

# *Philippians 4:9*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 11/04/2007*

## **What Are You Doing?**

### **Prayer**

Father, we praise You that even though there are trials and storms and though Satan may buffet, because of who You are and what You have done in Christ, it can be well with us. That You have regarded our helpless estate and sent Your Son to shed His blood for us. Father, we praise You for who You are. We thank You for what You have done. We thank You for Your Son. And we praise You for Him. And Father, we pray as we look into Your Word today, that You would help us to humble ourselves before You, that by Your power and strength we would lay aside all malice and wickedness, that we would confess our sins and receive the Word implanted. Father, that we would not be merely hearers who delude themselves, but by Your power and strength we would be doers of what You say, so that You will be glorified. We ask You to bless Your Word as it goes out. May it bring You glory and honor in the lives that are Yours. We pray this now in Jesus' name, amen.

### **Sermon**

Well it does not take long to realize that we live in a consumer-oriented Christian culture. And in this consumer-oriented Christian culture, you can actually find churches that are flavored based on man's own desires. If you desire an upbeat, exciting worship time, there's a church that will cater to that. If you desire a liturgical, traditional church, you can find a church that will cater to that. If you desire a church that has a certain type of musical style – jazz, classical, heavy, metal, rock and roll - you can find a church that will cater towards your desires. Some churches are catering towards multiple desires at once. And churches actually are being planted around here and other places based on an analysis of the unbelieving community, of what they desire.

Now folks, most of you I hope recognize that that's not the way that church should be done. Why? Because we are not the head of the church, deciding what happens in church. God, the Son Jesus Christ, is the head of the church, and He has declared in His Word how the church should function. Remember that friendship with the world is adultery towards God. We are not to lean on our own understanding. But it seems pretty straight forward from the Word of God how we should function as a body, how we should gather together, for the equipping of the saints, for the works of service, that we would go into the world and make disciples. It seems pretty clear. But ultimately, we see these days in the evangelical church that these truths are being twisted into the subtle shades of man's desires. Indeed I was taught in seminary, actually, that there are various types of churches. Now this first portion is not wrong. But the conclusion that they came to and taught there, that there are teaching churches, there are learning churches, there are worshipping churches, there are liturgical churches, there are outreach churches, there are doing churches or social churches. And I was taught ultimately that all of these are fine because they all find a niche in the body of Christ. Is that true? Is the way the church functions up for grabs to us and for us to decide?

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Often I hear people say, “We are church shopping.” And I ask them, “Well what are you shopping for?” And you hear the answers concerning their desires. And sometimes I am greatly blessed when they share from the Word of God what they are looking for in a church. But I believe we are going to see today that a Biblical church is a teaching church that is producing the Word of God, teaching the Word of God, and the church ultimately is learning also and receiving and *then* in that, doing what God says. And I believe today we are going to see and have the question answered (we saw last week, “What are you thinking?”), today we are going to see, “What are you doing?” And we are going to see the behavior of a true, heavenly citizen, which is a doer of the Word of God.

Would you turn with me in your Bibles to Philippians chapter four, and we are slowly coming to the end of the book of Philippians. And I just look forward to every week, sharing this wonderful book. There is so much truth. It is all truth, but there is so much truth that is so wonderful. Now we have been looking at the book of Philippians, and we have seen that Paul has shared his circumstances. He is imprisoned, but the Gospel is not. He shared his attitude, “To live is Christ and to die is gain.” That his understanding in everything, that whether life or death, he desired Christ to be magnified. And then he addressed the Philippians’ attitudes, that they were to be united, humble in spirit. They were to have the mind of Christ, they were to have “this attitude” or this thinking which was also in Christ Jesus, who ultimately considered us more important than Himself by humbling Himself, taking on the form of a bondservant, becoming obedient to the Father’s will, to the point of death, even death on a cross. We see that we are to be that way. And therefore, the Lord God highly exalted Him, that He is Lord over all, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. Therefore, we are to obediently work out our salvation because God is at work in us. We are not to complain and grumble, because He is the Lord. He is sovereign over all.

And then we saw ultimately in the beginning of chapter three, that when you desire to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, there will be persecution, there will be opposition. And Paul shared amid the glory of these truths that there are those, there are make-believers, there are false brethren who ultimately glory in self, worship in their own flesh, and put their confidence in their own abilities. Paul says, basically, “We are not like them. We are not like them.” And he gives an example, “If we were going to be like them, I could be the biggest one, I could be the best one.” And he gives all his qualifications religiously before he came to Christ. But he said, “All of this is refuse in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus,” whom he lost everything for.

Now we saw the Apostle Paul’s mindset, which was to press forward, not looking back, that everything is loss in view of knowing Christ and then becoming like Christ, which is the upward call – becoming like Christ and being with Christ. And the Apostle Paul encouraged us to imitate him and to imitate those who walk like he walks. We are to stand firm in the Lord, we are to imitate the Apostle Paul because we have a heavenly citizenship. Our citizenship is not like here, like the many ultimately, the many make-believers whose mindset is on the flesh, whose end is in destruction. But we have a heavenly citizenship. And the Lord Jesus Christ will Himself change us ultimately and glorify us when we see Him.

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Do you remember what we saw in chapter four? We saw that we are to stand firm in the Lord. We are to be reconciled, through the example of Euodia and Syntyche. We are to have the same mind, we are to live in harmony, to be like-minded (same word). We are to be rejoicing, finding our joy in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are to be at rest, finding our peace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**<sup>5</sup> Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men.** (Let it be manifest to all men. Why?)  
***The Lord is near.*** **<sup>6</sup> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.** **<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard (or garrison) your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [Philippians 4:5-7]**

We pray about everything. We worry about nothing. We let our requests be known to Him. The Lord is near.

And then we saw ultimately that we are to be dwelling on those things that God has revealed in His Word - whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute. We are to be continually thinking about the things of Christ as revealed in His Word. And we saw last week and the week before that this list encompasses the boundaries that our thoughts should dwell. We saw that each one of these areas has a characteristic to do with the Lord, His character, or His work as revealed in the Word of God.

With that in mind, let's now, if you would turn with me to Philippians 4:9, and we are going to look at, "What are we doing today?" Now I shared last week that if you look at Philippians 4:8 and you look at Philippians 4:9, and let's read those together.

**<sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.** **<sup>9</sup> The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you. [Philippians 4:8-9]**

We saw two commands, end of 8 – "let your mind dwell on these things." We should be continually regarding and thinking about these things that are revealed in Scripture concerning Christ and what He is doing. And then today we see another command in the middle of verse 9 – "practice these things." Today I believe we are going to see as heavenly citizens, that we are to be continually doing what we have learned, received, heard, and seen in godly examples, as exemplified in the Word of God.

So then what are we to be doing as heavenly citizens? Many times people ask you, "What should you be doing if you are a Christian? Well you should be feeding the poor, you should be doing this, you should be doing that." Well what should we be doing as Christians? What is it that the Word of God says we should be doing? Again, verse 9, Philippians 4, "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you. [Philippians 4:9]"

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Now notice quickly, there is a command here as I have shared. And we are going to look at it more in depth later in the passage, but it is “practice these things.” It literally means, “Be continually doing something.” Isn’t that what we are doing when we practice something? We are continually doing that. And here he says, “practice these things.” And it is in a present tense, imperative mood. And what does that mean? Active voice. All that means is that we are actively doing something continually, and it is a command from the living God. “Practice these things.”

Well what is it that we are to be continually doing? What is it that we should be continually doing? Feeding the poor as I have mentioned? Evangelizing? Continually worshipping? What should we be continually doing? I think first of all, we will see the basis for our Christian behavior. He says, “The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things.” Did you notice the four action verbs here? Learned, received, heard, and seen. Now it is important to recognize that these particular verbs are not like the verb “practice,” which is to “continually do.” These are in a tense in Greek that speaks of a completed action. “The things you have learned,” it is a completed action. “The things you have received,” a completed action. “The things you have heard and seen in me,” Paul says, those are completed actions. Then, “continually practice these things.”

Now there are some possibilities we need to look at before we get into the individual portions here. How do these four things go together? Are they totally separate? Learned, received, heard, and seen? Or could they be combined in some way grammatically? And I think the question is resolved when we look at that term in the end of this here (before the verb “practice these things”), it says “in me.” Now certainly Paul is speaking of the things “seen in me,” right? That is obvious, right? Is he speaking of those things “learned in me”? I don’t think so. It does not make sense. Is he speaking of those things “received in me”? I don’t think so. That does not make sense. Is he speaking of the things “heard in me”? That is possible. But when I combine those together, “the things seen and heard in me,” I think those things go together.

So what am I trying to say? I believe we have the related ideas of learned and received, then the phrase “heard and seen in me.” “Learned and received” then “heard and seen in me.” “The things you have learned and received” - that is separate. And then, “The things you have heard and seen in me,” Paul is saying. I think that is what it is talking about.

Ok so what is the first thing we are to be continually doing? He says, “The things you have learned.” The things you have learned. The verb translated “learned” here is *manthano*. And we do not need to be a Greek scholar to understand what this word means. It simply means “learning something that is taught or observed.” It is pretty simple. It just means to learn. It really does. And I believe, folks, it is crucial to understand what Paul is saying here in this verse. We could pass through it so quickly. Our Christian behavior, the things we do, the things that we are to practice, are based on first and foremost what we have learned! He says, “Practice these things. The things you have (completed action) learned,” right? Our Christian behavior is based on what we have learned, complete action. It is not based on our feelings. He does not say, “The things you feel, practice these things. The wisdom you have, do that. The abilities you have, do that.” It is not based on our preferences, it is not based on

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whatever works. It is not based on our intellect. It is based on the things that you have learned. "The things you have learned, practice these things."

We need to recognize I believe, brother and sisters, the paramount importance of this very simple statement. The Christian life cannot be lived out without being taught. How can you do what you have not learned? And in like manner, if you learn the wrong thing, you are going to be doing the wrong thing. "The things you have learned..." Is that not what disciples are? They are taught to do everything Jesus did and said, right? Matthew 28:18,

**<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples (it's literally, "In your going. Going, make disciples") of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, (confirmation of their salvation, them being baptized. And then) <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you..."[Matthew 28:18-20a]**

Everything He commanded them. That is what being a disciple is! Observing what Jesus says. And it is not just what He says in the Gospels because it is all His Word, right? What He commanded them. And he says, **"...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."** [Matthew 28:20b] A disciple or a learner is someone who is taught and then observes what they are taught. It is pretty simple, right? Well we are going to see ultimately, Paul helps us here in showing us that it is not only being taught, that we need to receive it also. And ultimately we need to do what we have received.

Folks, a true disciple of Jesus Christ is one who does what He says, right? Who does His Word. Jesus said in Luke 6:46, **"Why do you called me, 'Lord, lord,' and not do what I say?"** [Luke 6:46] A true disciple of Jesus Christ is one who does what He says. And to do what He says, we first need to learn what He says from the Word of God. The basis for our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ (ultimately after having been saved, as we learned and as we will see again, the Gospel - we learned that also) is to be taught the Word of God.

Folks, and just a side note, that is one of the reasons why we here at Vancouver Bible Fellowship desire in obedience to center everything around the teaching of the Word of God. Every church should be, as we will see, a teaching church. Now with that in mind, they need to be a learning church and then a doing church, right? They need to be taught, receive it, learn it, ultimately, and then do it. Indeed Scripture reveals that we actually learned, same word *manthano*, the Gospel. Colossians chapter 1. Let's just kind of skip over a couple pages here to Colossians chapter 1. And Paul praises God because these people truly came to faith and they learned the Gospel and truly came to faith. Colossians 1:3. And I love the heart of Paul when he prays. He is excited about people who have been changed by Christ. That is what he is excited about.

**<sup>3</sup> We give thanks to God, <sup>b</sup>the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, <sup>4</sup> since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus (that is their salvation, they trusted in Christ Jesus. And the evidence of that...) and the love which you have for all the saints; <sup>5</sup>**

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***because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel, <sup>6</sup> which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth; <sup>7</sup> just as you (manthano) learned it from Epaphras... [Colossians 1:3-7a]***

Epaphras took the Word of God, the Gospel, and taught them the Gospel. They heard it, they understood it, they believed it, and they were changed. Scripture reveals that we learn in a sense. We are taught, ultimately. It is something we do not know. People do not know the Gospel by nature. Paul said it is from heaven, it is not a man-centered Gospel. The Gospel is from God. Man did not make it up. And folks, what is it that we are to be teaching and learning? There is a lot of teaching out there in churches, a lot of teaching. But what is it we are to be taught and where are we to find it?

First of all, it is the truth concerning Jesus Christ in His Word. Ephesians 4:20, Instead of living the way you used to live, in the futility of your mind, the hardness of your heart, all those things, he says, Ephesians 4:20

***<sup>20</sup> But you did not (manthano) learn Christ in this way, ("You did not learn Him that way," he says.) <sup>21</sup> if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus. [Ephesians 4:20-21]***

We are taught about the very person of Jesus Christ. We learn about the Lord Jesus Christ, that He is the way and the truth and the life, that no one comes to the Father but by Him. That He died for our sins according to the Scriptures. We learn truth about Christ in the Word. And we will see later on, a lot of people can learn and some people do not receive. And we will talk about that in a little bit.

"In the same way," Paul proclaims Christ. And in Colossians 1:28 if you want to skip back over to that portion. And I love this passage. He says, verse 28 of Colossians 1, ***<sup>28</sup> And we proclaim Him*** (that is Christ), ***admonishing every man*** (that is warning, admonishment is warning with instruction involved) ***and teaching every man*** (there was no one left out in the body of Christ when Paul was around. Admonishing every man, teaching every man) ***with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.*** (And he says,) ***<sup>29</sup> And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His <sup>1</sup>power, which mightily works within me. [Colossians 1:28-29]***

The ministry of the Apostle Paul was admonishing and teaching, proclaiming Christ. And folks, what we learn is found exclusively in the Word of God. And everything else is man's wisdom and pride. We do not learn other things. We learn from the Word of God. Turn with me to 2 Timothy. We will kind of go around all over the place here today. Second Timothy. These are Paul's last words to Timothy, his faithful disciple. Second Timothy chapter 3. And Paul is contrasting ultimately the bad guys that twist the Word, getting from bad to worse, with those who will teach the Word and exhorting Timothy to do so. Second Timothy 3:12,

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**<sup>12</sup> And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. <sup>13</sup> But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, (Folks, that is happening all over the place right? "...will proceed from bad to worse,") *deceiving and being deceived.* (But in contrast, now he is going to say, "This is not the way it should be for you, Timothy.") <sup>14</sup> You, however, continue in the things you have learned (*manthano*, those things you have learned) *and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them;* (And he is going to talk about where you learned them from, right?) <sup>15</sup> *and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.* (Here is what he is learning. "Continue in this, Timothy, continue in this.") <sup>16</sup> *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. [2 Timothy 3:12-17]***

"Timothy, the imposters are going from bad to worse, there is all sorts of junk out there. Continue in the things you have learned, knowing where you learned it – from the Word of God." We learn it from the Word of God. We learn it from the Word of God. Paul commanded Timothy to continue in the things he had learned. Where did he learn it? From the sacred writings, he says, from Scripture which is inspired by God. It is the Word of God, not stories and psychology, that we learn. It is the Word of God that Paul tells Timothy, as we will see, to preach right after he says "All Scripture, Timothy, continue in these things," he says (2 Timothy 4:1),

**<sup>1</sup> I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: <sup>2</sup> preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; <sup>4</sup> and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths. [2 Timothy 4:1-4]**

People will learn from somebody and they will, instead of the Word of God, they will accumulate teachers after their own desires and they will learn things based on their own desires. Churches based on their own desires. "Timothy, do not do that. Continue in the things you have learned, knowing where you learned them from."

Folks, we learn from the Word of God. That is why we teach the Word of God. The Christian walk is not based on our experiences, good or bad. The Christian walk is not based on how we feel. The Christian walk is not based on what we observe apart from the Word of God. The Christian walk is not based on our feelings. We are to learn what we have in the Word of God, and this is the basis for our Christian walk because it reveals the person of Christ and glorifies Him. Every church should be a teaching church. Every church should be a learning church. Every church based on that should be a doing church, based on what they have taught, learned, received and then do.

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Now as Paul exhorted Timothy, imposters would get from bad to worse. Unfortunately, lately as I have said, too many churches are teaching minute bits and pieces of the Word which are true with worldly wisdom around it – and experience and feelings and stories and psychology with a verse here and there. People are taken captive by empty deception as Paul warned the Colossians. What pride for anyone of us to share anything other than the Word of God. What does Peter say? For those who have speaking gifts, here is the mandate. Here are the brackets for anyone in the body of Christ who has a speaking gift. First Peter 4:11,

**<sup>11</sup> *“Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the (oracles or the) utterances of God; [1 Peter 4:11]***

If you speak, speak God’s Word. If you are counselor, counsel with God’s Word. If you encourage someone, encourage with God’s Word. Now in Romans chapter 16 we see that in the context of learning sound teaching, there are those who will come along with unsound teaching. Romans 16, let’s turn there also. Romans 16:17. Paul has completed his treatise on the Gospel and then the application to the Gospel. He has given his greetings and his goodbyes. And out of nowhere, all of a sudden, Paul says this statement. Romans 16:17,

**<sup>17</sup> *Now I urge (or exhort or beg) you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned,* (There was sound teaching through the Apostle Paul. They learned it, and now people were coming along and causing dissensions and hindrances contrary to that teaching. And he says, “Keep your eye on them brethren.” That is the entire church. And then he says) *and turn away from them. (Why?)* <sup>18</sup> *For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. [Romans 16:17-18]***

Liturgy does not direct our teaching. It is the Word of God that directs our teaching. Tradition does not direct our teaching. It is the Word of God that directs our teaching. Our own wisdom does not direct our teaching. It is the Word of God that directs our teaching. Our worship does not direct our teaching. It is the Word of God that directs our worship. Our experience does not direct our teaching. But teaching brings about a proper experience. It is paramount that we as believers are being taught in sound doctrine. It is paramount that what we are being taught is correct. And it is paramount that you examine those things to see if they are so, that you are like the Bereans who checked it out. Even the Apostle Paul, they checked him out to make sure that it was so.

Folks, do you realize if we do what we are taught and we are taught wrong, we are doing wrong? You realize that? If you are taught wrong theology, if you are taught wrong in Scripture, and you do that and practice that, you are doing wrong. And there is a lot of bad teaching, and there is a lot of bad doing in the body of Christ. Now folks, I am not talking about going around and addressing every person and every church. We need to recognize that there are teachers, false teachers, that are bad; and we need to turn away from them. And we need to go to those in those churches if the Lord leads.

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**<sup>24</sup> And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, <sup>25</sup> with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition... [2 Timothy 2:24-25a]**

Folks, there is not much turning away from bad teachers these days in the body of Christ. We need to have the Word of God taught correctly. We need to do what is right. Folks, I believe it is crucial for us to understand this first point here. Our behavior is based on what we have learned. Completed action. The Christian life cannot be led without understanding the truth from Scripture concerning Christ. I want to ask you, are you being taught and learning the Word of God accurately on a consistent and habitual basis?

Now folks, it is not just through the pulpit that we are taught. The writer of Hebrews rebukes the Hebrews. He says, "By this time you should be teachers. You should be teaching one another! Time sufficient has happened." Paul tells Timothy to find faithful men who will be able to teach others. The body of Christ should be teaching each other the Word of God. Certainly from the pulpit, certainly through Bible studies, whatever it would be. But one another in our circumstances also. Are you being taught the Word of God on a consistent, habitual basis? Again, this is why the ministry here in this church is centered around the Word of God in every avenue; because it is the Word of God, His Word concerning Christ that changes our lives by His Spirit and enables us to address every circumstance and do what He wants us to do for His glory.

And folks, if you come here just on Sunday for an hour a week and that is all the teaching you are getting, you are not getting enough teaching. We need to be together in Bible studies. We need to be together. We need to be listening to sermons on the radio, we need to be taught the Word of God. And I want to ask you, what was it the early church was continually devoted to? Jumping up and down and clapping hands? That is not what they were continually devoted to. Were they continually devoted to works of outward service? What were they continually devoted to? The Apostles' teaching, the breaking of bread, fellowship, and prayer. And from that comes the right behavior, whether it is serving the people, whatever it is, it will flow from that. And the right experience and result will flow from that also.

Devotion to the teaching of the Word of God is an absolutely crucial part of your walk. "Whatever you have learned." If the Word of God is dwelling richly in your hearts, it is going to affect your behavior moment by moment. It is going to come to your mind day by day. Either we are learning or we are not. Now some of you may have learned a lot but we are going to see that some people do not do what they have learned. That they are merely hearers that do not do, who delude themselves. Second Timothy 3:7, a little earlier than the passage that I shared concerning Timothy and continuing in the things that he learned, as Paul describes the bad guys he says they are <sup>7</sup> ***always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*** [2 Timothy 3:7]

Learning is not simply the only thing we do. If we just learn and that's it, then we have missed this whole passage. But we must remember it is the basis for what we do in Christ. James chapter 1 verse 21,

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**<sup>21</sup> Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, (Get your sin out of the way, confess your sin, then receive the Word of God.) in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup> But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; <sup>24</sup> for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. <sup>25</sup> But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does. [James 1:21-25]**

We are going to see some of you are good learners. You have been taught a lot. But you are not a doer. You are not a doer, you do not do what you are taught. You hear the Word every week and it does not apply to your lives. We are going to see there is more to just learning. We have got to learn. But there is more to just learning the Word of God. I believe Paul shares this in the next phrase. Because of that he says, "The things you have learned (back in our passage) and received..."

One side note. Again, are you placing yourself in the position to continually hear the Word of God? It is my responsibility to teach you the Word of God, which I will be judged for (James 3). It is your responsibility to be in a position to learn. We see Hebrews ultimately, chapter 5-6, we see Philippians 4:9. But beyond that, we need to receive what we have learned. "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things..." It is one thing to learn Scripture. And sometimes there are churches that everybody learns but nobody does, right? That does not mean we should not learn. It does not mean we should not learn. I hear and I heard this in seminary, the discrediting of teaching churches because people were not learning. It is not the teaching problem. It is the response of the people to the Word of God. It is my responsibility to teach you the Word of God. It is your responsibility to receive the Word of God.

The word here, "received," is *paralambano*, *Para* means "alongside" and *lambano* is to "grab" or to "take." To take alongside. You learn it and you take it alongside to yourself. You receive the Word. We are not only to learn the Word, we are to receive the Word. We are to respond by receiving what we have been taught. Now let me remind you that God's Word is inspired by His Spirit, 2 Timothy 3:16 we saw earlier. "Men moved by His Spirit spoke from God," second Peter 1:20-21. "The Word of God is spiritually appraised," 1 Corinthians chapter 2. And it is God's Spirit that teaches us His Spirit-inspired Word. Let's take a brief look at John chapter 16. We are going to look at verses 12 -15. You can turn there with me just for a second. Keep your fingers in Philippians. Philippians 4:9 is a short verse. We probably should have it memorized by now.

John 16:12. Jesus has been sharing with His disciples that He is going to go. He is telling them their hearts should not be troubled. He is going to come for them. He has prepared a place for them. And He is not going to leave them as orphans. He is going to give them His Spirit. John 16:12, Jesus says,

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**<sup>12</sup> "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup> "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. <sup>14</sup> "He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. (The Spirit of God glorifies Christ by taking what is His and discloses it to us. When the Spirit of God reveals the Word of God concerning Christ, God is glorified. And He says,) <sup>15</sup> "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you. [John 16:12-15]**

Folks, when we are taught the Word of God, there is a humble dependence upon His Spirit to teach us, to help us understand the Word of God, and then we are to receive the Word of God. To take it alongside. And folks, true children of Jesus Christ will hear His voice. Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice." If you are truly His child, you are going to respond to the Word of God. You are going to receive it. And the Apostle Paul rejoiced when the Thessalonians received the Word of God. First Thessalonians chapter 2, and I will go back a little bit. Verse 10,

**<sup>10</sup> You are witnesses, and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; (Paul is talking to them.) <sup>11</sup> just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, <sup>12</sup> so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. (Paul did this within three weeks of first knowing these believers. He says,) <sup>13</sup> And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received (paralambano) from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. [2 Thessalonians 2:10-13]**

True believers receive the Word of God. Now certainly we can be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. But now with the Spirit of God in us, we have the ability to hear the Word of God, understand the Word of God, and receive the Word of God. And actually, you can discern who is from God and who is not from God based on their reception of the Word of God. First John 4:4,

**<sup>4</sup> You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. <sup>5</sup> They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. <sup>6</sup> We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; (Now this is the Apostle John who in the beginning of this letter said, "We beheld, we were there, we were with Christ (ultimately)," speaking of the Apostles. And he says, "We are from God; he who knows God listens to us;") **he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. [1 John 4:4-6]****

If you listen to the Word of God, you understand it, you respond to it, that is one way to know that you are saved. His Spirit confirms with our Spirit, I believe, through the Word of God that we are children of

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God. What is the Spirit's job? To take the things of Christ and make them plain and clearer to us. His Spirit confirms with our Spirit that we are children of God. The Word of God rings true in our hearts. You can know if you are from God or not based on how you respond to the Word. If you consistently, habitually turn way and disregard the Word of God, I would say, "Examine yourself to see if you are in the faith."

I want to ask you, how do you respond when you hear the Word? Do you receive it like a wonderful friend with open arms? Do you want to hear it? Do you rejoice in it? The learning of the Word of God and the reception of the Word of God in our passage is a completed action. "The things you have learned (completed action), the things you have received (completed action)..." You are not wondering if it is true or not. You are not debating it. You have received it. "Practice these things."

Some of you have learned a lot of the Word of God. But you do not do it. You are anxious for everything rather than anxious for nothing. You are angry about everything, rather than letting your forbearing spirit being known to all men. And I could go on and on. Maybe you have never truly received the Word of God. You never truly received it. Because sin has caused a separation between you and God. And you need to humbly come before the Lord, confess your sin, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, receive Christ as Lord and Savior. Receive the Word implanted which is able to save your souls.

And folks, if you do not receive (as Paul would tell the Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians) the love of the truth, if you do not receive the Word concerning your salvation and, your sin and your salvation, you will be just a hearer and not a doer and your destruction is awaiting you. Receive the Word. "The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men." The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." What is your response to the Word of God? Are you placing yourself in the position to have good, sound teaching and then are you receiving the Word of God? So we are to be in a position to learn, we are to be taught, we are to receive and next we see I believe, we are to imitate those who actually do this. The Philippians were commanded to, what they saw and heard in Paul, they were to do it.

Again, back to Philippians 4:9. "<sup>9</sup> The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things..." [Philippians 4:9a] Now again I believe, this is my view, that these two last verbs "hear and seen in me" go with that same phrase. The Philippians heard about Paul. They heard about his behavior. They heard about the things that he had done. They had heard His Word and seen it in Him. They had also experienced it and seen it in Paul. "The things you have heard and seen in me..."

Well what are these things? The Philippians had seen Paul trusting Christ. They had seen the Word of God worked out in the life of the Apostle Paul. And when they were not in his presence, they had heard about the Word worked out in his life. They were hearing about it through this letter that Epaphroditus had ultimately brought to them. And they were to practice it. Paul is basically saying, "By the example you have seen and now hear in me, do this!" Now certainly in a minimum that includes this epistle, right? The things that Paul has said about himself in this epistle, right? At a minimum. Back in verse 17

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he says, “Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.” Literally, “Be fellow imitators of us. Imitate us.” We saw when we looked at that passage, all the things at least in Philippians that they were to imitate. And I will list a few of those.

Back in chapter 1 verse 3, we are to imitate his prayer life. <sup>3</sup> ***I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all. [Philippians 1:3-4]*** We should imitate Paul’s prayer life. We should imitate his understanding of doctrine and God’s sovereignty. <sup>6</sup> ***For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. [Philippians 1:6]*** We should imitate Paul’s attitude towards circumstances. Verse 12, chapter 1,

***<sup>12</sup> Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, <sup>13</sup> so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, <sup>14</sup> and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. [Philippians 1 :12-14]***

We are to imitate his focus. Verse 21, <sup>21</sup> ***For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*** (We are to imitate his view of life and death.) <sup>22</sup> ***But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me.*** If you are alive, you are here to labor for Christ. We should imitate that right? He says,) ***and I do not know which to choose. <sup>23</sup> But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; (We should imitate his desire to be with the Lord.) <sup>24</sup> yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. [Philippians 1:21-24]***

If you are here right now and God has you breathing, which He does, He has you breathing for the body of Christ, to minister to it ultimately. We should imitate his view towards suffering. Verse 28,

***<sup>28</sup> in no way alarmed by your opponents-- which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God. <sup>29</sup> For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, <sup>30</sup> experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me. [Philippians 1:28-30]***

“Saw” and “hear in me.” Right? Like our passage. We should imitate his view of what is valuable and what is not.

***<sup>7</sup> But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, <sup>9</sup> and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, <sup>10</sup> that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings,***

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**being conformed to His death;<sup>11</sup> in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. [Philippians 3:7-11]**

We are to imitate his concern towards false brethren. We are to do what we have seen and heard in the Apostle Paul. He says, chapter 3:2,

**<sup>2</sup> Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; <sup>3</sup> for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh. [Philippians 3:2-3]**

One last one, and I could go on and on just with this book. We are to imitate his passion to reach the goal of Christ-likeness. Middle of 3:13, <sup>13b</sup> **but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,** <sup>14</sup> **I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. [Philippians 3:13b-14]** What did they hear and see in the Apostle Paul? Certainly all we have in Philippians, we know that. Certainly the manifestation of Christ in his life. We should be doing the things that we see in believers that are manifesting a life controlled by the Word of God, like the Apostle Paul. Are you doing what you have heard and seen in the life of Paul? Are you doing that? Are you practicing the things you see in the life of Paul in Scripture? Paul commanded these Philippians to do that. Are you doing that? There is a lot to do, you see. There is a lot to do. It is not as simple as feeding the poor, this and that. But it is simple. When we trust Christ and His Word works out in us, He takes us through the circumstances as we will see.

God has given us everything, as Nick read, pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him and we have His precious and magnificent promises. We have the Word of God, we have His Spirit, we have everything we need for every circumstance. The things we have learned, received, heard and seen in Paul, do these things. By faith act upon what God has said, what you have learned. By faith do what God has said. That is the Christian life, right? Doing what Christ has said by His power and strength, as it applies to every circumstance. Every circumstance controlled by the Word of God and the power of the Spirit through faith. We have a pattern set in the Word of God concerning the Apostle Paul that we are to mimic. We are to do what we learned, received in the Word as exemplified by Paul.

At this point now, we see in our passage back in Philippians 4:9, the outright command. <sup>9</sup> **The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things...** [Philippians 4:9a] What do you think of when someone practices? They are doing something continually over and over again. When someone practices they do something over and over and over and over again. I heard a story once about Chuck Mangione. He was on the Dick Cavett show. The guy said, "You play so effortlessly. You are so great!" and all this stuff. And he got mad basically. He is not a Christian I don't think. He got mad and said, "I've practiced 8 hours a day for thirty years." (I'm paraphrasing, I don't remember exactly. Just his whole life!) Through discipline comes freedom." Basically he practiced over and over and over again, and we are being commanded here to practice not our trumpets or trombones or whatever. We are being commanded to practice what God says. We are to do it. We are to do it. Present tense, active voice, imperative mood. Continually, actively do what God says. Well what does

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that mean? We are to actively do the things we have learned, received, heard, and seen - the example of Paul in the Word of God. If you are not in the Word of God, if you do not know the Word of God, if you close this book up and walk out today and you have none of His Word in your heart, you cannot do anything God has said. You are a forgetful hearer. It needs to be dwelling richly in your hearts throughout the day. We need to be taught. It is like a glass with holes in it, that's what we are like! You pour and it keeps pouring out. We need to be continually taught. Otherwise we will forget. Bottom line, the Word of God is to be informing our decisions and our actions day in and day out, all the time.

Do you see why it is so important to have sound teaching in the church? You see why it is so important to have sound teaching in our homes? Do you see why it is so important to place ourselves under sound teaching? It is the bottom line, and then to receive it and then to do it. If we do not have sound teaching, then everything will be wrong in our Christian walk! This is why I believe Satan attacks so strongly the Word. "Did God really say that?" Do you understand now why the Apostle Paul was so grieved in Acts 20, that for day and night he warned them for three years with tears concerning those who would twist the Word of God? Do you understand why Paul continually warned about false teachers throughout Scripture, who would twist the Word? It is because the unadulterated Word of God is what we learn, receive and then do. Do you understand why Peter and Jude warned of the same thing? It is the core of our walk with Christ, His Word, by His Spirit, the things of Christ.

A five-point sermon on marriage will not do. Overcoming family storms will not do. Forty days of purpose will not do. Teaching series on doctrine will not do. A true verse here and there surrounded by a world psychology will not do. But only the consistent, habitual, accurate teaching of the Word of God will do. "Timothy, preach the Word in season and out of season, all the time!" Paul told Timothy, as I shared in light of that false teaching, "The things you have learned, stay in those things," right? "The things you have learned, continue in the things you have learned." Brothers and sisters, continue in the things you have learned, knowing where you learned them from – the Word of God. And then he says, "Timothy, preach the Word."

What are we to do? How are we to live the Christian life? We are to be continually placing ourselves in the position to learn the Word of God through preaching and teaching as God has ordained, through teaching one another, through Bible studies, we should be hearing the Word of God preached and taught. We should be by now teachers. Time sufficient has passed. We should be teaching one another the Word of God. How are we to do this? And then we are to receive the Word of God, and then by faith in His power we are to do what He says.

And now at this point, I need to give one caveat. We do not pull ourselves up by our boot straps and do what we see in the Word of God. Remember what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3? <sup>5</sup> ***We are not adequate to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God. [2 Corinthians 3:5]*** We learn the Word, we receive the Word, (faith comes from hearing and hearing from the Word of God) we believe the Word, and since it is God's Word it is powerful, able to judge the division of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. And we trust Him to work it out in every circumstance. He says, "Husbands, love your wives." I cannot do that on my own. But it rings in my heart. I have learned that, I have been

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taught that, I receive that, and when I am confronted in those circumstances, I am convicted by that, and I step out in obedience and do it by His strength. "Wives submit to your husbands." You cannot do that on your own, but you have learned it, you have received it, you have been taught that. And by His power and strength, you do it. And there are a million examples from Scripture of the Word that should come to mind in the forefront of our circumstances day in and day out. "Practice these things." Practice. If you are a well that is empty, you are practicing basically your own wisdom and desires. Just read through Psalm 119, one of the longest Psalms and you see the heart of someone who loves the Word of God, who wants to obey God.

So in a nutshell, we are to learn what Jesus wants us to do from His Word. We are to receive it. And then by faith, we are to obediently do it. Now at this point, there should be sufficient motivation to say, "I recognize what Paul is saying here. My mind should be continually thinking of those things that are 'Whatever is lovely, whatever is honorable, whatever is true,' all those things, 'whatever is praiseworthy, whatever is excellent,' my mind is in the Word. And now the things I have learned from the Word I should be receiving and doing." And at that point we could say, "We are done, we know what to do," right? God has shared that. But God in His graciousness gives a wonderful promised result for those who do this.

Back to verse 9, "The things you have learned (completed action), things you have received (completed action), and heard and seen in me (completed action), practice these things (continual habitual action) and (here is the promise) the God of peace shall be with you." What a wonderful promise. What a wonderful promise. Word of God dwelling richly, informing by His Spirit my decisions throughout the day. The God of peace is with you. The God of peace. Wonderful promise. The God who is characterized by peace. God is never caught off guard. He is never worried about anything. He is never concerned about anything. He is characterized by peace. Fully in control. Fully sovereign. A loving, great, wonderful God. Jesus said, "My peace I leave with you. Not as the world..."

Now some of you say, "Wait a second? Does this mean God is not with us when we are not practicing what He says?" He says, "Practice these things and the God of peace will be with you." Does this mean that He is not with us when we are not doing what He says? Because all of us don't always do what He says, right? True believers do not practice sin but we do sin, right? We should be practicing what is right. Well we know in Scripture for true believers, they have His Spirit. Romans 8:9 – if you do not have the Spirit of Christ, you are not His. We know we have His Spirit forever as Jesus told His disciples - John 14:16. We know that God has said, "I will never leave you nor desert you." Hebrews 13:5 – God will never leave us. We have His Spirit as a pledge with us forever.

So how is it that He says, "And the God of peace *will* be with you if you do these things?" There are a couple possibilities. And I think there is some crossover between these possibilities. First of all he could be relating to the fact that if you are continually doing what you have learned in the Word, God is with you. He could be relaying the truth that we see in 1 John, that our behavior is a confirmation of our relationship with Christ. That is certainly possible and that is certainly true. First John 3:7 - <sup>7</sup> **Little children, let no one deceive you;** (Don't let anyone deceive you!) **the one who practices** (and does, the

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one who does it) **righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;** <sup>8</sup> **the one who practices sin is of the devil; [1 John 3:7-8]** Someone who lives a life of continual habitual sin is not saved. That is what God says, not me. That is what God says. Maybe that is what he is saying here. "If you are one who is a doer, a hearer and a doer, the God of peace is with you. Just remember that. Know He is with you." That is possible.

Certainly true. But I am not totally sure that is what he is speaking of here. But that truth is there in Scripture. What I think he is saying here possibly is that there is a recognition while we are doing what He has said of His supporting peaceful presence. God is fully with you. He is with you. Someone can be in your presence but not with you. If someone is with you in terms of what you are doing, for instance, you can be with someone physically and not be with them in terms of your opinions of them and their actions, right? God is not with us when we are sinning. He is not in agreement, He is not in support of us when we are not doing what He says. In that sense, He is not with us, and His peace is not with us when we are not doing what He has said. That is possible. I think you see quite possibly that He is with us in the idea that He is in agreement, support, and that is why I believe we have no peace when we sin as believers. God is not in support at all. That is why the non-believer has absolutely no peace. But believers who learn, receive the Word of God and do what He says by His power and strength, in these moments will experience His real presence, His peace in their lives, right? God of the universe in total support of you. The God of the universe, the God of peace in total support is with you.

You see, in Scripture, those famous men of old, those who God was with them ultimately. It was not that He was gone. He was with them in the tasks that they were doing. He was with them. I think both these are true. If you are not doing what He has said, by nature you are not saved so He is not with you. But here, if you practice these things, what a great promise – the God of the universe is with you. He is on your side. You know, what a great promise as Bob and I have had to go through and do things said in the Word which are difficult, like church discipline, going to people and exhorting them concerning their sin, that they would be won and repent – very difficult. You need to know that the God of peace is with you when you are doing what He says. That is why He says in the very same passage, "Where two or three are gathered in My name, I am in your midst." It is church discipline. You need to know God supports you right now. It's not that He disappeared but that He supports you; He is in your midst. Folks, when you do what is right in a consistent, habitual basis, you need to know God is with you. God of peace is with you.

Well some of you recognize you have no peace. God is not near because you do not know Him because your sin has caused a separation between you and Him. I am not talking about terrible gross, sin which you may or may not be involved in. I am talking about a life that is controlled by sin rather than by God. You are the lord of your life, rather than the Lord of the universe. You are not submitting to Him. You may understand the truth that Jesus died for your sins and rose from the dead, that He is the Lord. And I hear people who can share the Gospel (the demons believe and shudder!) but you have not received it. You have not truly in your heart of hearts said, "I believe it," which would call for a response, "Lord God, save me." If you believe you are sinful and God is the judge and He is going to judge you then you need to cry out for a Savior if you really believe it; and He will save you. And you will have peace with God.

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For us believers, when we do what we have learned, received and heard in the Word by godly examples like Paul here, the God of peace is with you. One hundred percent support. The God of the universe is with you. I began speaking this time here by speaking of the different types of churches. I believe it is clear in Scripture that there is one type of church. And I do not mean the body or the organization. I mean the group of believers and how they function together. There is one type of church. It is a teaching church, with the responsibility to receive what is taught and then do what is taught, which would be manifesting Christ's life in this dark world by the day to day, day in and day out behavior of trusting Christ, believing what He said.

So the first application of this message is obvious. We need to be around believers who are being taught the Word of God. We need to be in a church that is teaching and preaching the Word of God so that we do what is right, right? That's the first application. Our Christian behavior is not based on our feelings. It is not based on our experience. It is not based on our wisdom. It is not based on what we observe apart from the Word in creation. It is not based on our abilities. It is not based on our preferences. It is not based on our intellect. It is based on the things you have learned concerning Christ. The teaching of the Word of God needs to be a priority in the body of Christ so that we can do what He has said. If the church is not doing this, if they are not preaching the Word in season and out of season, get out. Get out and find a godly church that is being obedient to the Word of God.

So with this in mind, how are we to live the Christian life? What are we to do? First of all we need to be in a position to continually learn the Word of God. We need to place ourselves, certainly in a good church, but also more than just on Sunday. We need to listen to, not just Christian radio about families and this and that – the teaching of the Word of God by faithful pastors and teachers who are using the gifting by His strength, speaking the Word of God. We need to put ourselves in a position to hear that throughout the week. We need to be in Bible studies. We need to be like the early church, continually devoted to the apostles' teaching, the breaking of bread, fellowship and prayer.

Secondly, we do not want to be a dead, dry church that has all the teaching. We need to receive what God says. We need to receive it. It has to change to our lives. And thirdly, we need to do what He says. We need to do it. It should be lived out. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for God is at work in you." He is at work through the Word.

I am going to close with what Jesus said in Matthew 7. Because there were a bunch of people that would come to Him on that day and say, "Lord, lord, didn't we do all this stuff? We did Your stuff. We did, we cast out demons. We did all this stuff for You, Lord." He says, "Depart from Me. I never knew you, you who do lawlessness. You who practice lawlessness." And then He says this,

<sup>24</sup> ***"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them,*** (That is a summary of what we are seeing right now in this passage. "Hears these words," the living Word of God, and "acts upon them,") ***may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock.*** (Well what was it founded upon? The words they heard right? And did!) <sup>25</sup> ***"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and***

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***burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock.***

***<sup>26</sup> "And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. <sup>27</sup> "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall." [Matthew 7:24-27]***

Are you a hearer and a doer? Or just a hearer?

## Prayer

Father, I thank You for Your Word. Thank You for Your goodness and graciousness. Father, thank You that You have not left us in the blind concerning the Christian life. You want Your Word to dwell richly in us, that we would abide in Your Son and by Your power and strength do what You say. Father, I pray for anyone in here who You are convicting is a forgetful hearer. Heard a lot of Scripture, heard a lot of teaching but gets up and walks out and does not do it. That they might be convicted of their state before You. And they might cry for mercy, for You are a merciful God. I pray they would recognize their need for mercy. That they would cry to You for mercy, believe in Your Son. And Father, for those of us who know You, may we see the way You have laid forth in Your Word how we should function. You are a loving God. You are a great God. You are a good God. And You are revealed in Your Word, and Your Son is revealed. And You have given us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Your Son. And we have Your precious and magnificent promises. Father, may we recognize that and do what You say by Your power. Every circumstance that comes our way, may Your Word inform us that You would be glorified. Father, may we be a body here that is faithful to Your commands by Your strength, not in our own adequacy. Father, may we recognize when we do by Your power and strength what You say, You are with us. We need not fear because You are with us to support us completely. Thank You so much for Your Word now. I pray this in Jesus' name.

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