

Let's go to Luke 6. We will finish out this chapter, Lord willing. We have an unbelievable amount of work to do tonight. And it's honestly not one that's pleasant, and it's not one that I think is well received among the girth of Evangelicals. But when you hired me, I kind of made this promise to you that I'd preach the Bible and never apologize for it and that I would trust that the Scriptures are sufficient to grow us into the fullness of Christ. That you didn't need me to be cute. Didn't need to be clever. Didn't need to be creative. You just needed to unapologetically preach the Word in a way that could be grasped and understood. That's what you pay me for. So if you leave here angry tonight, you paid me to do it.

So let's get going. If you've been here for any length of time through this Luke series that started in September, then what you've found is almost every other week, Jesus is into a philosophical, theological debate or collision with a group called the Pharisees and the scribes. Now, as we push into this book, we'll get a new group called the Sadducees, but so far it's just been the Pharisees and the scribes. Now, the Pharisees were the ruling religious party, and here's kind of their role. Their role is not too far off of what my role is, to open up the Scriptures, to read them and then to explain them and give you the details of how this thing plays out. Now, Jesus is not a fan of this group of people, and that is an understatement. If you'll go read Matthew 23, He says, "Woe is you, you scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You're a brood of vipers. You're a whitewashed tomb. You're a dirty cup..." So you can see He's got massive problems with this group of men. And so, what He's going to do for the rest of Luke 6 is address these men. And normally we take these texts out of context, but what He's doing is engaging, in not really friendly banter, the ruling religious elite. So let's look at this. He's going to start in verse 39. This is the shortest parable in the Bible. We're trying to answer what is Jesus' problem with the Pharisees and the scribes. "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?" There's your parable. I told you. Very quick, non-complex. "A blind dude's walking with a blind dude...Ahhh! Both in a pit." And this is one of those really great stories. There's not a lot of depth here, not a lot of confusion, nobody in the crowd needs to go, "Can I get a clarifying statement on that? So you're saying that if one guy's blind...there are two blind guys?" It's very, very simple. If a blind man leads a blind man, eventually both of them are dead. Now, the most consistent accusation that the Pharisees make against Jesus is that He's a glutton, and a drunkard and a friend of sinners. The most consistent accusation made by Jesus on the Pharisees is that they're blind. Now, they're not physically blind. What He's saying is that they have no, or they do not possess, the truth, that they're spiritually blind. And He's saying here that if you follow someone who's spiritually teaching, that is spiritually blind, and you're just following them going, "I'm going to follow them. They're my teacher. They're the one I'm going to learn from," then you're going to end up in a ditch. And His main problem with the Pharisees and what made them so dangerous is they're using the same Scriptures and pointing to the same God, but the path they're laying to get to that God is wrong. Which is why you're going to see Him engage them so heavily over and over and over again. When He says things like this: "You study the Scriptures in vain. You think that in them you have life, yet you refuse to come to Me to whom those Scriptures testify." Or He says to them again in Matthew 23. He says, "Hey listen, you tithe and you do these things well, but you have no justice, no mercy, no compassion in your heart." Over and over, "You blind guides..." They didn't hold the truth, and yet they claimed to hold the truth absolutely. And so Jesus would also say in Matthew 23, "Hey listen, you put onto people what's nowhere in Scripture. You put on rules. You put on regulations. You put on laws that were never My intent, never My heart, never My command. You do not possess the truth. You take texts, and you twist them as one who has authority; and you don't." That's His first problem. They're blind, spiritually blind.

Let's look at this next one in verse 40. Here's His second problem with them. "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher." Problem number two. This is really simple. It's not going to take us long at all: They're just men. They're not God. Now Jesus is doing this compare/contrast thing here. Here's what He's doing. He's saying, "All the Pharisees and all the scribes are mere men. You can follow them all you want, but in the end you're only going to be able to get to where they were able to get, which is being decent men. But I am God in the flesh." That's kind of His trump card over and over again. "I'm God. I'm perfect. The wind and waves obey Me. I curse trees and kill them. I tell a lame man to walk. A blind man to see. I'm not just a dude. I'm not just a guy. Everything obeys Me. I'm not a magician. There are no optical illusions that I'm playing. Everything obeys Me." And so He goes, "Listen, if you want to follow man, follow man. But in the end all you'll become is a man. But follow Me, the Son of God, and I will make you heirs to the throne." I'm going cultish on you here. I'm not telling you one day you're going to be a god that populates a planet. That's a whole other issue, and it's not what we believe. That's another belief system. We don't have time tonight. No, but we become heirs with Christ. So He's going, "Okay, you can follow the teachings of men or you can follow Me. But you're only going to go as far as your teacher goes, and I'm God. So you should probably let Me teach. You probably should listen to My teachings as opposed to others."

Let's look at problem number three. This is a big one. "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother; 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye. You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye." Several years ago, I was sitting with what's now a good friend. At the time he wasn't a believer. We were just kind of talking about God, and he was chain smoking at the restaurant we were at. I mean, he didn't even take it out to drink. He just put it over to the side of his mouth and drank and just kept smoking. And I ordered a tea, and although Texas claims to be the South, you can rarely get sweet tea anywhere. And so, I tried to sweeten it, but if you put the sugar in after it's already cold, it doesn't mix well. I don't know why I'm giving this amount of detail for this story. I just grabbed a "Sweet-n-Low," and I opened it up and poured it into my tea and stirred it up. And he says, I kid you not, "You know that's going to give you cancer." I'm like, "Hey chimney, I don't know that you should worry about my lungs, bro. You got winded cutting your meat. So I don't know that my 'Sweet-n-Low' is the problem." I'm off the "Sweet-n-Low" now. I'm getting better. Anyway, the problem with the Pharisees over and over again is they're trying to free men and they themselves are not free. They are horrific hypocrites. I'll just give you one story out of the Scriptures. In John 3, Nicodemus sneaks out in the middle of the night—this is as the Pharisees are causing all kinds of problems for Jesus, challenging His teachings, calling Him out in front of everyone—Nicodemus sneaks out in the middle of the night as a liaison for the Pharisees and says, "We know that You are from God, for how can a man do what You do and not be from Him? How can we be born again?" Now catch all these things. Middle of the night. During they day, they're like, "Don't listen to this Jesus guy; He's a demon. Don't listen to this Jesus guy; He's crazy. Don't listen to this Jesus guy. The things He does, He does by the power of Beelzebub, Lord of the Flies, Satan. Don't listen." And the sun goes down, everybody goes home, Nicodemus dresses up like a ninja, gets there, "Look, we know You're from God. We're a wreck. How do we get born again?" Do you see the hypocrisy here? In Matthew 23 once again, seven times in one chapter He says, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites." Seven times in one chapter. "You are trying to free men when you yourself are a slave." This is not saying that we're not able to minister if we've got issue. It's not. It's when you're pretending you don't have issue and you're trying to help people that you're more than likely binding them. So you don't have to be perfect to minister. If that would be the case, I'd be working somewhere else. But to not know that you need help, that's a different issue.

Now, let's look at this last one. Verse 43. "For no good tree bears bad fruit, no good tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." Here's His last problem that we see just in this

text. He has other problems with them. I'm not going to get into all those tonight. Not only do they not possess the truth, not only are they trying to lead into this eternal state when they're just mere men, not only are they hypocrites, but the last thing He's going to say here is they lack godliness. They just lack godliness, that they have this external shell of religiosity, but they are absolutely absent of compassion, mercy, love, grace, empathy. They lack these things that are intrinsically from God. A love for others that goes beyond self—they lack that. They only love God in that by being obedient to the law, they can then establish themselves as powerful. They can then make much of themselves in front of everyone around them. They don't produce godliness. Not only are they themselves not godly, but Matthew 23 says, "You'll go to make a convert, convert him and make him twice the son of hell that you are." He's going, "This thing you're doing, this path that you're laying, it does not lead to godliness." So this is Jesus' problems with this group. This is why He is continually in combat with them. He is always sparring with them verbally, always reading their thoughts and telling them back to them. Those are some of my favorite parts of the New Testament. "Why do you think that?"

Now, I wish more than you know, as a pastor, that false teachers and men who would make much of themselves rather than much of God would have died out with the death and resurrection of Jesus, but that has not happened. And it only takes not even a very careful reading but just a normal reading of the New Testament to see that, after Jesus dies, is resurrected, the Christian Church begins to flourish, that false teachers and men who would make much of themselves instead of much in Christ continue to be a problem across the landscape. Let me just read you what really could be any one of forty-six texts. I'll just read five. 2 Corinthians 2:17. "For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ." So we've got Paul saying, "There are those out there who are peddlers, they are salesmen of God's Word." Which means they have no real, genuine affection for Jesus; they only would rather use the name of Jesus to make some money. 2 Peter 2:1-3. "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemy. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words." Galatians 1:8. I love this one, "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed." If you go to bed tonight, and right before you fall asleep you notice this light in the room, and you look and it's a big angel in your room. Clean yourself up and then listen. And if he preaches or proclaims a different gospel than Christ absorbing the wrath of God and therefore enabling, enacting grace in the lives of men who would believe, he is false, a liar, no matter how bright he shines or what magic he can do. I mean, that just took it to a whole other level, didn't it? Not just if a man, but if an angel shows up in your room—uh uh. Let's keep going. Romans 16:17-19. "I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naïve." So there should be in this room, if you're serious about your faith, at the sound of that, there should be a deep bowing up that, "I will not be naïve. I will not be one that's naïve like this." "For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil." 1 Timothy 6:3-5, "If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain." Now these are just a few of—seriously—dozens and dozens of warnings in the New Testament that there are those, not outside of us but within us, who are teaching what is incorrect and in the end will lead us into a ditch.

It's time for me to be careful. It's not just a New Testament problem. It goes forth to this very day, this very age, and I contend that almost everything at that Christian bookstore is filled with horrific errors. Most of the most popular ones are theological train wrecks. Let me give you an example, and I'm not naming names; that's not my job. If you want

to know, e-mail me, I'll e-mail you back. I told you I'm not doing that. Although I was going to put several on here, I thought that for time's sake I could make my point with one. The following is an excerpt from one of the most popular Christian books in the last eight years. It has sold over 600,000 copies. I will do nothing but quote him. "In an attempt to secure the sovereignty of God, theologians..." By the way, in most books, theologians are always made out to be this wicked, evil group that sits around trying to destroy Christianity. In reality, theology simply means "the study of God." Theologians are simply those who study God. "In an attempt to secure the sovereignty of God, theologians have overstated their case and left us with a chess player God playing both sides of the board, making all His moves and all ours too. But clearly this is not so. God is a person who takes immense risks. No doubt the biggest risk of all was when He gave angels and men free will, including the freedom to reject Him, not just once but every single day.

There is something much more risky here than we are often willing to admit." And He goes on, "God did not make Adam and Eve to obey Him. He took a risk, a staggering risk with staggering consequences. He let others into His story, and He lets their choices shape it profoundly. It's not the nature of God to limit His risk and cover His bases. God's relationship with us and with our world is just that, it's a relationship. As with every relationship, there's a certain amount of unpredictability and the ever-present likelihood that you'll get hurt. God's willingness to risk is just astounding, far beyond what any of us would do if we were in His position." Now that sounds very, very beautiful and very nice and made me feel warm just reading it. Like I started feeling warmer, like good warm. So let me lay out a couple of problems. One, I have no idea what he's talking about when he says "clearly." Because the God of the Bible and the God he just described are not even in the same solar system. The God who risks? In order for God to risk, He can't know the future. So now we have a God that doesn't even know tomorrow. Well, you worship and sing to Him all you want, because if I can fix it, I don't need Him. If I don't have an all-knowing, everywhere, sovereign, powerful God then someone help me understand how we get through life. We have no hope, because God is just as surprised as we are. Bam—tragedy hits, and God's like, "Aw! Okay, here's what we're going to do. Gabriel, I need you down there ASAP." Listen to me. God is not the ambulance driver that shows up after the wreck. He's the surgeon that will make the cut, knowing exactly what to cut out, exactly what to leave in, exactly what to take, exactly what to let alone. This is the giant, scary, worthy of worship, eternal God of the Bible, who not only knows tomorrow but is already there. 600,000 believers ate this thing up, and it's a lie. It is not the truth. And nowhere on pages 31-33 does he have one Scripture reference that makes this so clear to all of us.

So here's what we've got to decide. What we've got to figure out is who can be trusted. Here are our options. The sixty-six books of our Scriptures, written over a period of a thousand years, in three languages, on three continents. The authors included kings and peasants and fishermen. There's books of history. There are architectural structures. There are stories that talk about geography. These sixty-six separate books deal with hundreds of different controversies, all with uncanny unity. Or a forty-year-old dude who, out of nowhere, penned his thoughts on God. You see, what's happened here is conjecture, and conjecture is a lot of fun. I like conjecture. I mean, conjecture is just imagination, isn't it? I love "This could be going on. This could be happening." I enjoy that, but conjecture is a plaything, and what we're doing here isn't playing. So you've got these weird choices that seem really simple. Like, do we trust the Scriptures that are a thousand years old and have produced depth of life and passion for Christ all over the world, in almost every tribe, tongue and language, that has proven itself to be historically true and accurate? And what I mean by that is the same conversion things that you're hearing today, you could go read about that occurred 500 years ago. Someone could say, "I can't explain this. Christ captured my heart. The Holy Spirit flooded me. This has been my response." Fast forward to 2008, and you'll hear the same exact story. You can trust that, all that history, or you can go, "No, a random dude who's just really creative—I like that guy's story." This is what all of us are going to have to decide. Because there's another really popular book right now in the top 25 on Amazon that, although I think has really beautiful imagery, I think is horrible in regards to what it makes out God to be. So what do we do here? Because what I'm guessing is that most of us aren't going to become resident theologians. Can we agree upon that? Everybody going, "I'm not learning Greek." Let's all agree. Let's go. Anybody going to learn Greek in here? "No, I'm not going to learn it." Koine Greek—not even modern

Greek—dead Greek. The kind of Greek that if you tried to speak to a Greek, he wouldn't even know what you're talking about. Can I get, "I'm going to get some Hebrew on" in here? No, I can't. My guess is that most of us are not going to run out and buy volumes of systematic theology. I could be wrong. We'll run out and buy them, but we're not going to read them. So then what are the things that we have to watch for that will tip us off that what we're reading's dangerous, that what we're watching is dangerous, what we're thinking is dangerous? Now, let me clarify here. I am not trying to tell you what to read or watch. I'm not into book burning. I'm not into removing books from public libraries. I'm not into that. The reason I can quote most of these books to you is because I've read them. So then, what are the markers, what are the things that we can look for that we can go, "Okay, this is dangerous." Let's look at it.

I think there are four questions you can ask. Here's the first one. What do they do with the Scriptures? Are they cold and dead? Here's one of the things that I find to be very, very ironic, because honestly it's just a reverse picture of itself. Right now if you'll get into a discussion about what God's like, and you try to use the Bible, you're immediately labeled as some kind of cold, dead seminarian. If somebody's like, "Oh, I just think this about God, and God's this"—normally the God that most people buy into is extremely effeminate. We'll step outside of Christian literature right now. Go read Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus, and look at the list of how they describe men. Look at the list of how they describe women and think to yourself, "What have I been taught about Jesus? Does He land on this side or does He land on this side?" He will land on the woman's side. He is usually completely effeminate and never frustrated over sin, never. He's just fluttering about, "Love, love, love" on everyone. Sin has not bothered Him. Debauchery has not bothered Him. The offense against His great name has not bothered Him. He's just fluttering about, pixie-dusting people. When you try to challenge that view, what you'll get is, "Ugh!" Especially if you're trying to do that with the Scriptures. So somehow the Scriptures are now being tied to dead orthodoxy, which is insane. It is throwing out a thousand years of transformation and power and replacing it with some dude's conjecture or what you think. Now, I don't mean to be offensive, but there was a time you believed a fat white man came down your chimney. If you've got kids, earmuff them. There was a time where you believed that to celebrate the risen Christ, God created a magical rabbit that laid eggs and just hid them in your yard. And I could go on and on and on all the way up to whatever age you are now.

There is a way that seems right to us. There is a thing that makes sense to us that in the end will kill everyone, which is why Paul pleads with Timothy in the book of 1 Timothy, "Guard your doctrine closely, because it will save you and those around you." So at some point, what you think has to become submissive to what God has already unpacked as how He does things. Now you can walk away from that, but I don't know what you're walking to. And please don't tie the Scriptures to dead orthodoxy. Now, there are men who have killed it. Christ help us, there are men who have taken what is living and active and moving and once again made it some set list of paradigms that we all have to follow, which is the other side of this problem. But to say then, "No, what I think," or, "Oh, I like the way that sounds," without having to check that with how God's already revealed that He is and He behaves is very, very, very dangerous. What do they say about the Scriptures? Are the Scriptures cold and dead? I would hope they're not, since I talk about them every week. I'm hoping you're not picking up that vibe here. I'm hoping you're not leaving here going, "Oh, I don't know. This guy just doesn't look like he believes it." No, it's living, and it's active. And if you don't believe me, I'd love to just take several weekends in a row and introduce you to person after person after person after person here who has come to powerfully know Jesus Christ by nothing but the reading of His Word. No sketches, no lasers, no props. The only prop I use is this water bottle. Sometimes I'll use it for dramatic effect.

Here's the other thing. Watch what they say in regards to the purity of Scripture. Watch anyone and be very careful of people who would say, "Uh yeah, I think we should just follow what's red letter. That Paul said that, Jesus didn't. Jesus didn't say that." Well, we can preach on just what Jesus preached on. He mentions hell eleven times. He talks about money more than He talks about anything else. Do you want me to do a 42-week series on money and hell? We don't have to go Pauline. I can do eleven messages on hell followed up with 56 messages on how you're so selfish and greedy

with your money that you're probably reaping judgment on yourself. Come on, next week, you wanna go? We'll just have a bunch of guests here; we'll just fire up Easter with it. Why not? Welcome to the Village. We can just do Jesus, but that's not what they're talking about. No, they just want certain ones of Jesus' teachings. Be careful. The Dead Sea Scrolls did not destroy Christianity. The Dead Sea Scrolls did not dissolve the Bible. There were scrolls of Isaiah found in those Dead Sea Scrolls that were almost to the letter the same Isaiah that's in that Bible in front of you. And the reason some of the rest of those scrolls weren't fitted into this book back then wasn't because there was some kind of political scandal back then meant to stomp them out. It's because they don't fit in this book; they go contrary to it. Why would you include a book that says, "Ah, Jesus wasn't really God?" More conjecture. Once again one thousand years, uniformity vs. conjecture. Which one do you want to play in? What do you do with the Scriptures?

Here's a big one for me. Do they add anything to the cross? And I don't mean, do they add a piece to the story? Do they add anything to the cross? What I mean by this is the Scriptures are unbelievably clear that Christ died once and for all for those who are being saved. Which means nothing gets added to it. It's not, "Believe in the cross of Christ and..." There are no additions. I want to make clear here, I'm not even talking cognitively believing the cross of Christ but that thing that happens when regeneration takes place. All the little moral codes and all the other things that we need to be doing or not doing, those all start taking place in us after the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit begins to work in our heart, not before. Which is why if you're not saved and you're trying to do everything right, it's so exhausting. What do they do to the cross? Do they add to it? Because there are main-line denominations that add to it. It's not just the cross, it's the cross and _____. Wrong.

This next one is going to be where you stop liking me. Maybe you already don't like me. What do they believe about the essence of man? Is man intrinsically good? Is man at the center of all that God is doing? Because that's this very, very popular idea in a lot of this literature. "God made all of this for us." Well, the only problem with that is once again, the Bible. Because the Bible says that God made all of that as a display of His might, power and glory. That's a little bit different. "God created us for fellowship." Where? Because I just don't see that anywhere. Because God's never been lonely. And if He was, already we've attacked His godness if He's lonely. And then if that's not it, then He's dumb. Because He went, "Here's how I'll fix My loneliness. I will create billions and billions of people who have no intention of obeying Me, worshiping Me, loving Me, only instead destroying all that I've cried out as sacred." Great plan. The Trinity gives each other fives—bam—end of working. Man is not intrinsically good. The depravity of man is the only doctrine we have with thousands of years of evidence. "Surely I was brought forth in iniquity," David said. I was born. The doctor smacked me. Iniquity already. The law reveals that we can't. We've talked about this over and over and over again. The law reveals that we can't. You cannot pass the Ten Commandments, and that's Morality 101. That's not upper level ethics. That's posted on the wall in kindergarten—used to be. You can't do it. "Don't lie." Anybody get out clean? No. "Don't covet." Anyone? No, everyone's guilty still. "Don't have any other gods before Him." And don't think religiously there; think trinkets, toys, safety, things like that. Do I need to keep going, or will you just take my word for it? I mean, you're not even going to pass that, so why does God give us all these laws in the Old Testament that He knows we can't do? Do you think maybe it was to reveal in the real deep parts of our hearts that we can't, so we'd be ready for a Savior? I know there's a lot of preachers right now that want to talk about your goodness. They want to talk about how great you are. In fact, a lot of them are wearing diamond cuff links and driving way expensive cars. Because that's a message that we all want to hear despite the fact that when we go to bed at night, we know it's not true. Maybe not the rest of the day, but when you go to bed at night and your spouse is already asleep and it's just you laying there staring at the ceiling, you know it, because it's the core of who we are. We need a Savior because we have nothing intrinsically great within us. What does it say about the essence, the nature of man?

Here's the fourth one. What do they do with Jesus? Is He God? Is He God in the flesh, resurrected from the death? Is He the wrath-absorbing Son of God? Or this one is real popular right now. Is He a great moral teacher, a great ethicist,

a great teacher, someone we should follow and emulate? Because if you leave off the God part, you've left Christianity. You've left it. You're not even in the same building anymore. Once again, I'm not trying to tell you what to read. I'm not trying to tell you what to watch. I've never done that. Now, Paul does it in one of these texts. He's like, "I'd rather you just be innocent of evil. I'd rather you just avoid that stuff altogether." I don't think that's going to happen, so here's what I would tell you. You should at least know these four questions. Because that book that had such horrible things in it, it had a couple of things that were really beautiful. I want those little beautiful nuggets. You just had to, in this book in particular, get through a lot of junk to get there. But I'm telling you you've got to be careful. Why? Because if you follow a blind guy, you end up in a ditch. And if you let a guy do surgery on you who has a log in his eye... I mean, there aren't any blind surgeons. Do you know any? Would you go to one? Did you ever see that special on "20/20"?

"Blind heart surgeon." Uh uh, it ain't going to happen. You're not going to find that guy. There's never going to be that good news, heart-stirring story of the blind brain surgeon. Because even if through some weird miracle he could do it, you aren't going to find too many volunteers. You're definitely not going to find the first one. "Yeah, I'll give it a shot." That ain't going to happen. So you've got to ask these things lest you let someone with a log in their eye try to pull out a little speck out of yours. Do you know what kind of damage that could do? And if you've got guys that are hypocrites—and I swear to you, I saw a guy pleading for money for Sudan—just a ridiculous man—with giant diamond cuff links. I mean, am I off here? Is that crazy? Pleading with me, who in the tax bracket world isn't into the diamond cuff link area yet, to forsake the trinkets in my life to help redeem and reach out to Sudan, wearing diamond cuff links? Sell your cuff links. Don't own seven cars. I mean, this stuff is comical. It's satire. It's a "Saturday Night Live" sketch. Do you want to follow the hypocrites? You'll just end up like them. What do they say about the Scriptures? What do they say about Jesus? What do they say about the essence of man? Do they add anything to the cross? These are things that have to be in your heart, have to be in your head lest you get led astray. Listen, I don't consider myself a perfect man, nor do I think that. But I'm going to preach this book to you fearlessly and unapologetically. And I know you know I travel around and do things. I don't take any money for honorariums. All that money goes to the church. I submit myself to the elders of this church financially and don't seek compensation outside of this place. I don't confess to be a perfect man, nor to have all the answers, but I'm not afraid to tell you what the Bible says. Not afraid at all. And is there some hypocrisy in me? Some, I'm sure there's some. But I welcome it being pointed out, and I throw my life at the mercy and grace of Christ and the elders of this church. Be careful, because the ditch is a horrible, horrible place to end up.

Let's finish Luke 6 here, and we'll be done for the night. Verse 46. "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like, he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great." For the one who hears and applies, even when the streams and rivers leave their banks in the flood and in the storms and slam against the house, you will not be shaken. But if you hear and do nothing, you will eventually be swept away. A lot of you even now are living in the powerlessness of knowing truth and not applying it. The more you do that, the farther and farther you creep away from the power of God.

Let's pray. "Oh, Father, I just ask for Your mercies tonight over the minds and hearts of these men and women. I thank You for the chance to get together and open up the Scriptures and be read by them and pushed by them, and I hope chiseled away by them, God. And I'm not trying to be the book police or the theology police here, Father, but You've charged me with caring for this place and for these men and women. And so God, I pray that You would give them ears to hear, and they wouldn't get caught and swept away by stories made up by men but instead, Father, would humble themselves before You. I pray that they'd leave this place grasping those four questions and kind of just taking them with them always. 'What does this do to the Scriptures? What does this say about the Scriptures? What does this add to

the cross? What does it say about the essence of man? What does it claim about the person and work of Jesus Christ? I pray that we might guard our lives and our doctrine closely, because You said it will save us and those around us. It'll save our kids. It can save our marriage. Help us. I know this thing isn't all in the mind, but You have commanded us to renew our minds. I thank You that this book is living and active and is not closed, dead nor ancient orthodoxy, but it's still transforming lives today. Thank You that theology is not a bad word, doctrine is not a bad word; but mining the Scriptures for depth has great reward. It's for Your beautiful name. Amen."

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