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Genesis

Chapter 10 - God Promotes Family-Man Pursues Dominance

Man Defines His Identity (vs.15-20)

Genesis 10:15-20: Canaan became the father of Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth and the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite; and afterward the families of the Canaanite were spread abroad. The territory of the Canaanite extended from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; as you go toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. These are the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, by their nations.

It's a wonderful thing to gather together in the name of the Lord to worship Him, to open up His word. What a magnificent thing, the word of God. Think about that. All Scripture is God breathed and is actually profitable for every area of our lives. God's word. Kind of a phrase that we throw out there without really thinking about that. God is speaking to us. God, who created all things. Peter will say that Scripture is not a matter of one's own interpretation. What he fundamentally is saying within that particular phrase is that truth is not up for grabs. When God says something, He means it; it's true. Man likes to interpret it according to the way that he perceives it or sees it, or whether or not it fits into his life. As Paul will so aptly put it to Timothy, as he writes, "The time will come when people won't want to hear the things that you're saying. They're going to accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires." And we have seen that time arrive, haven't we? I mean if in fact you disagree with something that I'm saying, you could just go to another church. There's no problem. I mean, for a while I was thinking that you came together because of my magnetic personality, but I'm beginning to understand

that it's because you love the word of God, and as Paul so aptly puts it to the Thessalonians, "That you received this word not as words of men, but as it is, the word of God." There are times that the word of God is so encouraging, as you began to hear some wonderful things as we have been reading in the Book of Luke and Jesus stands up and He begins to quote out of the Book of Isaiah, and they go, "What wonderful words." As He talks about freeing those that are in captivity and about healing the blind and the lame and what a wonderful, wonderful message of the favor of God upon us. But then there are passages that are very convicting, and those are the passages where you usually lose somebody. This just may be one of those passages. However, as we look at this, my desire is to tell you what God has for you. This is not a popularity contest. It's not me trying to get people in the church. It's nice if people do come, but like Jeremiah, even if I said to myself, "I'm not preaching another message," the word inside me would just be so burning that I would have to say something, and I'd probably be preaching to my own family, which I'm accused of from time to time. But the heart of what we're about is proclaiming God. There's a

plaque up here. I don't know if you've ever read the plaque, but the plaque reads this way, "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name." That's what church is about. That's what this church is about. We're pointing to God, and really, it isn't up for grabs, and it isn't up for a definition, and it isn't up for voting. It is truth, and we're going to proclaim it.

As we come to this passage, what we realize as we've been going through the Book of Genesis, is God is gracious; God is giving. Every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of Lights. There is no variance or shadow of shifting of His goodness. In everything that He does, He's good and He demonstrates that in such marvelous ways. In creation, as we see at the beginning of this, as well as His patience and even when man sins, His desire to cover rather than expose, we see God's graciousness. Man continues to sin, and God then saves humanity. Think about that. In spite of their rebellion. The thought is that man sins, he reaps some of the consequences. His thoughts will probably be, "Ok, we're going to do better now." Well, let's give them 969

years and see if they do better. I mean, I figure somebody living actually that long. Adam living 930 years. Noah will live 950 years. I mean, it's a long time and I would say it's enough time to get your act straight. Nevertheless, things proceeded from bad to worse, and humanity came to a certain point that they were literally imploding, and they were going to kill the only one left that was righteous. God saves humanity and through saving humanity, He preserves something new, family. In family, it is His desire to unite around the truth and in this wonderful picture that we have with Noah in particular, you have a patriarch that is a righteous man that points to God. Nevertheless, he falters. He fails, and he has sons. Your hope is, "Well, maybe they'll take after their dad, a chip off the old block, and they'll follow the wonderful message of righteousness." Nevertheless, they don't. As we begin to see them dissipate and go through and we have the three sons, Japheth, Ham and Shem, and really, as we're going to look today specifically, that one coming from the lineage of Ham, which is Canaan, we'll see specifically the way that he goes. It is clear that all we like sheep go astray. We go astray in very different ways. As James will

put it, we all sin in many ways and we all choose our poison, so to speak.

So, as you look at the different ones that are mentioned, one of the first that he mentions is Japheth, and we watch that particular lineage, we begin to realize that that lineage goes towards something in particular. What is that? Well, as we looked at the text, what we really saw was, is that they were seemingly motivated by exploration, and I would say acquisition. That you have a people of commerce and you have a people that gravitate towards greed. So, really, if you were to summarize that particular group of people, the Japheth people groups, you would realize that they go into all the world, they go into realms of the islands as the text goes on, Europeans, as they go all of the places. Literally, what they are defined by is their desire for acquisition and for commerce. It is this greed that begins to draw them.

It sort of reminds me of the passage in James 4 that says, “Beware you who say that you’re going to go to such and such a city and do business and do this. Instead, you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills.’” The passage is reminding

us that we have a tendency to do that, and there are certain groups that maybe are not allured by that, and there are others that are.

You have Ham that is defined within the passage, and of course, the poster boy for Ham would be Nero. He ultimately comes in, I would say, in the time of Rome. But you have this other individual within the passage. His name is Nimrod, and Nimrod will literally define this whole group of people. They are group of people that love power. So, you have people that love acquisition. You have people that love power. That would be the Hamites as we would call them. These would be the people that love to build great towers. They'd love to build great cities such as Nineveh, such as Babylon, and it will come from this particular group. They will enslave people to get what they want. Oppression is the thing that they use, and they are motivated by power.

When we come to the Canaanites, what we're going to see is that they're motivated by a very unique thing. As you go through the list of the Canaanites which is a branch from Ham, Scripture specifically wants to set them

aside as different. They're going to be the ones that settle in the promised land. As we oftentimes make reference to the fact that God promised to Abraham, "You're going into the land of Canaan." So, this will be the land of the Canaanites, and they actually live and conquer in these particular regions. If you look at the names, it's very interesting because you end up saying "ites" a lot. Did you notice that? So, you have the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Girgashite, the Hivite, the Arkite... So, that's a lot of "ites," and what we're dealing with is really a suffix that is fundamentally talking about belonging to or origin. The suffix at the very end is making reference to that, "Where do you belong?" and what you're going to see within this is the emphasis of identity. So, people separate according to their desires. It's very clear, some acquisition of things, others great power and oppression, and they use that to their advantage. But there are others that hold in high esteem their identity, and that identity, if you were to think about it, would be those groups that you feel comfortable with. Paul talks specifically about this when he writes to the Corinthians, and he goes, "You guys have a problem. First of all, you're childish, but beyond that

problem, because you're childish, you think this way: You think in cliques, and you think in terms of clubs. You think, 'I'm of Apollos,' 'I'm of Paul,' 'I'm of Cephas.' What are you talking about?" In Christ's time, there were the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the scribes. They were different ones, that of the sects that didn't even like each other, even though they would rally together, with the Herodians, to crucify Christ. They were really haters of each other, which tells us that man has a tendency to try to gain his self-esteem by connecting himself with a particular group.

So, when you think about the particular groups and if you look in Genesis 10, in particular, in verse 5, in verse 20, and in verse 31, you're going to see some very similar things coming at the end of each of the families, the family of Ham, the family of Japheth, and the family of Shem. What you're going to see is that they are divided up, and you can see it in the list, by families, languages, lands and nations. You see it repeated in every one of those verses. So, what we see is that people begin to gravitate towards a particular identity, and that identity is

spelled out oftentimes by their names. You have “Sidon” here in Genesis 10:15 that makes reference to this one that lives on the coast. This is going to be a great city, and this was actually the beginning, and it was the Canaanites that began what was called the city state. That is to say, you had a large city, and it became a state in and of itself. It became a government in and of itself. So, you have these groups of people that come together that declare themselves, “This is the way we think, this is the way we believe, and this is what we stand for.”

So, as you go through, you see the firstborn of Sidon, Heth. If you look at that passage, “Heth” will make reference to somebody that is terrified or will bring terror. So, they begin to identify themselves as individuals that are in control. What's interesting as you go through the list, and we're not going to go through in great detail all the names, but if you look at Jebusite, he's a thresher. Now, he'll ultimately sell the threshing floor, interestingly enough, to David. The lineage of the Jebusites will do that. They'll settle in Jerusalem, and David will have to conquer them. But what you see is the names are really

defining their spirit. Amorites are Sayers, and you're going to see the Amorites really bring in all kinds of false cults and idols and religions. In fact, when you look at the Canaanites, you have literally a plethora of those that are following idols and other gods, and you say, "Why so many gods?" I mean, I could count when I was going to the list of the Canaanite gods, over 40, right off the bat. So, what you have are these group of people that are segmenting according to their beliefs, according to their desires, according to their wills. As you go through the different names, whether it's the Hivite or the Arkite, which means a brawler; I guess those people are really fun to be around. Sinite, which means thorny. You like to gather around thorny people; you have an ability to do that. A person that's an Arvadite is somebody that wants to break free of all the boundaries. So, it's described in such a way. You have the Hamathite, who is literally one who builds great fortresses under himself. All of these names pretty much define what they're about. Scripture gives these pictures, and just to make note, when you see "Amorite," and when you actually go back to Genesis 10:15,

“Canaan became the father of Sidon...”

See that particular word? If you were to do a little research, and once again, I don't want to get bogged in all the research, you would find somebody that came from there that one of the kings of Israel married. His name was Ahab, and he married the daughter of the king of Sidon which was Jezebel. Jezebel was known for her many false prophets and the gods, and all the worship, whether it was Baal, Anu was another one that they worshipped, the great sky god. I guess that was somebody that they want to attach themselves to, especially if you'd been through a flood. So, all of these gods, they began to invent according to their own desires. What you literally have in this is the tendency of man to gather together according to his desires, and that's a key point, and that's really the point that I want to talk about. Because in our society, it's the way we think in so many ways. I mean, people gather together because of their hobbies, they gather together because the clubs that they join, the cliques that they're a part of. People have careers and they begin to join together just simply because of the

careers they have, the jobs they have, the unions that they are a part of, gender, race. People gather together according to those particular things, and sometimes military service, “Ok. We're military. We're going to gather together and we're going to come together for that particular reason.” You realize that we segment. We not only segment, but we join, and we not only join but we protect, and we defend our turf and that's fundamentally what's happening in 1 Corinthians 1 as he talks about this. In a way, what you see within this text is you have all these “ites” that are proclaiming their origin or they're beginning, or what they're about, and they're defending it by virtue of city states. Each one develops a city state, a wall of protection, things that they guard, and they protect, and they say, “This is what we're about.” They literally form their identity by virtue of the things that they pursue. This is one of the great dangers of our society and one of the things that I've seen as a major problem oftentimes within the church. The problem isn't just that people have a tendency to do that. The problem is that people begin to try to bring that in the church. “We’re a particular identity.”

When you walk through that door, you cease to have those identities. You walk through those doors; you become a child of God. You should be walking that way everywhere you go, but in this church, it's no longer about your background; it's not whether you're a Jew or Greek or bond or free, female or male, according to Galatians. It has absolutely nothing to do with it. It has nothing to do with your politics; it has nothing to do with your background. Your heritage is out of it, even your nation is out of it.

A number of years ago, somebody asked me, "Why don't you have the American flag? Because a lot of Baptist churches put the American flag in the churches. Why don't you have the American flag in your church?" I said, "Because we don't worship the United States of America. We worship God and to bring the American flag in here would put that on equal status of God." One of the things that Pilate tried to do was he tried to bring a standard of the Roman government in the temple. I don't know if you've read what actually happened, but a massacre happens because the Jews said, "You can't bring that

which is unholy in the holy place. That's a holy place. You can't do that." It was a big eagle that represented and the shields that he would bring in from the Roman government because it would represent, and he felt like that was a way in which they could be represented within. All the way through, what you're going to see is that there's a tendency of man to develop a sense of belonging somewhere. He identifies himself as this person. When you come to Christ, you become a new creation. You are born again into a different family. So, as we come into this realm, we're no longer in the realm of a citizen of the United States; according to Hebrews, we're a citizen of a different country. Jesus will say, "This isn't My kingdom. My kingdom is not even in this world." And Abraham will so see this, that he will gravitate so much to the heavenly kingdom that he'll see this place as a place in which he's simply a stranger and an alien. This is not his home. This is the way we live. We are a holy people. Another nation. We're actually another nation within a nation. Now, does that mean that you don't honor the country that you're in? Absolutely not.

Let me give you an example of that. Jeremiah 29 makes reference to this, and what's interesting is that God would say this to His own people, who, by the way, when He called them out, were His nation. But of course, as you remember, by the time you get into 1 Samuel 8, what begins to happen is they want a king, and as they begin to want a king, then they want to be like other nations and so many other things. The problem of our nation is that we use phrases like "Under God," but we're not, and just because you say something doesn't mean you are. So, as you come to Jeremiah 29, you have God's own people that He had actually called and that nation was to be a theocracy. Which, by the way, is the only theocracy that has ever existed. That is to say, was the only nation that was at one time totally under the control of God. They were led by Him. They were protected by Him. Everything was done according to Him. However, they went away from that and because they went away, God says, "We're going to bring you under another nation. You wanted to be like the other nations? We're going to let you live under the other nations." So, he brings in Babylon. You're familiar with the story and the captivity. If you look in

Jeremiah 29, what you have is Jeremiah sent to tell the king, “Look, this is what you do. You're about to go into captivity. You need to submit to the nation that you're going to.”

So, the passage reads basically this, that this letter was handed, and he says,

(Jeremiah 29:4) “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon,

(Jeremiah 29:5) ‘Build houses and live in them; and plant gardens and eat their produce.

(Jeremiah 29:6) ‘Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease.

(Jeremiah 29:7) ‘Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile...”

So, as a citizen of America, what should we do? Seek the good of our country. There's no doubt about that.

However, we're not led by our country. We do what we

do for God. We represent God in everything we do. It's sort of like when you go to work, you need to work hard. You need to work harder than everybody else, but you're not working for the boss. You're working for God. So, if the boss was to tell you to do something that would be inappropriate to what God has called you to do, you would never do that, because He's the one you take orders from. This passage is clearly setting stage.

Romans 13 emphasizes that as well. In the time of a king like Nero, God writes through the apostle Paul, and He says, "I want you to submit yourself to all authority, for all authorities are ordained by God." and you realize, "Ok, that's what He wants me to do." But you have to continue to read the text, and He clarifies within the passage that when you submit to the authority of the government, it's for the purpose of paying taxes. "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's." Well, what is Caesar's? The glory, the magnificence, the praise? No, no, no, no. That's not his. Taxes? Yes, that's his. Give him the taxes. Pay him the taxes. As you go on, it tells us, "And give to God that which is God's." So, as we as we go through this, what I

want you to see is that man has this tendency to form cliques. Cliques will oftentimes walk in those doors, and they'll try to in some way move me to move off of why we're here. The reason why we're here is to give Him glory. The reason why we're here is to be separate from the way that the world thinks. We don't think the same way.

Now, let me show you an example of where this could go awry, and one of the examples that I want to give you is found in 2 Chronicles 26. If you remember, the individual, the king that is mentioned in this particular passage, it is Uzziah who was a good king. So, it almost complicates things more because you have a good king that ultimately does something wrong, and you wouldn't expect that. I mean, how wonderful it is if in fact we have a leader in our country and our nation that is doing the right thing. Once again, by virtue of cliques, we have certain people that are against him and certain people that are for him, and whatever. But according to 2 Chronicles 16, you have this king that was actually made king at a very early age, and it seems like his mother had some influence on him,

which I don't think was necessarily a bad thing, but it seems like he was doing good up to the point that the prophet that kind of raised him lived. Then, when that Prophet died, he began getting full of himself. So, the way that the passage reads is that you have this king, he is doing these particular things that seem to aggrandize him, and it is all in this that he begins to display great things. As it says in verse 2, you have Asa, he then brings in silver and gold and treasures, and through this, he begins to feel so full of himself that he breaks treaties. You not only have this king that begins to draw people astray, and ultimately rebels, even against the seers that God brings in his life, and in that rebellion causes great harm to himself, but you'll see a pattern of this with the kings, i.e. with the ones that are leaders of the nations.

If you drop on down a little bit further in 2 Chronicles 26, you'll see Uzziah, and it says,

(2 Chronicles 26:1) “And all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the place of his father Amaziah.

(2 Chronicles 26:2) He built Eloth and restored it to Judah..."

I mean, he's going to be doing great things.

(2 Chronicles 26:3) "Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem..."

So, things are going pretty well.

(2 Chronicles 26:4) "He did right in the sight of the LORD according to all that his father Amaziah had done."

And this is the key verse, if you look with me,

(2 Chronicles 26:5) "He continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding through the vision of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God prospered him."

Now, what we have is a civil government, and as long as that government followed God, what was happening? Things were going well.

It goes on in the passage that God helped him in defeating the enemy.

(2 Chronicles 26:7) “God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians...”

(2 Chronicles 26:8) “The Ammonites also gave tribute to Uzziah...”

(2 Chronicles 26:9) “Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem...”

(2 Chronicles 26:10) “He built towers in the wilderness...”

He had a great army, if you look at verse 11. “You have a great army. Wow, you're probably really somebody, aren't you?”

(2 Chronicles 26:11) “Moreover, Uzziah had an army ready for battle, which entered combat by divisions...”

It goes on and says that just this elite army was 307,000 people. So, pretty impressive all the way through.

So, then it reads this way,

(2 Chronicles 26:15) “In Jerusalem he made engines of war invented by skillful men to be on the towers and on the corners for the purpose of shooting arrows and great stones. Hence his fame spread afar, for he was marvelously helped until he was strong.”

Up to a point, he seems to be doing pretty well. People were saying, “Wow, look at all this stuff he accumulated.” But at one point, he probably thought, “You know what, by my might and my power, I've made this happen.” So, you know what he decides to do? He decides to go into the temple, and he decides to say fundamentally, “I'm king. I'm going to do what I want to do.” And he goes in, and he offers sacrifice to God. The priests come in and they go, “You can't do that. You can't bring that in here.” And he doesn't listen to them. Scripture says he was struck by leprosy at that moment, and the rest of his life was a leper. Is there a signal that God is sending? Yeah. You can't bring that in here. It doesn't belong in here. This is a place where we elevate God, not man; not the accomplishments of man, not anything that he does. We elevate God alone. This is fundamentally what is repeated over and over again in the Book of Isaiah.

If you look with me in Isaiah 42, it reads this way,

(Isaiah 42:8) “I am the LORD, that is My name;
I will not give My glory to another...”

That, to me, is just so clear. “Well, don't you want to give praise to this person?” I don't want to hear praise to Pastor Gary. We're going to give glory due His name. Glory is due His name.

If you look at chapter 43, you see the same thing that's been repeated, and what an interesting chapter this is, in Chapter 43, in particular, which God basically is saying to His nation, “I formed you. I took care of you. I'm the one that protected you.” And He said, “And I've done this for one reason.” Do you know what the reason is? It gives it to us (in the passage).

(Isaiah 43:7) “Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory...”

Why has God saved you? For His glory. Yeah, to proclaim His glory, not yours. That's why He goes on and says,

(Isaiah 43:11) “I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me.”

So, you mean the hospitals aren't saviors? You mean the doctors aren't saviors? The nurses, the first responders, people in the armed forces, they're not our saviors? No,

there's no savior other than God. Now, look, in all fairness, the world glories in that stuff. I'm good with that. I mean, I'll sit by the side and wave a flag too, but I'm not going to glory in that, nor do I see that as my trust, my hope or my savior. I don't know if you're thinking that this is semantics. It's not semantics. To me it's real clear, you don't give praise to that at all. You don't lift it up. Once you do that, you fall out of the ranks of who you are. If God has saved you, He's called you for one purpose, to give glory to Him.

One of the concerns that God has here is,

(Isaiah 43:23) “You have not brought to Me the sheep of your burnt offerings...”

A burnt offering was that which literally declared a total commitment to God because you literally burn the whole thing. So, what you were saying is, “All is yours.” This is why Romans 12 says, “Present your bodies a living sacrifice.” “You mean my body is not the governments?” No, it's God's. You've given it to God. Once again, different than the world. I understand if they think a different way. But Scripture tells us in Jeremiah 10, you're

not to think like the world. You're not to hold the things in esteem that they hold. They have idols. They have things that they elevate. But we're not like that and we don't fear the same things that they fear. "Oh, there are going to be rockets shooting at me." I'm not afraid. I don't need a gold dome to protect me. I mean, our government may have one, but I don't need that. That's not what protects me. What protects me is God because He loves me, because He cares for me, because He's called me for this particular purpose.

(Isaiah 44:7) "Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it..."

(Isaiah 44:8) "... Is there any God besides Me, Or is there any other Rock? ..."

"Is there anybody really you can depend on beside Me? Is there anybody that's stable?"

(Isaiah 44:24) "Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb,
"I, the LORD, am the maker of all things,
Stretching out the heavens by Myself
And spreading out the earth all alone."

“Is there anybody that is greater than Me? Is there anyone beside Me?”

He will say the same thing in Isaiah 45:6,

“...That there is no one besides Me.

I am the LORD, and there is no other.”

(Isaiah 45:18) “... “I am the LORD, and there is none else.”

(Isaiah 45:21) “... And there is no other God besides Me,

A righteous God and a Savior;

There is none except Me.”

I don't know. Does that leave it up to anybody else? I mean, is there somebody else that's a savior? Is it somebody else that's the provider?

Psalms 33, if you look there with me. Once again, the tie in all of this is that we have a tendency to be a bunch of “ites,” and we identify ourselves with whatever we gravitate towards. I've seen people gravitate around Winnebago, and it's just so important that you actually have a type A place to live.

But if you look with me in Psalm 33:16 is,

“The king is not saved...”

Now, regardless of what a king may say, and let me just say this too, that Nebuchadnezzar said, “I built this kingdom by my power and for my glory.” And God goes, “Ok, it's not happening.” And in Daniel 4, he's out of there. He becomes an animal, and he's not the only one that's done that. I mean, you read in Acts 12 of Herod and his clothes began to radiate, and they go, “A god and not a king!” And because he did not give God the glory, God ate him up with worms. I don't know if you're kind of getting the point, but the point is that glory belongs to Him and only Him.

(Psalm 33:16) “The king is not saved by a mighty army; A warrior is not delivered by great strength.”

“Oh, we won this war because of...” No no, no. If it was about great strength or about a great army, there literally is no reason why Alexander the Great could have won all the wars that he won because he had a very small army, and yet, God so ordained it and prophesied it in the Book of Daniel that it would happen. The very fact that Israel is able to sustain itself in the midst of all of this turmoil,

what do you think that is? Do you think that's just because Israel is so great? God has made them great.

(Psalm 33:16) "The king is not saved by a mighty army;
A warrior is not delivered by great strength.

(Psalm 33:17) A horse is a false hope for victory;
Nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength."

(Psalm 33:20) "... He is our help and our shield.

(Psalm 33:21) For our heart rejoices in Him,
Because we trust in His holy name."

If you look in Psalm 44:4, and really, I could exhaust you in all of this, but it reads this way,

(Psalm 44:4) "You are my King, O God..."

So, who is our King?

"... Command victories for Jacob.

(Psalm 44:5) Through You we will push back our
adversaries;

Through Your name we will trample down those who rise
up against us.

(Psalm 44:6) For I will not trust in my bow,
Nor will my sword save me.

(Psalm 44:7) But You have saved us from our adversaries,
And You have put to shame those who hate us.

(Psalm 44:8) In God we have boasted all day long,
And we will give thanks to Your name forever.”

I'm going to give you verses to where you're just going to go, “Ok, that's enough. I think I got it.”

(Psalm 60:11) “O give us help against the adversary,
For deliverance by man is in vain.”

That's such a short verse. Let's just let that one filter in your head, “Deliverance by man is in vain,” and yet we say, “It's all because of them.” It's not because of them.

(Psalm 60:12) “Through God we shall do valiantly,
And it is He who will tread down our adversaries.”

And one of my favorites is this Psalm 146, if you look there with me,

(Psalm 146:2) “I will praise the LORD while I live...”

What a great text this is.

You want an injunction?

(Psalm 146:3) “Do not trust in princes,
In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation.”

It's God who,

(Psalm 146:7) “Who executes justice for the oppressed;
Who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free.

(Psalm 146:8) The LORD opens the eyes of the blind;

The LORD raises up those who are bowed down;

The LORD loves the righteous;

(Psalm 146:9) The LORD protects the strangers;

He supports the fatherless and the widow,

But He thwarts the way of the wicked.”

I mean, even though I may reach out and care for somebody, that's not even me. In Him, I live and breathe and even have my existence. How could I take credit for anything good that I've ever done? How could I possibly do that? It would be blasphemy to God. Anytime I give glory to anyone else; I'm going to pay taxes, but I don't glory in our country. Let me just say this too, that there's

a real problem when you begin to wave that flag for things that this flag stands for. "We pledge allegiance to the flag and the things that it stands for"? I don't know if I pledge allegiance to the things that it stands for, because the things that I'm seeing it stand for are not things that I stand for, not things that I agree with. Am I going to live in this nation and am I going to support all I can? Am I going to wish good for the nation? Am I going to pray good for the nation? Am I going to pray for the leaders?

Absolutely. I'm going to do that. Absolutely. Am I going to glory in them? No way. I don't see a lot of glory out there.

I've got to show you the passage in Leviticus 10, because fundamentally one of the things that we're protecting in all of this, once again, to bring it all around, is the identity of who we are. Strangely enough, all of these different ones go out and they develop their own identity, whether it's their love for the power or it's their love for acquisition or whether it's their love just for their own personal identity, which they kind of invent as they go along the way. But we do have an identity and it's in the person of Christ. We are children of God. We're a royal

people, a holy people for God's own possession. We are His nation, there's no doubt about that, and especially when we come in as a body of Christ, we come in and we're a holy people. So, where are we? We're in a holy place. In a holy place, is there any room for the common? The answer is absolutely not.

There's no room for the common, and if you look with me in Leviticus 10, you'll see this in particular with Abihu and Nadab.

(Leviticus 10:1) “Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire...”

Another word for “strange” is “common”. They brought things of the world, the identities of the world in the church. It's another way of putting it. Because what God has called us to do is to be separate, “Come out from among them and be separate.”

The passage reads,

“... after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them.”

I don't know if you noticed, but we don't even have yoga classes. There's a reason why we only lift up God.

(Leviticus 10:2) “And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.”

I mean, these are sons of Aaron. These are the ones that would have right to be in there, and yet, because they brought in something that didn't belong in the holy. See, the church is a holy place. You don't want to bring other thoughts in. You don't want to bring any ideas in. You don't want to bring other glories in. You don't want to elevate anything else but God. Anybody that comes to me wanting to do that becomes an enemy of the cross.

Because what we're about is God and God alone. Paul will say, “I came to you knowing nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” That means that we're not elevating anything else, anyone else, other than God. I don't know what other way to put it because I know that there are so

many other influences that are going to hit you in this world, are going to be a part of you. Certain people want a certain kind of music, they want a certain kind of performance, and quite frankly, we hold a lot of that stuff back because we see it as looking too much like the world. It seems too common, and it's not treating God as special and it's not treating the family of God right. So, we move that aside and say, "We're not going to do that." Now, I will say this, that the stand that we take in this is not popular. But as we said from the beginning of this work, I'd rather have 5 people that love God than 5,000 that don't. We're looking for are those that are few and when you consider that Jesus ministered to so many multitudes of people and then finally ends up with 12 and they even run at the time of the cross. It's a magnificent thing, and think about this, He would entrust the keys of heaven to 12 men that were normal "Joes" to begin with. But the reason why He chose them was because they didn't have all the baggage of all the other identities. They had surrendered those, and that's what God is looking for. So, identity is going to be a big thing with us and we're not of this world. This isn't our kingdom. This isn't our

country. This isn't our world. We're of a different kingdom and it doesn't mean you can't celebrate things that are done that are right, things that are done that is good, and it doesn't mean that you can't want good for your nation, which you should absolutely do. There are going to be times that you might be called into service. You need to go because God has ordained that. If God calls you in a service, you need to go because that's due what the government says. But the things that we oftentimes fight for are the wrong things and I'm just not for that.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we want to lift up Your name. There's no one like You. We want this to ever be what we proclaim from this pulpit; to give You the honor due Your name. We thoroughly are convinced that there's no place for anyone else but You here, and Lord, we're not going to compromise that. Give us strength as

we trust in You, and Lord, let the world see our testimony and let them see how You protect us, whether it be in times of war or in times of disease. Let the world see that we're not afraid and we're not dependent on anything they have to offer. Let them see a faith that is solely in You.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. We know that all of us come from a different perspective. As spread out as the “ites” were, we have an origin, we have a place at which we were raised. We have influences that have gathered around us, clubs that we belong to, cliques that we had within our lives and influences that began to move us to think a certain way. But Father, when we came to You, we laid all of those at the feet of the cross, and we said, “I need to die today with You. I need to take up my cross and follow You.” And whatever was gained for you at that time, you let go of. You remember that? Don't pick it back up. You and I are following Christ. We're exalting God. That's the reason we were called; the whole reason that we're saved. Think about all the people that could be saved, and yet, so few are walking through that

narrow gate. For what reason? To glorify God. If you've in some way fallen off that path, I'm going to ask you to get back on today; understand why you're here.