

Matthew 20-08-09b

I want to thank Dan and Anna and Lori for our wonderful interlude of music there. Sing the mighty power of God, certainly apropos to our study this morning because it is the power of God that is our court of appeal. It's the only genuine power for change.

Human agency, I've spent some time in self amusement looking at attempts to fix even problems in the human psyche or the human heart via psychology, psychiatry, various medications or whatever. And it reminds me of the late night commercials where, do you have a plaque, take this and Tesla or whatever it is, side effects may include, and then bleeding from the ears and limbs falling off. You exchange one problem for another.

Human efforts to solve human problems are basically whack-a-mole. You bang one down to pop up somewhere else. And it's because we are not God.

We don't have creative power. We don't have full knowledge. We look back with a shake of the head and a smile at medical knowledge just a few centuries ago with leeches and razors and bleeding and thinking that there were bad humors that could be let out.

And we look back and say, oh, well, we know everything. Now, if human history were to continue another couple of hundred years, those doctors and those medical practitioners will look back and shake their heads at the ham-fisted, sledgehammer approach that we take. We find a drug that will in fact suppress a symptom.

And we disregard all of its other causes, conditions, successions and relations. And it fixes this thing, but it breaks so many others. And you burn out your liver or you stop your heart or you get nervous.

I saw now that there are drugs designed to counteract the effect of a drug. So you're taking this one drug to this particular one I'm thinking of. And bless their hearts.

I mean, they are trying. If I was a doctor, I would do the same thing. I'm not faulting their intentions or their goal.

It's just our human limitation, our human frailty. But you have people that have what the Bible calls a palsy, an uncontrollable shake or tremor. And so they have found a drug that will control that.

But the side effect of it is that it causes another side effect. And the tremors come back in a different form. So now you've got to have, and those are permanent.

And so now you've got to have another drug to counteract the symptom that the first drug caused when you were trying to fix a more severe. We just trade one thing for another. The mighty power of God fixes things at the source.

If human behavior is unkind, unfair, insensitive, self-serving, you can seek to hem it in. You can put handcuffs and chains and ropes on the demon-possessed men to prevent them from hurting others. But they are going to shatter those shackles.

They are going to break those bonds and be twofold what they were before once they've done so. Because now they know not to let themselves be fettered or shackled or bound. And this is what happens with human efforts.

They fail because they try to work from the outside. How did Jesus fix those demon-possessed men in Gadara, Gerasa? He fixed them on the inside. He drove out the demons that were causing those problems.

And that's the solution. Only God can change hearts. Only God can change minds.

Only God can wreak genuine positive change. And He is going to do it. But you notice He's not in the business of doing it in this life.

You have these kingdom now. If we build it, they will come. People who think that if we build a millennial kingdom, Jesus will come and be its king.

God manifestly is not going to work to fix this system. He's going to wipe this out and do a fresh system. If you want to know what happens when you try to rehabilitate this system, look at the millennial kingdom.

If the kingdom is run by God, wouldn't it last forever? Why does the millennial kingdom only last a thousand years? Because it is a rehabilitation of this existing system, which cannot be rehabilitated. Because so long as you have free will and those who exercise that free will against God, that's an internal problem that even God can't fix. He probably could, but He won't.

He respects the free will that He created. And He is not going to switch people into puppets and cause them to believe and to accept and to conform and to obey. Free will is its own arbiter.

The only way you can achieve a true peaceable kingdom of righteousness where righteousness is at home is to confront all of the free wills, let them all make their choice, segregate and eliminate the negatives, and create the kingdom with the positives. That's the kingdom of the Father. That's the eternal kingdom.

Positive angels, positive people. Negative angels, negative people, not a part of the equation. That's not the case in the millennial kingdom.

This is why Jesus says over and over again, the kingdom is like a man who sowed a field and then his enemy came in and sowed tares. Let them grow up together until the harvest. Then we will gather the tares.

The angels will gather the tares. They will be put in bundles and burned. Wheat will go into the barn.

The barn is the kingdom of the Father. The tares are gone. But so long as they grow up together, you're going to have problems.

You're going to have strife. You're going to have division. And it cannot be fixed with human agency.

Now, should there be law enforcement? Should there be the working of the system and the structure that is designed to handle these problems? Absolutely. This began in Genesis chapter 9 after the flood. God instituted human government when he said to Noah, if a man sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.

Previous to that, it was godly government. This is why Cain was not executed by Adam. God dealt with Cain.

God confronted him. God judged him. God pronounced sentence on him.

God did justice all the way up to and through the flood. God evaluated the only evil all the day generation. God judged them.

God executed sentence on them. But after the flood, if you shed man's blood, by man shall your blood be shed. It's a new thing.

That is the institution of human government. Human government is to uphold laws and inflict penalties on those who disobey the law. Man's responsibility.

So this is not deconstructive or anti-establishment in any way. But we also have to recognize that this is a system of reaction to infraction. It doesn't prevent infraction.

You have now a movement to try to prevent thought and prevent speech and prevent actions that haven't even happened yet. There's this funny theory being put out that if the election goes the wrong way, the president won't leave the White House. That hasn't happened yet.

The election has not happened. He hasn't been defeated. But they're already saying, well, we're going to have to take steps to prevent this imaginary crime that we've invented.

He won't accept the results of the election. So we're going to have to take steps now. Well, a wise man of my acquaintance and my patronage once said, it's a mistake to judge others by yourself.

People are imagining what they would do in his place and speculating, well, if I were him, I would find a way to reject the results of it. And so they're imputing their own thinking to

someone else. That's usually a mistake.

People aren't necessarily like us. So I say that to say this. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.

There are a couple of concomitants that come out from this. One is to think about kingdom talk in the Christian community right now, because this is a principle about kingdoms and about houses. So are we a part of a kingdom right now? Are we doing kingdom work? Are we on the king's business? And so on.

As I have said before, this is something to think about carefully. Is Jesus on a throne? This was my big beef with progressive dispensationalism 20 odd years ago when this came out, the mid to late 90s, when progressive dispensationalism came out and sought to supplant classic dispensationalism. Dispensations is a fancy way of saying Israel was God's people in the Old Testament.

The church is God's people through Christ in the New Testament, and they're not the same. We have a new covenant founded on new and better promises. They will catch up.

It's not anti-Semitic to say that the church has better promises. When the original promises, I will pour up my spirit on all flesh, David will be on the throne, you'll be back in the land. All of those Old Testament promises to Abraham through you, all nations of the earth will be blessed.

They're wonderful promises. No promise of God is a bad promise, but we have better promises because we have the spirit immediately. The promises of God to Israel are you will get the spirit eventually.

Now you want the spirit now or later? I want it now. And a promise of the spirit now is a better promise in that sense, then you'll get it later. But starting in the millennial kingdom, when God does pour out his spirit, Israel has now caught up.

They have been set aside till the fullness of the Gentiles come in. Branches were broken off so that we could be grafted in. Faith holds the branches in.

Be careful. Maintain faith lest you too be broken off. This is the tree of blessing, the tree of fruitfulness, the tree of production and fruit in God's economy, right? So that's dispensations.

Well, progressive dispensationalism sells a lot of books. People can make a name for themselves by, I've got a new and better understanding. Well, only if it's biblical, only if it's scriptural.

And all you need to know, in my view, all I'm going to tell you about progressive dispensationalism, put it that way, is it says Jesus is on his throne now in heaven. Well,

he's not. I'm sorry, but he's not.

He is seated at the right hand of the majesty on high. You know how many thrones there are in the British castle court king? Can you have some other hangers on family members, sycophants, ministers, jesters, whatever, all up on the platform? Of course. How many thrones are there? One.

England's got a queen right now. Does it have a king? No. There's one monarch, one throne, one scepter, one crown.

And right now, bless her heart, it's queen Elizabeth. There's one throne in heaven. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the majesty on high, awaiting the time appointed for him to come down and sit on the throne of his majesty.

David, there's one throne in Israel. God never says, and there will be another throne in Samaria for the 10 Northern. It's a united kingdom.

It's got one throne and it's the throne of David. There's one kingdom in heaven with one king, and it is God, the father. God, the father is the king.

Holy spirit's not the king. Jesus is not the king of heaven. And Mary is not the queen of heaven, for crying out loud, as the Catholics believe.

One throne, one kingdom. So progressive dispensationalism says when Jesus ascended and sat down at the right hand of God, that the throne of David is somehow up there. And he's, well, where is this kingdom? If it's a throne of David, where are the Israelites? Where's the land? Where are the 12 tribes? Where are the borders? Where's the temple? Well, it's a heavenly, where, where are the Levites? Where's the, where's the Ezekiel temple? Where are all of the accoutrements Ezekiel talks about for seven or eight chapters? Where is that? Well, in the words of the Lord, Jesus, they do err, not knowing the scriptures or the power of God.

It's the power of God that is at issue. If you're upset with the way things are in your life, there is only one power for appeal. And it's not the power of man, not the power of people, not the power of persuasion.

If I could just argue with you long enough, I could get you to see it my way. Go to God, bring God his promises, appeal to God's power, God's righteousness. He has the power to change your circumstance.

Or if that's not his will, he has the power to put inside us so that we prevail and overcome in those circumstances. Letters to the seven churches, who inherits the promises at the end of each one of those letters? To him who overcomes. Well, if you ask God to flatten every obstacle, what are you overcoming? If you're ice skating along the great wide way, what have you overcome? Nothing.

What is your heritage and your promise? Nothing. Challenges are the opportunity to lay hold of blessing and reward from God in time and in eternity. I need my pain.

I thank God for my challenges. I thank God for my corrupt nature because it is an ongoing battle to fight. We're not wrestling against flesh and blood.

We're not wrestling against organizations and policies and ordinances and laws. We're not arguing against corruption in high places. We're not, we might argue against it, but we're not fighting it.

What do we fight? Principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age. What was the matter with the mute man? Demon-possessed. What's the matter with the mute and blind man? Spiritual problem.

Jesus, casts out the demon. The rest of the problems go away. Get it at its source.

Go to God. The answer, whatever you see, whatever catches fire, whatever gets torn down or toppled, whatever gets said, whoever gets elected, you are appealing to the enemy system and the enemy power and the enemy plan. You're going to be Jeroboam instead of David.

It's a powerless system ultimately. And all of this stuff, Peter says, is going to go up in smoke and melt with a fervent heat. Why would you try to rehabilitate? God himself is not going to rehabilitate the millennial kingdom.

He's going to eliminate the negatives at the Gog Magog rebellion. He is going to eliminate the negatives at the great white throne. And then he is going to let us into his realm where righteousness is at home.

We will still have free will, but we are those who exercise our free will in the positive direction. We exercise our free will in the godly direction now. So if you want to write a letter to somebody, if you want to have paid a sign in March, feel free, but it's not God's way.

Exercise your vote. We're in a free country. This is a voting country.

Not everybody's been in one down through history. They didn't vote in Israel. How many Pharisees got voted in? How many high priests? How many kings in Israel got voted in? There's no such thing as voting and one man, one vote, one person, one vote in Israel.

You don't need to appeal to the system. Use the system. Exercise your freedom.

Make your voice heard on election day. It's our responsibility. It's one of the ways we can shine as light in the midst of a generation, but it's your life that's just one tiny act on one particular day to vote.

It's daily life. It's daily commitment to the Lord Jesus that accomplishes and spreads the power of God instead of the malignancy of human failings, such as we see here in Matthew 12. Verse 25, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation.

And every city or house divided against itself will not stand. Will not stand. That includes the body of Christ.

And we saw in Corinthians extensively that we should not be divided. You go to Ephesians chapter four, flip over to Ephesians four right quick. We're going to talk for just a minute about what should unity involve? Should we be striving for community unity, calm unity? Should we be striving for national unity or state unity? Look at Ephesians four.

God has put gifts in the body of Christ for a specific purpose. So in verse 11, Ephesians four 11, he himself, the Lord Jesus Christ gave some apostles. He gave some prophets.

He gave some good news tellers, evangelists. He gave some pastors and teachers for what, for the bettering of the community, for the feeding of the orphans, for the clothing of those who are in need, social action for what equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry. What is the work of the ministry? What is the work of the ministry? We should know this.

If apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers have been given so that we can be equipped for it. What is it? What is your work of ministry? If you go back to acts, when Stephen and the others are detailed, uh, the apostles say we need to devote more time to study and prayer. So you all need to feed the orphans and the deacons are appointed.

Stephen of acts chapter seven fame is one of them. That's work of ministry. What were they doing? Feeding the widows and orphans, which widows and orphans? Did they establish a John three 16 mission in their town? All comers, what widows and orphans were getting fed? What was the work of the ministry in that church in Jerusalem? Brethren, widows in the church, orphans in the church, spiritual gifts are developed and exercised in the body of Christ for the body of Christ.

The one notable exception is evangelist. And there are those who are equipped to explain why the body of Christ does what it does. We are not here to benefit society except to present Christ.

We are not here to change circumstances in the physical world except to represent Christ because Christ is the power of God. Romans one 16. I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

It is the power of God for deliverance. The gospel of Christ meeting physical needs is a wonderful thing. And it counts in the church going out to random individuals and trying to better their lives and say, well, if I bribe you with these good works, maybe you'll be

positively disposed to the gospel isn't found in the Bible.

Now, people will claim that it works and they can and that's that's their business. If that's their calling, if they've got an evangelistic calling and if their particular evangelistic gift inspires them to do some sort of physical ministry that creates opportunities, but only in so far as people are evangelized with the gospel, is that ministry any good? You can't point to it and say, we fed a hundred orphans and 50 widows and say you've done anything. If you've had a hundred orphans and 50 widows come to Christ, you've done something.

And that's the measure of the ministry. And I'm not going to tell somebody how to do their ministry that's between them and God. That's why they've got the Holy Spirit.

What I will say is the only measure of success for any ministry is either adding to the body of Christ or blessing the body of Christ. It's body of Christ. The gospel of Christ is the power of God for deliverance.

There is no other deliverance. There is no other good work. Doing good things for bad people doesn't count.

Doing good things for God's people counts. And if you're in the process of making them into God's people, great. That's your evangelistic tools are between you and the Lord.

I'm not an evangelist. I don't tell evangelists how to do their work. I will tell you what the measure of their work is, and it's Christ.

Are people coming to Christ? Are people growing in Christ? That's the measure of your life, your fruit is the fruit of the spirit. And by living your life, you can win others without a word. You don't know who is observing you, but it is the light of Christ shining out of your daily life, small things, attitudes, actions, priorities, what you say and what you don't say, what you identify with and what you don't identify with is a testimony and a witness.

And it is an encouragement to fellow believers, believers of like mind, believers of biblical mind to live a biblical life. So he gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the equipping of saints for the work of ministry. Ministry is measured by its effect on the body of Christ.

It either blesses it or it increases it for the building up of the body of Christ. Until when? Till we all come. And this till, you know, I've told you before that one of the Greek words that means until is haos.

It's in Acts 1A, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, until the, until the end, the telos, until haos. This is not haos. This is a different word.

And this means as far as it means that this is going to, is going to extend to the destination. It doesn't mean that it's going to stop, but it's, it's almost ace in the sense of with a view toward, but this is the goal. You will have arrived at the unity of the faith, unity of the faith.

Body of Christ, unity of faith, knowledge of the son of God. What is the unity of the faith? Is this, we've got to get all believers united. We need the big tent.

We want to be ecumenical. Anybody who says Jesus is Lord, doesn't matter what else you believe. Let's all come in.

That is not what it means. The word here translated till is mechri, M-E-C-H-R-I. And this is the, this is for the duration.

This is the time in which these gifts and goals are manifest. So these gifts, communication gifts, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are going to equip the saints. And that equipping is going to prevail and be effective so long as, or while we're functioning toward the unity of the faith.

What is this unity of the faith? It's funny. I was surveying what people said about this. And a guy was talking about the unity of the faith and he was the most wacky, harebrained, far off person in terms of having his Bible thrown in the blender and repasted into the covers.

And he was talking about the unity of the faith. And I thought, well, I'm sorry, but your understanding of scripture is so bizarre that there's no way we can be unified. Unity of the faith.

What does Paul say? All things are yours in Christ. Christ is what unifies us. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me.

He said in our recent context, I am meek and lowly. I am humble of heart. Come to me and find rest for your souls.

People associated with us, people in our periphery. If we divide our kingdom, if husband and wife bicker and quarrel and take their own side instead of recognizing that they are a team, that they're on the same side, and it's not worth dividing over inconsequential things, creating bitterness, acrimony, division, a house divided against itself cannot stand. I was doing a little research into some of the things you're going to be looking at this coming Thursday about the attitudes toward marriage and some of these divine structures for authority and for cohesion in society, whether it is marriage, family, nation, church, and the attacks on those and what happens, what does the Bible have to say about cohabitation? What does science have to say about cohabitation? Just going out and analyzing and objectively observing the results of cohabitation, people who live together prior to marriage or without benefit of marriage are many times more likely to

never have a stable relationship.

They have trouble with commitment. They have trouble with weathering the kind of storms that a unified marriage weathers because if I don't like what's going on, I'll bail. I'm not going to commit, and making a commitment later is extremely difficult, and their divorce rate is many times higher.

People that live together or live with somebody else before they get married, their divorce rate is like four times higher than people whose first serious relationship is marriage, and then through death or dismemberment, something happens and they go on, but the divorce rate is much smaller among people who marry than those who cohabit. There are any number of other effects. I'll mention a few of those, but Scripture has something to say about cohabitation and about marriage.

It has something to say about many of the things we look around and see under attack today about life. It talks about the life of the unborn. It talks about the issues that are currently under debate, review, and attack in this nation, but this equipping of the saints for the work of ministry until we all come to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, those things are two sides of the same coin.

To the extent that we know and love the Son of God, to that extent we are unified. If people are going to make an issue out of doctrinal points, out of passage interpretations, and are going to debate and corrode and splinter the body over those things, Scripture militates against that. To a mature man, knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Christ called out what was erroneous. He called out the Pharisees. He called out legalism.

He called out hypocrisy. He didn't picket a Pharisee's house. He didn't create a committee or a group that would go out and picket a Pharisee's house and seek social change or religious change.

He spoke out. They attacked him. He responded.

They said he was in league with the demons. He replied, but he didn't seek to overthrow the Sanhedrin. He didn't seek to undermine or dissolve the party of the Pharisees or the Sadducees.

He didn't call into question King Herod or the chief priest. He didn't tell people you shouldn't pay any attention to them. They're not legitimate.

There's something wrong with them. Jesus, regardless of how corrupt the people were in those offices and even some of those offices, who appointed the Pharisees to be in charge? But Jesus spoke to their personal decisions and their personal behavior, and he

did it collectively. He didn't single out Caiaphas.

He didn't single out Annas. He didn't single out some other Pharisee by name and say, old so-and-so is a complete rascal. The stature of the fullness of Christ is the measure.

So look at Jesus Christ. What did he do? He taught spiritual truth to create change on the inside. That's what his body should continue to do in this age, represent and speak the truth.

We should be heard. The mutant man speaks, and we should evaluate. We should see and tell what is right and what is wrong.

And in the aggregate and in the general, we can say that attitude, that behavior is wrong. I don't see a scriptural warrant for calling out individuals by name and attacking them personally and individually. You can attack what they represent.

You can attack a position that they hold. That's what Jesus did. But what did Jesus not do? What he didn't do, we have no business doing.

The measure is the stature, the height of the fullness of Christ in the knowledge of the Son of God in faith. And we should be unified in that. So we're no longer children tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine by trickery of men and craftiness of deceitful plotting.

A lot of deceitful plotting going on today on all sides. But verse 15, speaking the truth in love. If you're going to speak the truth in love, what does that mean? How would you describe that love? What does 1 Corinthians have to say about love? Love is patient.

Love is kind. Love is not puffed up. Love does not vaunt itself or lift itself up.

Love suffers long. Read the chapter, speaking the truth in love. Should we be acrimonious? Should we be bitter? Should we be hateful? Should we be celebrating scandal? Should we be overly obsessed with what's going on in the world? Love of God and love of the brethren are our two commands.

Love not the world or the things that are in the world. And I would say, don't try to change the world or the things that are in the world. We have a hard enough time letting God change us and representing the stature of the world.

And God will give you in that hour what you should say. Speak the truth in love. If things start turning acrimonious and argumentative and bitter, what did Jesus do? With his disciples, he withdrew.

Don't let yourself become a part of ugly debate. It doesn't represent Christ. You look at all of the debates, all of the confrontations, all of the arguments and challenges between the Pharisees and Jesus, does He ever let it turn ugly? He's clear, He's forceful, He's

persuasive to those who are willing to hear, but He doesn't descend into the mud, and we shouldn't either.

Speaking the truth in love, verse 15, Ephesians 4. May grow up in all things into Him who is the head, not into better circumstances, not into better society, not into, oh, all of my problems are gone, grow up into Christ from whom the whole body joined and knit together. The body of Christ with the spirit of Christ is unified. Now, if someone is or claims to be a believer, but they are divisive, they are caustic, they are acrimonious, they have a grudge and they won't release it, they're not of this thinking, a house divided against itself cannot stand.

We strive, we seek to stay in the unified house. Those who separate themselves from it by lack of faith, lack of obedience, have left the house. We concentrate on that which is good to the extent that things are noble, lovely, pure of good report.

Think on these things. If someone is bent on strife and division, let them go. Let them go do that somewhere else.

Trying to keep them in the house creates a divided house and it will not stand. It's not going to succeed. You might as well try to keep a malignant tumor.

You might as well try to keep a gangrenous infected appendage. If it's infected, if it's malignant, separate because a divided house cannot stand, a divided body cannot stand, a divided kingdom cannot stand. The millennial kingdom will not stand because it's going to ultimately be divided at Gog Magog.

God's going to cause it to divide when he releases Satan from the bottomless pit. I was watching a stock film of pharmacists. They have a plate full of pills and they've got the container, the bottle or whatever, there's a little funnel and they've got this little spatula thing and they go through the pills and they say, well, here's five into the bottle.

It goes, here's five into the bottle. It goes. And they just, they divide these pills so that they can count them and make sure you get exactly the right number in the bottle.

And this is what it reminds me of. God looks at there's blue pills and red pills out here and he's taking the spatula and he's just sorting and here's five blue pills. Here's five blue pills.

And he separates, he discriminates, he divides and he unifies that which is for unity. And he divides that which seeks division. Unity of the faith.

Grow up in all things into him who is the head joined and knit together by what every joint supplies. This is the ministry of spiritual gifts according to the effective working by which every part does its share. The functional unified body of Christ is what we have to be a part of.

Touch not the unclean thing. Hate the garment spotted by the flesh. If you can, pull somebody out of the fire.

But there's people that will withdraw their hand. They don't want to be pulled out of the fire. There's the Jew who says, you're a Samaritan.

I won't let you pull me out of the ditch. I'd rather die than be touched by a filthy Samaritan. That Jew in the Good Samaritan parable had the good sense to not quibble about ethnicity when he had provision from God for his restoration and his healing.

It doesn't matter what face that healing wears. If it's from God, it's good. And you have to have the humility to accept it and not divide over inconsequential things.

When they are consequential, do what Jesus did. We withdraw. I'm not saying you have to be passive and inactive and fatalistic.

We have a vote. We have a voice. We can speak in conversation.

We can advocate for positions. And we can advocate against positions and policies. Personally, I would suggest drawing the line against calling out individuals.

Because Jesus doesn't do it. Paul doesn't do it. Peter doesn't do it.

James doesn't do it. The Bible does not invest us with authority to attack the man. You can attack what they embrace, what they stand for, what they advocate biblically.

Hopefully, it's on a biblical grounds. We're going to see something Thursday night. Be sure and be here Thursday night.

If you want to know things about racism, if you want to know things about the right to life, the right to keep and bear arms, and so on, Scripture has got more to say than you might remember. And pulling these things together makes it very clear. I don't see how any believer who owns a Bible and ever cracked it open and read it would come to any different position.

These would be things that unify us. We should be unified in our view of life. We should be unified in our view about races, racism, bigotry, about slavery, good or bad.

We should be unified in our view of these issues that are so divisive today. And the body of Christ ought to be standing clearly on the biblical side of those issues, and we'll be looking at that on Thursday. But what is our application for what we have seen here? Two-fold.

It's just like the two great commandments. What's the first and greatest commandment? Love the Lord your God. What is the power to whom we appeal when there is a problem or we've got an issue? God.

Go to God. Bring it to God. Prayers and supplications.

Let your requests be made known unto God. And once you've done that, the peace of God that passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything.

I say again, be anxious. King James says, be careful. Be full of care for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication.

Let your requests be made known to God. I'm missing a word there. How does that verse go? In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.

With thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God will keep you.

That's number one. What's the second great command? Love your neighbor as yourself. The vertical and the horizontal.

It's just like the cross. The vertical post has to be there, or the horizontal post is not going to be where it's supposed to be. Love for God.

So if we've got issues, if there are problems, we go to God. It is the power of God that achieves deliverance and no other power. Secondly, love your neighbor as yourself.

Unity of the faith. A house divided against itself cannot stand. If you try to be too broad, if you try to incorporate into your house that which doesn't belong, your house is not going to stand.

Your witness is not going to stand. Your life is not going to stand. You are not going to stand at the judgment.

Psalms 1. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. A lot of scorn going around today. His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in that law he meditates day and night.

He'll be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth his fruit in his season. Leaf will not wither. Whatsoever he does will prosper.

The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff, which the wind drives away. If you try to incorporate the ungodly into your kingdom, into your house, into your home, into your life, you're just going to have a lot of chaff and a lot of tumbleweeds blowing around. Unity of the faith.

Stature of the fullness of Christ. That's what we're after. We're spiritual people.

We're here for a spiritual purpose. We have a spiritual identity and a responsibility to one

another for unity. As far as it is up to you, live peaceably with all.

Somebody doesn't want to be peaceable, get away with draw. Vertical, horizontal. Power of God, peace with each other.

Ministry to each other. The measure is the stature of the fullness of Christ. Well, we'll pick up here in Matthew 12 next time.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you that in turbulent times, we have the rock of the Lord Jesus Christ upon which to build our lives, to live our lives. We pray that as we reflect on these truths from your word, that God the Holy Spirit will show us their pertinence, how they apply in our words, our thoughts, our actions, that we will indeed be blessed with that peace that is promised to us to those who love and trust and obey.

We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.