receiving all kinds of money from the government in order to have a vote? That's a question I'm not coming down on but it's been proposed that as in civilizations and days of the past, people who had a stake in the country, who owned something, who paid taxes on something, had the privilege of determining the direction of the country and how that money was going to be spent. Those who are receiving the money then also get to vote on how the money is spent. That's sort of a different thing.

I leave that for your well-informed analysis. But the fact remains that in these last days, and lest you think I've strayed too far away, we are still in 2 Timothy chapter 3. Know this, in the last days perilous times will come. It is a dangerous time when people are lovers of themselves.

Our society has been promoting this for four or five decades, really ever since World War II and the post-war prosperity and the baby boom and everything else that took place right after that war. We have become ingrown. We have become interested in self-gratification.

Our technology has bent itself toward granting every comfort and every luxury and it's in the post-war years that we got the automatic transmission and central air conditioning and

everything else you can imagine for creature comforts, entertainments. We went from 78 records to quadraphonic stereo and sense around to watch our movies. None of these things are inherently wrong.

It's a great thing. I marvel at the technology and I love air conditioning and hot showers as well as the next guy, indoor flush plumbing and so on. But, perilous times when we become lovers of ourselves.

Because what happens? This is first in the list and I'm dwelling on it for a reason. What is the first and great commandment that transcends dispensations? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. If you're a lover of yourself, that commandment is out the window.

And the second, which is like unto it, is to love who? Love your neighbor as you love yourself. You start out loving yourself because, remember that song, I Will Never Get Over. I forget, Whitney Houston or somebody sang that song.

The greatest love you can have is to love yourself. It was all over the radio. It was in the top ten.

It was on the charts for weeks and weeks. And not only having an irritating, abrasive, and obnoxious tune, but the words, you know, the greatest love. I don't even know the name.

I don't know who sang it. I have this sort of reflexive expulsion of that song whenever it comes on my radio. I'm not sure I've ever even heard it all the way through because as soon as I hear that whiny, high-pitched, the greatest love you can have is to love yourself, that is the devil's own lie.

That's what got Eve in trouble. That's what got Satan kicked out of the throne room of God is loving himself. We don't have a self-esteem problem in the sense of lacking it.

We have a self-esteem problem in the sense of having it. You have to really be careful about what people say about self-esteem. A lot of people who are diagnosed as not having self-esteem, you know what they have? They have too much self-esteem.

Too much focus on self and I feel badly about the way I am viewed or I feel badly about myself. I feel badly about my failures. I feel badly about it's me, me, me, I, I, I. Men will become lovers of self.

This is the problem and our society caters to it. You can pay people all kinds of money to sit and listen to you go on and on about yourself because it's our, all of us, it's our favorite subject. Men will become lovers of self and he says perilous times will come.

Now it's a hard thing. My favorite subject is myself. I love to think about myself and so do you, every single one of you.

So don't sit there playing poker saying, well, you know, that's a, I can, I know somebody else

has got that problem. I have that problem. You have that problem.

So don't be sitting there acting like the Cheshire cat. Perilous times will come. Men will be lovers of themselves.

We all start out being lovers of ourselves. It's not something we come down with. It's something we're born with and we spend our life trying to minimize it.

It's like somebody who's a cripple learning to live with their disability. You've seen these people with no arms that learned to turn on faucets and make toast and drive and all that with their feet. Well, we're sort of like the armless person.

We start out with this inability to get away from focusing on ourselves and it is impossible. A lot of psychiatry and psychology and pharmacology spends its time trying to get people off of focus on themselves and, you know, therapy. I don't know if you keep track of what's going on in the world, but the shock jock, Howard Stern, that's been on radio and in some cases television trying to do the most shocking and outrageous I won't even tell you the kinds of stuff that he does or the kind of language that he uses or the subjects that he addresses, but if you can imagine a perversity.

He has had it and talked about it in explicit detail on the radio and later on television. He is the most fined person in broadcast history. He has had to pay more fines to the FCC for his, and this is his stock in trade, this is what he does.

You know, old former mayor, what's his name that has that TV show and people fight on it and that's all they do. Who's that guy? Yeah, Jerry Springer. I kept thinking Maury Povich, but he's like a Jerry Springer wannabe.

But, you know, that's his stock in trade. Jerry Springer gets people who are mad at each other, you know, what a lot of people term out of the lower classes and just get them up there and let them duke it out. Well, this is what Howard Stern does.

Well, he has now left the public broadcast airwaves because of FCC constraints and a lot of people have dropped the show. So now he's on satellite radio and there is no FCC control over what is said and what's done on that. And so he's had a lot of publicity in the last few weeks trying to get this, it's on the Sirius, not S-E-R-I-O-U-S, but S-I-R-I-U-S, the Sirius broadcasting over satellite.

But they've interviewed him and so on and I normally try to avoid him, but I saw him being interviewed and the guy is in therapy and has been for years. He goes and spends his time with the talking doctor. I don't know how many hundreds of thousands of dollars that he spent, but men will be lovers of themselves and we have all kinds of components of the society that cater to this, that will tell you, oh yes, you deserve this, you need this, you justify this.

People will sell you books, people will have you watch movies. Our culture is soaked in it and we

have to be aware. Now there is legitimate concern for self.

You are a child of God. You have been redeemed. Jesus Christ came and bled on the cross and atoned for you and for me.

We have value to God. We are made in the image of God and God is in the business of restoring us to that image. What I'm saying does not devalue us as people, but we have to have a divine perspective on who we are and where our value is.

Our value is not in what we think of ourselves and not in what other people think of us. Our value is in what God thinks of us. That's the eternal perspective.

At the judgment, your family, or your customers, or your schoolmates, or your employers, your peers are not going to be voting. They're not going to be sitting there in the audience like World's Funniest Home Videos with a button and okay, press your button. Who's a good guy? Who's a bad guy? There is no democracy.

There is no panel. There is no jury at the judgment. Whose opinion, whose evaluation counts at the judgment? It's not mine and it's not yours and it's not any other living human beings.

It is God and God alone. That judgment determines the eternal future. Everything we are, what kind of resurrection body are we going to have, what kind of life are we going to have, what kind of opportunities are we going to have? You look at a child whose toddler years going into grade school, moving through kindergarten into first and second grade, that general time frame, four to six to seven years old, and you look at that and you say here's a little potential human being.

Here's somebody that's going to be moving into society. They need skills. They need knowledge.

I want to put them in a good school if they're my child or if I see them running around the neighborhood. Children just tug at the heart strings of every normal human being, right? We always save the children. UNICEF, on and on and on.

Christian Children's Fund. Everybody has a concern for children, right? Why? Their life is ahead of them and we want them to get the advantages, to get the benefits that will set them up for life, right? Everybody in their right mind wants this because their life is ahead of them. You say they need nurture.

They need education. They need encouragement and love and to be enfolded. Hillary wrote the book It Takes a Village.

Why? Because she cares about children. Her ideas on it are screwed up, but one could argue that her heart's in the right place. Everybody cares about children.

Jerry Lewis and his Muscular Dystrophy Foundation. The guy has poured zillions of hours and

zillions of heartfelt efforts, money, into muscular dystrophy. Who do you see? He doesn't bring old 50-year-old geezers with muscular dystrophy.

It's children. They are the poster child. We don't have poster geezer.

We have poster child, right? Why? Because it tugs at our heartstrings. Think about this. What is the title for you and me? But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become what? Children of God.

Why are we called children of God? Because we are the children whose future is ahead of us. Now if you care about little human children and what's going to happen to them and you see these horrific crimes committed against children. There have been some in the news this past week.

I won't even detail them. They're horrific. It's shocking in the true sense of the word to see how some deranged people will treat children.

But we care about that. Well, what about our own souls? We are the children of God. We have value to God and we have an obligation to the children of God, to ourselves and to each other to look ahead and provide education and nurture and provision for the future.

This life is so short. It's like kindergarten. A lot of kindergarten now is what? Half a year? This life compared to eternity is so short and we are the children of God in it.

If you care about children, we ought to be caring about each other and about ourselves. Love the Lord your God. It's important to him.

We're his children. If you were babysitting or caring for someone's child, how careful are you? If you're in your right mind, you're every bit as careful as if it's your own child. If somebody says, well, I've got to go away.

Can you watch my child for the day? It just sends me into condition orange. I worry about everything. If some child is spending the day at my house, I'm looking at the pool.

I'm looking at sharp objects. I'm trying to figure out is there any safety hazard because my children know their way around my environment. Maybe this one doesn't.

Is there a place they can fall? Is there a place they can hurt themselves? Is there old food in the fridge? You just go through and check everything. Why? Because you care about that child. Why? Because normally you're good friends with the parents and you feel an obligation to them to do right by their child.

It's their most precious possession. And it's your love, not only for the child, but for the parent. Well, I'm trying to give us a bit of fresh traction as we look at this in the last days.

We are in the last days. Anybody who doesn't think we're in the last days is nuts. We are in the

last days.

Perilous times. It's dangerous times. There are hazards for the children of God.

Why? Men will be lovers of themselves. Lovers of money. Love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, Jesus said.

All kinds of evil. Covetousness is idolatry. What is the single biggest sin that plagued the nation of Israel all through their history until they were released from captivity after the Babylonians? Idolatry.

That's what they were warned about time and again. When they came out of Egypt, God said, you've got to go in. Why? Everybody says, oh, the God of the Old Testament, he's so mean.

He's so violent and unkind and unloving. The God of the Old Testament has this reputation as being this horrible God. Why? Because he said, go in and wipe everybody out.

Kill the women. Kill the children. Kill the animals.

Kill everything that moves. They used to have this thing in the military where if it moves, salute it. If it doesn't move, paint it.

If you can't paint it, polish it. Words to that effect. Well, Israelites, when they went into the land of Canaan, were to kill everything that moves.

Why? People who get all horrified at the God of the Old Testament never ask themselves, why did God give this command? Is it just delight? Is he kind of pulling the wings off of flies and saying, well, let's take one group of people and have them kill the other people. That'll be fun. I mean, it's like a cock fight or something.

Like a dog fight or like these primitive countries over in the Pacific Rim where they just take animals and pit them against each other until one of them kills the other or maims the other and knocks it into bloody unconsciousness. Is that how God is? Why did God say, wipe these people out? There's a reason. They are incorrigible.

They were sacrificing their children to Molech. They were burning them alive. Archaeologists have found throughout the Israelite area, I hesitate to call it Palestine because it's really a misnomer, but you know what I'm talking about when I say Palestine.

Archaeological digs in Hezron and Tel Dan and a lot of these other places, they have found burnt human bones, little bitty bones. One of the things about human bones is if you die naturally and you're buried in the ground, your bones tend to disintegrate. Bones that have been cooked or charred in a fire change and last a lot longer.

And so many times they can go try to dig up a cemetery and if they have not been embalmed or preserved in some way, the bones are gone. But if they've been charred and passed through

the fire, they survive and the charred ends are there. And that's what they find in Tel after Tel after Tel in the land, the former land of Canaan, that's what they find, these charred bones in piles, in heaps.

And it's this Molech human sacrifice. Men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money. Why did they sacrifice their children? They wanted the gods to bless their crops and children were nine a dozen, especially female children, were devalued.

And well, you know, let's send her into the fire and the gods will smile on me and I'll make more money. Lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters. There is the worst level of arrogance in terms of touting of self in our modern culture in amongst youth.

There's no shame anymore. And you say, well, blame and shame, that's an awful thing. Not always.

Some things we ought to be ashamed of. Remember, people used to say shame on you. When's the last time you heard anybody say shame on you? They don't say it anymore.

Why? Shame has gone out as a, you know, you can take anything and make it bad. There's evil shame. There's bad shame.

If you're ashamed of things that you don't have any business being ashamed of, that's bad. But there is healthy shame. If you're supposed to do a thing, you promise to do a thing, you commit yourself and say, oh yeah, I'll be there when you fall, I will catch you.

And then you see a balloon float by and you turn around and the person falls and you don't catch them. You ought to be ashamed. That's shameful conduct.

And when we commit ourselves and make a promise and we don't keep it, we ought to be ashamed. Men who boast about themselves had no shame. You look at the hearings that they've had for Judge Alito, who thankfully is going to be confirmed for the U.S. Supreme Court, and I don't give a flying hoot in a rain barrel about his views on abortion.

I think it is just nuts that Christians around the country have made this a one issue deal. Well, we think he's a closet anti-Roe v. Wade guy, so we want rah, rah, go Alito. It's nuts.

Look at the docket for the U.S. Supreme Court. How many hundreds of cases do they hear? How many thousands of cases can a Supreme Court Justice potentially hear during his career? You look at some of these people that have been on there forever. How many cases have they heard? How many opinions have they rendered and written and dissented from and everything else that have nothing, not one whit to do with abortion? I'm as against abortion as anybody, maybe not for the same reasons, but this is the one third of our government.

All kinds of things come up before the Supreme Court, and you need somebody who has got a judicial philosophy that adheres to the Constitution of the United States that was written by

believers who understood the principles of the Word of God. Don't let anybody tell you they were deists and theists and this and the other. They were believers, and their thinking was grounded in the Word of God.

Read their letters. Read their writings, and I don't care what they say about whether God exists or whatever. Their thinking, their background, their culture at the time was rooted and grounded in the Word of God.

They were like a tree planted by the rivers of water, and it brought forth this great fruit of the Constitution, and the Constitution has endured and made us the greatest nation on the planet for one reason. It is imbued with divine principles of government. That's how the thing was created, and the judiciary has a responsibility, especially at the federal and Supreme Court levels, of properly interpreting the Constitution.

I don't want him coming in there with a predisposition one way or another. I want him to interpret the Constitution the way it was written. That's what he's supposed to do, and that's what he's going to do, thankfully.

That's what Judge Roberts is going to do also, and President Bush is batting two out of two in terms of getting men on the court, because I don't see any way that he's not going to be confirmed. But here's the point. Boasters, proud.

If you watch the questioning, and I saw a little bit of it by some of the people who had made their mind up about Judge Alito on the Senate Judiciary Committee, they weren't there to do a fair and balanced investigation of him. They were there to try to smear him, to try to find some place where the Teflon wasn't stuck on good, where they could get a hold and create a controversy, going back 20 and 25 years, looking at writings when he was applying for completely different kinds of jobs, and taking paragraphs out of context, and trying to throw a spark in there and then fan it into a flame, and patting themselves on the back in the process. Boasters, proud, blasphemers.

Our culture, our society, our scientific community, they just had this trial a while back in Dover over the intelligent design of schools, and I think that's a misguided effort. I don't think people have any business trying to... I don't want a science teacher trying to tell me what the Bible says about creation. I appreciate that in Texas, most of the textbooks use conditional language.

Scientists believe. Evidence indicates. Fossil finds suggest.

Do that all day long. Give me the complete evolutionary scheme of things as scientists understand it. Scientists conclude.

Scientists believe. That's fair, because they do. That's a fact.

Teach facts all you want. Here's what we find in the fossil record. Here's what scientists conclude.

Here's why they concluded. Here's their line of reasoning. Great.

Just don't take out the conditional language and say, here is what happened. This is a fact, rather than what scientists believe. And Texas, you know why we don't have a big ID movement in Texas? Because our schoolbook choosers are smart enough to not pick books that present this as de facto unquestionable, and Christians can live with it.

I can live with it. I read Elizabeth's textbook, all of the stuff pertaining to the origin of life and all of that. And all the way through, they're very respectful.

They say, this is how science understands it. Hey, great. Fine.

But blasphemers, you look at the, you know, they get all upset about the, what is that? It's not the creation research people. That's here in Texas. But up in Seattle, there's some other organization that is basically touting creationism and supported these intelligent design people for a while and then kind of backed out.

Well, they have the same thing on the other side. The National Committee for Science Education was the foremost opponent in these things. Well, their charter says, and their founding was in response to creationism in the school.

And that's their raison d'etre, or however the French say it, the reason for being. The reason they're there is to counter creation. If there was no creationism, they would fall apart because that's the only reason they exist, is to find creationism and stamp it out anywhere in public life.

Blasphemers. Want to take God off our money. Want to take God out of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Want to take God out of the courtroom and out of the classroom. Blasphemers. It's one thing to say that government ought to be separate.

It's another to say God should be erased from our public life. Don't say Christmas. Don't pray in public.

If you're going to be a Christian, go do, you know, they're bringing homosexuals out of the closet and they're trying to stuff the Christians into it. That's basically what they're doing. Let's bring the gays out and let's put the people of faith in and get them to hide their faith.

I don't want to even know you have any faith. And I certainly don't want you to attribute anything to God. Well, this is just blasphemers, proud boasters, lovers of money.

And these senators that were questioning Judge Alito, if you don't think that there was pride and boasting and blasphemy going on in that, watch the tape. Disobedient to parents. We have never had, they had another yo-yo pulling a gun in a school bathroom down in Florida this past week.

And he got popped by the police and is now an organ donor. And that's what he deserves. It's nuts to take a gun to school.

That is disobedient, not just to parents, but to authority in general. But we have it. It's rife in our culture.

Disobedient to parents. It's encouraged not only by the modern views of how to parent, but look at the tripe that has been on television and in the movies for the last 30, 40 years, where the parents are dumb and stupid and the child is the one that figures everything out and saves the day. Where it's cool to be, you know, you go all the way back again, post-World War II, why is James Dean so popular? What's his signature movie? Rebel Without a Cause, you know, Marlon Brando, James Dean, it's cool and smoky and dark and girls like the rebel.

What are you rebelling against? Well, what have you got? I'm just a rebel. Disobedience. Unthankful.

I would love, if I was God and had an alternate universe to play with, I would take every arrogant, protesting, liberal, bleeding heart, strange person in our country and I would make them live in Thailand for a year. I would make them live in Afghanistan or in a Taliban environment. I would send them under the Khmer Rouge.

I would send them over into India and let them live there for a year and then come back and see if they want to gripe about our government and our freedoms and our way of life over here. Unthankful. God has blessed us.

You know, people hardly ever sing in a heartfelt way anymore. America the beautiful. God crown thy good with brotherhood.

We ought to be grateful and that gratitude ought to extend itself to the way we look at each other. Love your neighbor as yourself. That's a proper view of brotherhood.

Unthankful. Unholy. I don't even need to describe this.

Try to get around on the internet without seeing the unholy. Try to watch television. Try to watch a movie without seeing the unholy.

Try to walk down in a public place where people are conversing and not hear the unholy in vocabulary and in topics of conversation. We are as far away from holiness and godliness and respect for privacy, respect for women, the language that is used. Listen to the lyrics of your typical rap song.

Where are the women's rights people and rap music? This is what I can't figure out. Is it like, well, I can't pick on another minority and rap music is a minority expression and I'm a minority so I'm going to let them go to town. If you want to talk about denigration of women, the biggest place where women are denigrated is in the lyrics of modern music.

Most believers have no clue because we don't listen to it and if we did we couldn't understand it. You have to speak ɛmonics or something to even figure it out. I'm not trying to be disrespectful to black people because respectful black people don't use street slang and don't denigrate women and treat them as objects and talk about all kinds of violent acts against police and against the president and so on.

Unloving. Love is what? What's our short definition for love? Sacrificial towards self, beneficial towards others. You still see this in our military and I was ready to pick up my TV and kiss it today, this past week, when I saw a guy stand up.

You know, there is a, unfortunately, there is a retired Marine Colonel who is now in the Congress, Murrah or whatever his name is. What's his name? Murtha. That has been saying, you know, we ought to get out of Iraq and blah blah.

You know, we're not doing any good over there and all the people are against us and the troops morale is down and they're all questioning why they're there. And in his congressional district, there were over 200 troops that came back from Iraq and he didn't come to their homecoming. He didn't talk to any of them and one of them went to a press conference or something where he was spouting his inanities and stood up and got the microphone and said, sir, 200 of us have come home and you weren't there.

You haven't talked to any of us. And to a man, we think we're doing a good thing in Iraq and we understand the President's objectives. And you, sir, when you say that morale is low and that the troops don't know why we're there, who are you talking to? You're not talking to your own constituency because there's over 200 of us that you haven't said a word to.

That's what needs to be done. A little bit of truth, a little bit of perspective for some of this. Unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good.

You can fill these in yourself. Just look around. This is the last days.

These are perilous times. Now, perilous for whom? It's perilous for us. We are the children of God.

You are the custodian of a child of God and it's you. You and I have a responsibility to look out for ourselves as children of God. Now, how do we get children to look out for themselves? We teach them things, don't we? We teach children, don't cross the street without looking both ways.

Don't drink out of unlabeled bottles under the sink. Don't stick your finger in the light socket. We give them rules and we say, don't do these things and here's some things you should do.

Eat your food, take your vitamins, drink your orange juice, clean up your room so you don't trip over something. We teach children, children have to be inculcated at an early age to look out for themselves and most of all to have self-discipline. Just because you have an urge to chase a

thing out into the street doesn't mean you should do so.

Just because you're thirsty and you have an urge to drink doesn't mean you should pick up some unlabeled substance and drink it. Just because you have an urge to hit somebody with a stick doesn't mean you should. You've got to rein yourself in.

You've got to conquer your emotions with your mind. We teach children this. Well, guess what? You and I are children of God and our life is ahead of us and this is our childhood.

This is our time and we have to pay attention to God. We have to look out for ourselves and we have to look out for each other. That's the proper way to love your neighbor as yourself and to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and all your strength.

We have been given the custodianship of a child of God and it's our responsibility to feed ourselves, to protect ourselves in perilous times. That's what the Word of God does for us. That's why we meet.

It's difficult, I know, to assemble three times a week for six Bible classes a week. Why do we do that? It's not just to see what's going to happen in the 70th week of Daniel. It's not just to figure out hard passages.

We are protecting our souls. We are building ourselves up in the faith. We are taking care of, we are nurturing and nourishing children of God.

That's our job. That's why we're here. We're not here to do these things in these four verses.

We're here to be custodians and to be servants that take care of the things that God has entrusted to us. We are stewards of our souls and we have an obligation to others and that's why we're here. We encourage each other every time we show up, every time we pay attention to the Word of God.

We encourage, we build up. Our spiritual gift ministers and it counts. It means something.

We're swimming against the tide of an evil, evil day. It's perilous, but this is God's antidote and the power of God comes into our souls through his Word and through his Spirit and through fellow believers. Well, it's time to pause and take our break.

When we come back, we'll pick up our study in Daniel chapter 7.