

Matthew 18 (Part 4) :18-20

Binding and Loosing

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed or shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. Stop there.

Let's pray. Jesus, thank you for your goodness, your grace, your love. Thank you God for your word. Allow it today to be a light to our path and a lamp to our feet. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

I've done something this morning that I probably shouldn't have done. And that is, I've read these verses outside of their context. You were waiting for something big and dramatic, weren't you? Oh, true confession time. Now the reason I'm saying that is that a lot of times these verses are read outside or quoted outside of their context.

And there's been a lot of misunderstanding about them as a result. You probably are familiar with the idea, you probably heard about, I should say, the idea of binding and loosing. And you've probably heard it applied in certain sorts of ways. You're probably familiar with the rest of what we read here about the law of agreement, people call it, where two or more agree on any certain thing and it will be done for you. You probably heard people say, you know, for wherever there are two or more gathered in my name, there am I.

You've heard all those things, haven't you? And I just read them all in just three simple verses, but I read them out of context. And people quote them out of context. We're going to see what they really mean today. We're going to find out why context is so important.

Let me just, can I say quickly something about context for just a moment? I need to be clear about this. People will say from time to time, you know, you can't take the Bible out of context. That's not entirely true. I believe in context and I think it's very important, but it's not always important and here's why.

Whenever the Bible says something about God's character, it doesn't matter what the context is. That is always true about God's character. If the Bible says God is a God of love, it doesn't matter whether the context is you and I loving each other or the context is judgment. God is still a God of love. You know what I mean?

If the Bible says God is not a God of disorder, but of peace, then it doesn't matter whether that context is worship, which is actually where that comment appears in the Bible, or whether it's about your family or something like that, or creation, doesn't matter. Because he's always a God of order and he's never a God of disorder. You see what I'm saying? So when the Bible says something that's true about God's character, it's always true about God's character because God never changes. His character always remains the same.

Now there are many other truths in the Bible that are given to us which are contextually dependent, meaning that if you pull them out of their context and try to make them exist on their own, or you try to apply it to another context in which it was not given, it may not apply. You with me? Okay, I'm sharing all this because the verses that we've read this morning have been routinely pulled up out of their context and they have been applied and misapplied in the body of Christ over the years. What's the context? Do you guys remember just last Sunday?

We were dealing in verses 15 through 17 with the whole issue of resolving personal conflicts when there has been a sin that has been committed between brother and brother, sister or sister or whatever, and Jesus said if someone sins against you, then he proceeded to give us steps to resolving that, and you remember what they were? You first go to your brother or sister, in that case he mentions brother, but obviously it's applicable, it's not just something for men. Anyway, you go to that individual and you tell them, between the two of you, what happened and so forth, and then he said, and if he listens to you, great, you're done, you've won your brother back, the relationship is restored, the sin has been repented of, and you're good to go. But he said if your brother doesn't respond appropriately, then you are to go back to your brother along with one or two witnesses, remember, who can listen to the situation and be involved in the process of restoration, and if after that step your brother still is unwilling to respond or to fess up or respond to, you know, the sin that he has committed, you are then to go to church leadership to tell the church about it, church leadership will reinvestigate, look at the thing, question the thing, and then come back and address whatever sin there is, and then he goes on to say if your brother still will not respond, and by this time we're talking about a stubborn refusal, you know, to respond to the word of God or to the Holy Spirit and through all these different steps, Jesus said, then, you know, you withdraw from the guy. You treat him like you would an unbeliever in the sense that you're going to withdraw from fellowship and so forth.

So that's the context in which these verses are given. So what is the context? The context is church discipline. That's what's going on in this chapter, at least at where we're at as we pick it up here in verse 18. It's about church discipline.

It's about the church having to take action in order to resolve some issues of sin that have grown into the church, and where that is needed, Jesus then speaks these things, and the things he speaks are, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. He says, if you come together in agreement, you know, then I will respond. If you are, you know, together and gathered for this purpose in my name, I am there with you. I'm standing with you in this situation.

And so, you know, we're told what the context is here now of these verses. So when we look at these verses and when we look at any other verse that has a promise from God's word in it, there are two questions that we really need to ask, and these are important for you, I think, for all of us to see. So I'm going to put them on the screen so that those of you who are visual have a little bit more of an impact here. And the first question is, who is Jesus talking to, okay? Who is the promise given to, in other words, in the word of God?

We're saying who is Jesus talking to because he's the one doing the talking in this particular passage. It may not be Jesus talking. It could be Paul talking. It could be an angel talking, for all we know, is something in the Old Testament, could be one of the Old Testament prophets. But who are they talking to?

And then secondly, in what circumstances are the promises applicable? In other words, when can we lay hold of those promises? Now I'm just going to tell you here, right here, right now, there are people in the body of Christ, loving people, born-again Christians, okay, who believe they know always the answer to these questions without even looking. And they will tell you that these promises, all the promises in God's word, are always for everybody at any time. Everybody at any time.

They just say, hey, if it's a promise in God's word, boom, okay? I respectfully disagree. And I believe that context shows the answers to these questions. So we looked through this. We read, or I told you about what happens right in the verses right before these things.

And I told you what's happening. Jesus is talking to them about resolving sin issues when they have to take action to do so. So who is Jesus talking to in the passage? Again, he's talking to the church. And what are the circumstances that these promises, to which these promises are applicable?

They're applicable when the church takes action. Do you see what Jesus is saying? He's saying, there is such a connection between me and my church. Such a link between me and my church that when you act on earth, it is done in heaven. What Jesus is telling them here is that he, I won't say he specifically, although I think we could, but I'll say heaven stands behind the decisions, the determinations, the actions when the church is brought into that place where there needs to be a decision made, an action fulfilled about some situation.

He's saying, that heaven stands behind those decisions. And it really shouldn't surprise us. What else is the church referred to as? The body of Christ. What else is Jesus referred to in that relationship?

The head of the body. Do you know a head and a body that don't act together? That don't respond together? You might kind of think to yourself, yeah, but I'm a little more comfortable with Jesus doing all the acting and us doing all the following. I'll grant you, I read passages like this and I shudder a little bit to think that Jesus has given us such authority.

And it's very sobering indeed that what happens on earth, what actions are taken by the church on earth are actually accomplished in heaven. But that's what he's saying. That's what binding and loosing is talking about in this passage. What you bind on earth. In other words, and binding speaks of closing something off, closing a door.

Whatever is bound, whatever is closed on earth is closed in heaven. Whatever is opened up or loosed, okay? Whatever is made available on earth is made available in heaven. There is a corresponding action or reaction to the action of what is happening on the earth. That's what this passage is talking about.

Now, some of you are probably thinking right here, wow, I've heard those verses applied in such different ways, you know. And so, Pastor Paul, are you saying that, you know, this promise of his presence, for example, wherever two or three are gathered, it's not talking, it's not a general promise for all time? All I'm telling you is that's not the context in which it is given. You hear it quoted that way all the time. Hey, well, you know, there's two or more of us here, so God's presence is among us or whatever like that.

And that's probably true just, well, I think it's always true to be completely honest with you. But what Jesus is saying is when you guys come together to deal with these issues, I'll be there. You're not gonna have to go this thing alone. I'm here, I'm there, okay? I'm right there with you.

You guys, why two or more? Because the church is never an individual person. You individually are not the church. We are the church together, right? Okay, you can't apply elements of the church to an individual life.

I am not the church. I'm just a single member. When we come together, that connected, that community of our togetherness and our mutual faith in Jesus Christ, we are the ecclesia, we are the fellowship, we are the church, okay? So that's why he's talking about when you guys come together, I'll be there, I'll be there. But we hear that quoted whenever we just come together for worship.

Well, you know what? When we come together for worship, he's always here. Bible says that he's enthroned on the praises of Israel. And I assume that that applies to the church as well, that he's just, he's, you know, he's manifold. Well, for one thing, he indwells us.

I mean, he literally, doesn't the Bible say that you and I are temples of the Holy Spirit? So his presence is already within us. We come together. We can't help but have Jesus in our midst. He came with you through the door, you know?

And so we don't need to prevail upon him. Oh, please meet us here. He's here, you know what I'm saying? But so he's giving a promise here about being with them in difficult circumstances and so forth. So heaven's connection to the church.

That's what this passage is saying. Now, some of you might remember that this promise regarding binding and loosing, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven was actually made previous to this back in Matthew chapter 16. I won't make you turn there, but we'll just show it up on the screen here for you just to remind you. It says, and Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, "for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, "but my Father who is in heaven." What's going on here?

Do you guys remember what's happening? "Jesus said to his disciples, "Who do the people say that I am?" Oh, some people say this, some people say that. "Who do you say that I am?" "Peter speaks up, "You are the Christ, son of the most high God." Sweet, and then he says this very thing. He says, you know, Simon, son of Jonah, he says, you know, it wasn't man that popped this little thing in your noggin, that was my Father in heaven who revealed that to you. Now, look what he goes on to say.

"And I tell you, you are Peter, "and on this rock I will build my church, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Meaning the church. And then he says regarding this whole thing about the church, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in

heaven." There's a connection, right? The link. "And whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Now, we talked about in Matthew 16, we talked about what the keys of the kingdom are.

You guys remember that? It's been a while. What do keys do? They open doors, don't they? And when you have a key, you have authority to be able to open that door.

So Jesus is giving authority to open doors. And we looked from Matthew 16 at the fact that he gave these keys to Peter, not so that he could be the first Pope, so that he could be there and present when the door of the gospel was opened to the three different people's groups on the earth. And we read about the first one in Acts chapter two, when Jesus, or excuse me, when Peter was there to use the first key to unlock the gospel to the Jews, to proclaim it to the Jews. We read in Acts chapter eight, when Peter was there, when the Holy Spirit came upon the Samaritans that had been reached with the gospel by Philip, and the Spirit was poured out, and the gospel was unlocked to that people group. And then we read in Acts chapter 10, when Peter was there to preach to the Gentiles, and to use that key and unlock the door and open the gospel to the Gentiles.

And Peter's job was done there. The gospel was now open to all peoples, different people's groups on the earth. So how are we to look at this statement given to us here in Matthew 16, where binding and loosing is also mentioned? What is the context of the passage that we looked at? Well, let me whittle it down for you here.

If we're gonna take that and whittle it down, here's the context. And on this rock, I will build my church. And the gates of hell, he said, will not prevail against it. What is the context? What's this about?

It's about the church. It's about the church going forth in the power of the Spirit and so forth, and the authority that is given, and these various things. So once again, we look at the context. It's the actions of the church, and in what circumstances was the promise applicable when Peter used the keys of the kingdom, right? And he loosed the gospel into those particular areas.

So this is important that we see this, that this is what is going on in these passages. And these are not the only Bible passages where it speaks of that link between earth and heaven, or the church, and the throne of God in heaven. There's another passage in John. Let me show that one to you. From John chapter 20, it says, when he had said this, he showed them his hands in his side, and then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, receive the Holy Spirit. Look at this last line. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven.

If you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld. Wow, that's pretty sobering, isn't it? Do you guys see the connection between earth and heaven, between the church and the throne of God? He says, you forgive, it's done. You withhold forgiveness, it is done.

Now, he's talking about the church. He's not talking about individuals, where you and I withhold forgiveness from someone, maybe because we got a petty issue between them. That's not what he's dealing with. He's referring earlier to the church's declaration of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, or the withholding of that when there is no repentance that corresponds to that individual who's heard the gospel. The church has the authority to say, your sins are not forgiven, because you have refused to repent of your sin and turn it over to God and so forth.

So we see again, this closeness, this connectedness, this powerful link between Christ and his church, the church in Christ that even extends to forgiveness of sins, this corresponding action. Now, someone here this morning is probably listening to all this and they're saying, wow, this is all rather interesting, but I have to tell you, I've been in churches where this whole idea of, number one, binding and loosing was applied very differently than what you're talking about. This whole idea or the understanding of what it means to be in agreement with someone in prayer was spoken to me very differently than what you just shared. And this idea of wherever two or more are gathered has always been applied kind of in a general sense. And I understand that.

And I've been there too. In fact, on the subject of binding and loosing, I did what I like to do sometimes when I'm studying. I opened up Google and I put in a Google search phrase just binding and loosing. And oh my, the stuff I found. No shortage of hits, no shortage of people out there who are talking about this subject of what it means to bind and to loose.

But there was a shortage of biblical responses. I mean, truly biblical responses. So what I decided to do here this morning is I'm actually, I took, I decided, there was one paragraph of this website. I went to this one website. Let me just tell you this.

I'm not going to say whose website it was. But I will tell you he is a worldwide Bible teacher, faith leader, evangelist. You've probably heard of him, but I'm not going to say his name. This is his website. So this is not some obscure little website somewhere.

Anyway, I took this paragraph and I thought I'm just going to put this on a slide and let you see it. So please understand, I'm not teaching this. This is what he says. Here's what he says. The prayer of binding and loosing halts Satan's activities.

Matthew 12, 29 says, or how else can you enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods? Except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house. You can tell it's kind of King James. You have authority over Satan. He quotes Luke 10, 19 there, or not quotes it, but references it.

You exercise it with the prayer of binding and loosing. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Of course, he's quoting the passage we're looking at here today. And then he says this. As you enforce the authority vested in the church, speak directly to Satan.

Exercise your faith in Jesus's work at Calvary. All right. So again, this is just one paragraph. This thing went on for a long time. But I just thought, I'm just going to pull one thing out of here.

And I want to just show you some things. And it's important. And hopefully by the end of our talk, you'll understand why I'm kind of doing this. But I'm going to go through, and I'm going to highlight some of the portions of this text and just kind of respond from a biblical perspective. The first thing that I want to highlight is his first statement where he says, the prayer of binding and loosing halts Satan's activities.

Let me just say something very, very carefully. I believe that we can be involved in halting Satan's activities. I think we should be. That's what spiritual warfare is. We can have a hand, through prayer, faith, and so forth, in interrupting the work of the evil one.

And that's part of, you know, I mean, we pray against certain things. We fight. Paul says our battle is not against flesh and blood. Our battle is against rulers and powers and principalities of this dark world and so forth. And there's a battle going on, right?

And we battle. We battle sometimes in prayer. We wrestle in prayer over things on a spiritual level and so forth. So I believe in the essence of spiritual warfare. However, what he says here is, you'll notice he says, the prayer of binding and loosing halts Satan's activities.

And even later on in this paragraph, he uses that phrase again, the prayer of binding and loosing. Where did he come up with that? Do you know that binding and loosing is never shown in God's word as a prayer? It's an action of the church, which has a corresponding reaction in heaven. There is no prayer of binding and loosing ever in the Bible.

It's not there. So where did he come up with it? Well, they just kind of decided that's what they were going to do. So he's teaching this, and he's putting quotations. And the first quotation he puts is Matthew 12, 29.

Let's highlight that one. And he says, you know, and he quotes it. And then again, it's in King James. You know what the context of that quote is? Jesus had just healed somebody from demonic possession, and the religious leaders said to him, or said to the people rather, oh, we know how he's doing this.

He's doing this because he's in league with Satan. That's what's going on. Remember? So what did Jesus say? Really?

In league with Satan? So what you're saying is Satan is against Satan. And that's when Jesus said, listen, that's not possible. Any household, or kingdom, or city divided against itself can't stand. And then he went on to use this little story to say, listen, you can't break into somebody's house and take his stuff if he's there, because he's going to protect his house.

What you have to do is you have to incapacitate him. So if I'm casting out demons, that means I have incapacitated him. What Jesus is saying is, I am stronger than Satan, and I've proved it by casting out demons. You see? And the reason this verse is used in his explanation of binding and loosing is because it includes the word bind.

That's the only reason. It has nothing to do with binding and loosing. It simply uses the word bind, and so he applies it to that and says, see, this is a verse that is my proof text. Jesus is saying in this passage, I have bound the strong man. I am stronger than Satan, and therefore, I can go in and I can ransack his house.

That's the context of what he is saying. It is not a proof text for binding and loosing. And if you read all of Matthew chapter 12, you see that. Notice the next thing down toward the bottom. He says, as you enforce the authority vested in the church, do you remember what I said just a little bit ago?

The promises that are given to the church are to the church. Right? But he tells you in this paragraph that you can enforce the authority that's given to the church. In other words, you singularly can do what the church was given authority to do. Now, in some cases, that may be true.

I'd have to sit and think through it. But in the case of binding and loosing, it is only ever spoken of to the church. OK? It is not spoken of as prayer. It is spoken of as the church taking action where sin is involved or where the doors need to be opened or shut over a situation.

And that's what it pertains to. This whole idea that you can just assume the authority of the body of Christ on a singular level is pretty incredible when you stop and think about it, when you think about what the implications of that might be. So does that mean you can also start? I mean, hey, the body of Christ has authority to turn people over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. We saw that last week.

You going to go around doing that yourself? The body of Christ has the authority, as we saw last week in 1 Corinthians, to actually excommunicate people. You going to go around doing that yourself? You don't have that authority, not apart from the whole. You see, those promises, that authority, that kind of stuff is given to the collective group, the ecclesia.

And yet, there are some who are just saying, like it says right here, hey, you can enforce the authority that has been given to the church. And then the last thing that he says here that I take issue with, frankly, is this thing that says speak directly to Satan. You know, I have never seen in the word of God anyone talking to Satan except God himself, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament through Jesus Christ. God speaks to Satan. We do not see the body of Christ speaking to Satan.

Now, I will tell you this, in the book of Acts, Paul speaks directly to a demonic spirit that had a spirit of divination that had taken hold of a young girl. You remember when they landed at Philippi? And it tells us that this girl had this spirit by which she could predict the future. And it says that she followed them around for days, yelling out, following them, yelling them and saying, these men are servants of the most high God, and they're here to tell you the way to be saved. And this went on for days and days.

And finally, Paul, through the spirit, turned around. And I'll grant you, he spoke directly to that spirit. And he said, get out of her, come out of her, you know, and that sort of thing. So, you know, that is a reality. But speaking to Satan directly?

I mean, are we ever told in the Bible to talk to Satan directly? Are we ever told? Do you guys know who Satan is? He's the ruler of this world right now. He is on a temporary throne.

He's going to get the boot sometime, hopefully soon. But for right now, he is the prince of the power of the air. He is more powerful than you and I can even imagine. He's not anywhere close to as powerful as God. He's still a created being, but I can't stand up against him and neither can you.

I'll tell you one thing, the last thing I'm going to do is start talking to him. Because you know what talking to a spiritual power is? That's called prayer. There is nowhere in the Bible where you and I are told to pray to Satan or talk to Satan. What are we told to do?

There's a couple of powerful passages, one in James, one in Peter. Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you. Peter has the same idea. He says, be sober-minded and be watchful, he says, because your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour, resist him firm in your faith. That's what we're to do.

We're to resist the devil. We're to resist all of the attacks and temptations and things that come our way. Talk to him? I just don't see it. I mean, if I sense that what we're dealing with is a spiritual matter, I'm not going to talk to Satan about it, I'm going to talk to God about it.

I'm going to go to the Lord and say, Lord, this is a demonic attack and I ask you in the name of Jesus Christ, through the power of your spirit, to put the enemy to flight. I can't fight him, you can, and I'm calling out to you by the authority of Jesus' name and through the blood of the lamb to do this work against the work of the enemy. I'm not going to talk to Satan about it. I don't have anything to say to him and I certainly don't want to hear from him. So, you know, this recklessness that by which teachers of the word throw things out, is just, I think it's dangerous.

Now, the reason I've, lest you think this has just been a personal rant on my behalf just because I was ticked off at people, I'm not. I am not angry. I'm disgusted a little bit by the fact that there's so much weirdness going on in the body of Christ and it takes so many people, you know, in terms of their hearts and minds. But my goal today in sharing this was really kind of twofold. Number one, I wanted you to see what binding and loosing, how it appeared in the Bible, in the context in which appeared and how God gave it to the church and how he intended us to apply it.

That was my first goal. I wanted you to see that. So, when you walk out of here, you can say, okay, I know about binding and loosing. I understand that it's an action of the church takes that has a corresponding reaction in heaven. But I also, obviously by going through that paragraph I copied for you from the web, I wanted you to call attention to the enormous amount of misinformation that is circulating out in the world and even in the body of Christ, where people are frankly playing fast and loose with God's word and it lacks integrity, because it lacks understanding and it lacks understanding because it lacks context.

There's just this ignorance of context and the danger. You might say, well, Pastor Paul, what's the big deal anyway? I mean, who cares? So, somebody gets a few things wrong. Well, yeah, we all have gotten a few things wrong and I'm sure we're still to be corrected down the road.

Here's the point. There is a progressive danger to this thing, because if I allow myself to get sucked into unbiblical teaching about God's promises, I am going to have then therefore unbiblical expectations related to what God ought to be doing in my life or with the problems I'm going through or what have you. And this happens all the time, you guys, don't think it doesn't. This whole idea of unbiblical expectations. You know, God's going to do this for you, you just have to have enough faith.

And it was never a promise in the first place. Or it was this little promise given to Israel, or it was a promise given in this circumstance or situation. You know, there's wonderful promises in God's word. We just got to understand how they fit in and how they apply and what the context is of that promise and how it was given. And, you know, I don't want to suggest to you today that if somebody is going around praying, you know, binding and loosing in prayer, and that's part of their stuff, I'm not suggesting that you should, like, interrupt them and rebuke them.

I mean, if I sit down with somebody and they do that, somebody starts doing it, you know, it's like, hey, Pastor Paul, would you pray with me? Sure. And they start praying and they're like, Satan, we just bind you in the name of Jesus. You know, I mean, I've heard it hundreds, thousands of times probably. I'm not going to say anything to them.

You know, I'm not. I'm not going to say anything. It's like, but I want you guys to know. I want you guys to know what the Bible has to say on this stuff. And I'm not saying that somebody is going to go around and do all sorts of horrible things if they do that.

But eventually, I think it sets a dangerous precedent and this is it. When we give ourselves permission to believe something that isn't in the Bible, that is a slippery slope indeed. Do you guys understand what I mean by that? How many of you guys have heard of being slain in the spirit? Put your hand up real quick.

Just if you've heard of being slain in the spirit, almost everybody, almost everybody. You guys know that it's not in the Bible. You know that. We've talked about it before. It's not there.

There's no reference in the Bible to being slain in the spirit. How many of the body of Christ believes it? Huge. It's huge. Hey, I was raised up through Pentecostal circles when I first, when I came to the Lord.

The churches that I attended at the very first were very Pentecostal and very wild. I've been down to Tulsa, Oklahoma. I've been down to Oral Roberts University. I've sat through services in some of the big name faith preachers. And I've watched them do their stuff.

You know, it's not like I'm talking to you about this from a vacuum or a box. I've been in the middle of it. And I can tell you that there is a dangerous precedent being set in those churches because they have given people permission to believe that which is not corroborated in the Bible. And what, and you say, well, if it doesn't come from the Bible, where does it come from? It comes from experience.

If it happens at church, it's God. And if the pastor says that it was God, it's God. And it doesn't matter whether you're barking like a dog or rolling around on the floor or whatever you might be doing, it's God. You know? Why?

Because I experienced it. Is there anything in the Bible about that? No. But that's not, that's not important. The important thing is I experienced it, and therefore it is of God.

Oh, and there's another reason they know that it's of God. It's because I was blessed. God blessed me. Of course he did. There's a biblical principle that's in place that if you are seeking God, you know the Bible says he who seeks finds, right?

To him who knocks, the door is going to be open. So you think when you go to one of those weird services where they're barking and clucking like chickens or whatever, you think that God's not going to actually meet people there who genuinely want to meet him? Sure he is. You know why? Because he's a God of mercy and grace.

And there are people who go into those meetings who genuinely want Jesus Christ in their lives, and he meets them there. Not to put his stamp of approval on what, necessarily what's going on, but to respond to the hurting, desiring heart for Jesus. He will never turn that one down. He will not walk into a church and say, well, you know, if you guys had your acts together, I might meet you here. And we say, well, if God is there and he's blessing people, then what's the problem?

The problem is it sets a precedent for unbiblical expectations and for the belief or the gullibility that is kind of factored into the mind that says, if I experience it, it's of God. Where does that end? How far does that go? Do you know the Bible tells us to test everything? Test everything.

But if experience is the authority, what do I test it by? Another experience? A different experience? I lose my ability to test. Then the scripture that says test everything gets thrown out the window.

This, brothers and sisters in Jesus, is how we test the word of God. And you know, you call me boring if you want. That's fine. Won't bother me. I just don't think you're ever going to go wrong sticking to the word.

I don't. I mean, if somebody says something, you know, that's unbiblical, is it we're going to do this or we're going to do that? It's like, yeah, well, it's between you and God. But as for me and my house, we're sticking to the word. We're going to stick to the Bible.

And I don't see that in the Bible. So we're not going to do that. We're not going to believe that. We're not going there, you know, because we're going to stick to the word. Honestly, guys, I think that's a safe approach.

You can call it boring, like I said, if you want. But yeah, that's what we're going to do here at Calvary Chapel. Now, I don't want to be boring. I don't want to miss out on what God is doing. I believe in the gifts of the Spirit.

I believe they're all present for today. And I want to see God's Spirit move. I want to see people touched. I want to see lives change. I want to see marriages healed.

I want to see minds and bodies healed. You know, I want to see people coming to Jesus. I want all of that stuff, but we're going to do it according to the Word, you know? You know, I was mentioning, I was actually having a talk with a couple of people about this a couple of days ago, but about just kind of a general sort of a discussion about it, and I'll tell you something. There's something about our Pentecostal brethren and sisters that I appreciate, honestly.

And like I said, I've trafficked in those circles. They have a heart of expectation for the work of God to be accomplished, and you can't put that down. That part you cannot find fault with. And you know what? We who have kind of pulled away from that experiential sort of expression of Christianity, we can get boring to the standpoint that we're no longer expecting God to move and move powerfully, and that's too bad.

And we've lost something that our Pentecostal, you know, brethren have found, and that is a heart of faith that truly expects God to move, and we need to kind of fall out a little bit. You know, and we need to we need to get excited again about Jesus Christ and what he can do, and the lives that he can touch, and how prayer changes things, and how the Spirit wants to really move, and touch, and fill, and restore. We need to believe in that. We need to have faith, you guys. Let's not just sit on our chairs and go, oh yeah, you know, we're people of the Word, and never let the Spirit move.

We're not going there. We are going to find that balance, you know, between charisma and charismania, as Pastor Chuck used to say. You know, we're going to find that balance. We're going to give

freedom for the Lord to move and touch lives. But we're going to expect, here's one thing we are going to expect, that it's all going to be according to the Word of God.

It's going to be thoroughly biblical, and he'll do that because he knows we need it to be able to test and see that it is in fact the Lord.