

## Thy Word Above Thy Name

- As our summer draws to a close, so does our Wed night series on the Sovereignty of God called Thy Will Be Done.
- Of course you have lived in San Antonio for even a year, then you know that our summer weather continues long after the calendar says summer is over
  - I hope this series will have that same lasting impact in the life of this fellowship and in the lives of the many people who have followed this teaching through the internet
  - I suspect this series at times has probably made a few people as uncomfortable as a San Antonio summer
  - And I know some folks felt like a few of those Wed nights lasted as long as a San Antonio summer
  - But nevertheless, relief is in sight
- Tonight's lesson, the final installment in this series, explores the most important and most underappreciated area of God's sovereignty – His sovereignty in and through His Word – The Word of God
  - I'm not talking about the inerrancy of God's Word – God's sovereignty over the accuracy of His Word. That too is an important lesson, but it's not the lesson for tonight
  - Tonight's lesson is focused, rather, on the sufficiency of God's Word – a principle all but forgotten by the modern church
- Throughout this series, as we've examined the various aspects of God's sovereignty in His creation – over wealth, health, prayer, evangelism, world events – at various times I've taken elements of the church to task for its immaturity in these areas
  - I objected to the church teaching that our prayers are designed to give God new thoughts when the Bible says our prayers are designed to give us new thoughts
  - I objected to the church teaching that God's desire is to give us material wealth in this lifetime when the Bible clearly teaches that God's desire is that we spend our worldly wealth freely so that we may build up treasure in heaven

- I lamented how the church encourages Christians to see their physical health as a key measure of God’s blessing when scripture demonstrates repeatedly that those who are most obedient and committed in living their faith usually face the greatest earthly trials and sufferings
- I expressed my concern over how the church has twisted the Great Commission into a marketing initiative designed to create believers, while the Bible teaches that only God can create faith so the church is called to baptize and make disciples of new believers.
- Finally, last week I explained how the church has lost an appreciation of God’s control over all things great and small leading to a culture of fear and dread over world events,
  - rather than resting on the promises of scripture that tell us never to fear,
  - to trust in God’s goodness, and
  - to rest in His promise to work all things to good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.
- Now in each week you noticed we turned to scripture for correction on these issue, to know the truth, to find our path and set a new course.
  - This was no accident...it wasn’t merely a practice of habit.
  - It’s because truth is found in His Word. A truth that is completely and entirely sufficient for all our needs, concerns and instruction.
  - It was because of the sufficiency of God’s Word
- So tonight, we conclude our series Thy Will Be Done with the seventh lesson entitled “Thy Word Above Thy Name.”
  - We’re going to move a little closer to home with tonight’s topic...
  - Tonight we’ll consider God’s power to do the greatest work of all - to change us through His Word
- One of the fastest growing genres of non-fiction books are the self-help books, books that promise solutions to all of life problems

- Many of these books are secular, using principles drawn from modern psychology, new age mysticism, medicine and other sources. Examples: Oprah, Dr. Phil, etc.
- But a notable minority of these books portray themselves as Christian focused self help. They promise to help Christians live the good life. To walk closer to Christ, to live out our faith, to get closer to God
- And just as the world is hooked on self help bestsellers, so are many Christians – both by the Christians books as well as the secular books
- Why are these self help books so popular among Christians?
  - First, because the church has truly come to resemble the world.
  - Judging from home many social problems and persistent sins we share with the unsaved world, I think it's fair to say the church is sick. The church is weak, it's stunted in maturity
  - And as a result, it's often ineffectual in its commission and calling
    - If you think I'm overstating my case, consider these statistics
    - The Christians divorce rate is the same or sometimes higher than for the unbelieving world
    - Christians declare bankruptcy at the same rate as unchurched
    - Roughly 10% of Christian teens report have premarital sex and 15% drink alcohol underage and 25% report physical or sexual abuse by parents
    - Most believe the true numbers are even higher, since Christian kids actually feel more guilt over their behavior and are therefore less likely to self-report
- But honestly...is it any surprise that Christians share in life's failures at virtually the same rate as the world when we so often seek help from the same sources as the unbelieving world?
  - Christians today commonly reading the same books as their unbelieving neighbors, we watching the same television programs, following the same fads, invest their time studying the same powerless teachings
  - And as a result, we end up just as spiritually malnourished as the unbelieving world around us

- So why are so many in the church having so much difficulty living a life that's called out – a life that shows the world the victory they've already won in Christ?
  - Because we've largely set aside what it is that makes us different. We've set aside the very source of that power – Christ Himself
  - We've set aside the sufficiency of the Word of God
- In the first century church, the writer to the Hebrews was contending with a similar problem when he wrote his letter. Turn with me to our first passage for the night, Heb 5
  - Near the end of Chap 5 in that letter, the writer was about to explain a complicated issue concerning Melchizedek, the high priest from Chap 14 of Genesis, but the writer paused beforehand to admonish the church with these words:

Heb. 5:11 ¶ Concerning him we have much to say, and *it is* hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

Heb. 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

Heb. 5:13 For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

Heb. 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Heb. 6:1 ¶ Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Heb. 6:2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

Heb. 6:3 And this we will do, if God permits.

- The writer is forced to pause in his discussion of Melchizedek because he's frustrated at how immature and unprepared this church is for his topic,
  - And in fact this church's immaturity extended well beyond merely a poor understanding of Melc.
  - He said they had become dull of hearing (*nothros*), which means sluggish, lazy –

- this church can't appreciate these difficult teachings because the church is not accustomed to the difficult work of hearing – of studying – God's truth
  - Notice, this isn't a matter of ability or training or spiritual gifting or role in the church
  - This is a matter of effort and diligence – of commitment to maturing
- If they had been attending to the duties, the writer says this church should by now have gained the capability through study of teaching others about difficult subjects like Melch.
  - But of course they are far from that ability, and he is scolding them over it
  - Now understand, he wasn't suggesting they should all have the spiritual gifting of teaching nor even the role of a teacher,
    - He was merely pointing out that they should have applied themselves to the extent that they obtained enough knowledge and understanding, that if called upon, they could teach someone else
- But they couldn't. In fact, it's worse than that. This church needs remedial education – they've forgotten what little they may have learned in the past
  - The writer says they have need again to be taught the elementary principles from the oracles of God – from the Word of God, in other words.
  - That like an infant they need to return to living on milk rather than solid food
- If you were to take an infant and feed it solid food before it was ready, you would kill it
  - It would choke on it or it's digestive tract would not be able to process the food and it would starve
  - It must have something easy to digest, something simply, yet something nourishing. So for an infant, milk is the perfect food.
- But at some point, the child's body reaches its limit on milk

- It can't grow further without more complex foods
- The food that sustained it in its early years can't continue to fuel its growth to maturity...it needs solid food
- But if instead of solid food that child was to continue to be fed milk, the body would begin to grow anemic.
  - What was once the perfect food would now become completely useless for the growth and maturing of that body.
  - In fact, taken long enough, the milk becomes the death of the child. Growth will cease, strength will fade, sight grows dim, life is extinguished
- That's the writer's concern for this Hebrew church.
  - They received the essential teachings of the church, they received their milk, but when the time for maturing came they never progressed to solid food
  - They remain stunted. They continue to feed on the elementary teachings.
  - In fact, they've now even left those aside, which is why the writer says that they now again have need to repeat those teachings
  - By perpetually subsisting on milk, they have stunted their growth and their very existence as a church is in question
- And just what are these elementary principles? What is the milk that every Christian needs from his earliest days in the faith?
  - The writer lists them in verse 6:1-2.
  - First, the need to repent from dead works and show faith toward God - the gospel message
    - As a new Christian enters into their faith, it's important to teach them how that change occurred
    - Of how the Holy Spirit changed them and what grace by faith means
    - Of how works fit into the life of a Christian – being a response to salvation rather than the means of salvation

- Yet so often Christians attend their regular service every Sunday hoping to be edified in the meat of the Word only to discover that the main message in the sermon is yet another exhortation to repent and believe in the Gospel?
    - Where is the challenge to press on to maturity?
  - Secondly, teachings on washings and the laying on of hands – baptism and anointings and giftings, the works of the Holy Spirit in order words.
    - The writer says these teachings are milk, something even the newest Christian should be taught and understand
    - And just as with the gospel message, once taught, the Christian should be prepared to put those teachings aside and move on
    - Yet how many of our brothers and sisters remain utterly confused even to this day on what the Bible says on the spiritual giftings, on the purpose and meaning of baptism and on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Body of Christ
  - Third, the resurrection of the dead – an understanding of our destiny to be resurrected in bodily form and to reign with Christ on earth for a thousands years
    - Here again, a elementary teaching for all christians
  - Finally, eternal judgment – the teaching from scripture that all unbelievers will likewise be resurrected into a new body so that they may be judged and suffer the penalty for their sin in the Lake of Fire
- These are elementary teachings the writer to the Hebrews says.
  - Something every Christian should learn in Christianity 101.
  - How many of our brothers and sister in Christ really understand much less teach these things?
  - I venture to say not many
  - In fact, I've encountered a few pastors who couldn't adequately explain these things
- And if that's so, then where does our church stand compared to the Hebrew church who received this letter?

- May I suggest we're just like them if not worse
- In most churches today, pews on Sunday morning are filled with spiritual infants requiring milk when many should have long ago progressed to solid food
- And that food is the meat of the Word of God
  - Somewhere along the way churches came up with this crazy idea that only the pastor need understand the depth of the Word
  - If a disciplined, in-depth study of the Word of God is the medicine that can heal us of our sickness of sin,
- Now, consider verse 5:14 –
  - Those who fail to mature beyond milk and who therefore cannot stomach solid food will never be able to discern good from evil.
  - Such a church won't be able to discern good teaching from bad
    - Such a church is likely to fall prey to those teaching a return to the Law, as was the case in time of Hebrews
    - Or such a church will succumb to false teaching on prosperity, healing, prayer and other issues as is the case in our church today
    - Such a church will find men and women submitting to doctrines of works and trying to bear the yoke our spiritual fathers could not bear
    - And such a church, a church that cannot discern the good teaching of scripture from the evil teaching of the world, will accept as truth the falsehoods of the unbelieving world,
      - Teachings like evolution, The De Vinci Code, The Word Faith movement, and new age spirituality in all its many forms
- And if our church cannot discern good from evil, then we have no hope of witnessing to the world by the difference in the lives of Christians
- God's sovereignty over His church and over its members begins and ends with the sufficiency of the Word of God

- We know from a previous night here that Faith itself comes by the Word of Christ, brought into the heart by the Holy Spirit
- But scripture also teaches that it is the Word itself is the way God has chosen to change us, mold us, conform us to the likeness of Christ

[Heb. 10:12](#) But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,

[Heb. 10:13](#) from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.

[Heb. 10:14](#) For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

- Consider that Heb 10:14 tells us that Christ's one offering of Himself on the cross perfected believers forever
  - Our perfection before the Father is complete
  - We stand blameless before Him – not by our own account – but by Christ's account – His perfection attributed to us
  - Yet notice that those same individuals who are already perfect in position before the Father yet still must be sanctified – made holy, set apart in perfection
    - How is it that the same ones who are perfect must still be made better?
    - It's because while we stand perfect in position by virtue of Christ's work, we still experience imperfection and sin within our lives
    - And God wishes to remove the presence of sin in us every bit as much as He has already removed the penalty of sin upon us
- And the means by which God does both works is His Word
  - The Word of God is the means both of our justification as well as our sanctification

[Eph. 5:25](#) ¶ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,

[Eph. 5:26](#) so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

- Peter encourages the early church in much the same way when he says

[1Pet. 2:2](#) like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

- The word of God will grow the believer in respect to salvation – meaning in living out the perfection that he has already obtained through Christ
- I’m sure most of us have heard the often told story about how God provides for our needs though we don’t often recognize His provision
  - A farmer’s house is flooded and he crawls onto the roof of his barn to escape the flood waters
  - Multiple rescue craft float by offering aid, but he turns them down stating that God will save him
  - Even a helicopter tries to save him, but he refuses insisting that God will save him
  - Ultimately he dies in the flood, and in heave he asks God why God didn’t send help afterall
  - And of course you know the ending of the story, God responds by saying I sent three boats and a helicopter, what more did you want?
- And in the church today, I want you to consider that we are all sitting on the top of that farm house even now
  - Our congregation are suffering with crumbling marriages and we watch Oprah to learn how to reconcile, and wonder why divorce rates in the church are no different than in the world
  - Our congregations feel the stress and emptiness of hectic and over committed lives, and we read Dr. Phil for answers, and wonder why church participation plummets
  - Our people come to us with a lack of direction and purpose and fulfillment in their lives, and we give them a 6-week program and a best selling hardback, and six months later we wonder why nothing seems to have changed
  - Our children stray into behaviors and thinking that mirrors the world around them, and so churches respond with youth programs that resemble little more than an MTV concert or summer party,
    - and we wonder why so few ever show any spiritual fruit

- The majority, in fact, leave the church altogether by the time they're adults
- And as the flood reaches the rooftop, and one congregation after another succumb, we watch from our own rooftop wondering why doesn't God do something to preserve His church?
  - And God stands before us now, just as He does in Luke 16 in the story of the rich man and Lazarus
  - The rich man, an unbeliever, is in torment while Lazarus, a faithful man is in comfort, attended by Father Abraham
  - The rich man recognizes that his family is in danger of this same fate if they don't believe, so he asks Father Abraham:

[Luke 16:27](#) “And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house—

[Luke 16:28](#) for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

[Luke 16:29](#) “But Abraham \*said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’

[Luke 16:30](#) “But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’

[Luke 16:31](#) “But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”

- Abraham tells the rich man that his brothers can look to Moses and the Prophets – the Torah and the prophetic books of the OT – for their warning
- But the rich man says – oh that’s not enough, Father Abraham. They’ve already dismissed that – they need something bigger, better – something more spectacular to convince them of the reality of hell
- And Abraham says that if the Word of God isn’t enough, then nothing else will work either
- And friends, if the Word of God isn’t enough to address our hardships and weaknesses and failures and heartaches and endless number of potholes in the road of our lives, then nothing else will work either
  - Because as we sit atop our farm house waiting for Martha Stewart to save us, or another Chicken Soup for the Soul, or another book about the Bible...and one by one we drown waiting for the solution that never comes

- And as Heb taught, without a life of study and time spent with the Word, we have no hope of ever understanding the truth, much less choosing good over evil and overcoming all the plagues that accompany a life marked by wrong choices
- Because it is God’s sovereign choice to use His Word to accomplish His work in this world and nothing else
- It is His Word that goes out and will not return void
- It is His Word through which he created all things and sustains all things
- It is by His Word that He will make His church Holy
- Because as it is written in Psalm 138

[Psa. 138:2](#) I will worship toward Your holy temple,  
 And praise Your name  
 For Your lovingkindness and Your truth;  
 For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.

- God has magnified His Word above even His name...
  - So is there any wonder why he won’t give satisfaction to those who forsake His Word and go seeking answers elsewhere
  - The sovereignty of God means He chooses to work miracles in the lives of His people by His Word rather than through other means so that when the work is done, He will rightly receive the glory
- So as we cry to God asking why he has left us to despair in our sinful and hurting lives,
  - The Father stands before us saying I sent you the best help I could...I sent you my Son, The Word...
  - He is in you now in the form of my Spirit
  - And He is before you now on the pages of that book
  - With every page testifying to His power and to His sufficiency
  - And yet so often we set it aside. It sits on our shelf like a reference work – like the dictionary

- And when we get stuck and need to look up a passage, we pull it down
- Or when we go to church, we drag it along, and maybe we'll open it up
- The Body of Christ is weak and anemic and struggling to live
  - And it's this way because somewhere along the way we pushed the Word of God aside and made it something only our pastors should know in depth – and many of them have abdicated even in that responsibility
  - We've declared the Bible useless and out of step with our times, and we would rather turn to Cosmopolitan magazine and horoscopes for relationship advice
  - And because we don't have the patience to let God work us through our struggles over the years of a lifetime, we would rather read the latest paperback book about the Bible then take the time and effort to read and study the depth of the Bible itself
    - I once heard a pastor say from the pulpit that one of his chief concerns was that people in his congregation were spending too much time in Bible studies
      - He would rather they spent more time in home groups, if I remember right
      - Home groups that rarely opened a Bible, and were led by people who knew little or nothing of scripture themselves, and yet were expected to counsel the group on all of life's challenges – the blind leading the blind, in other words
        - While the Word of God stayed safely zipped in its Bible cover most evenings
- But brothers and sisters, I'm not suggesting we abandon all other church activities
  - I'm pitting Bible Study against other pursuits
  - In fact, I would settle for most Christians merely putting spending time in God's Word on a par with all the other things in their schedule that they think are important
  - This isn't an either or...but rather a matter of using the proper tool for the job

- And if our job is repairing broken lives, giving a building up the faithful, equipping the saints for ministry and training in righteousness, then our tool is the Word of God

[2Tim. 3:16](#) All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

[2Tim. 3:17](#) so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- And in fact, I'm so convinced in the sovereignty of God by the sufficiency of His word
  - That I believe if we truly want to see revival, to see God's people changed, healed,
  - To see, As Paul says,

[Rom. 12:2](#) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing** of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

- Then we must demand that our leadership inspires us in that way
- Turn to 2 Kings 22

[2Kings 22:1](#) ¶ Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name *was* Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath.

[2Kings 22:2](#) He did right in the sight of the LORD and walked in all the way of his father David, nor did he turn aside to the right or to the left.

[2Kings 22:3](#) ¶ Now in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent Shaphan, the son of Azaliah the son of Meshullam the scribe, to the house of the LORD saying,

[2Kings 22:4](#) "Go up to Hilkiah the high priest that he may count the money brought in to the house of the LORD which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people.

[2Kings 22:5](#) "Let them deliver it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD, and let them give it to the workmen who are in the house of the LORD to repair the damages of the house,

[2Kings 22:6](#) to the carpenters and the builders and the masons and for buying timber and hewn stone to repair the house.

[2Kings 22:7](#) "Only no accounting shall be made with them for the money delivered into their hands, for they deal faithfully."

- The nation of Israel had experienced the pain of years spent under poor leadership

- Past kings had brought Israel into idol worship and widespread apostasy
- The Word of God had all but disappeared in the nation of Israel
  - In fact it was all but forgotten
  - The temple was in disrepair
  - The sacrifices had ceased
  - Idols were everywhere
- And since the Word of God had been removed from the minds and hearts of the people, they no longer knew the difference between good and evil and followed their flesh
- But God raises up Josiah...who we're told lived his life like David, neither turning right nor left
  - And as he desires to restore God's house – the temple – he instructs the priest to take the money donated by the people
    - People coming into the temple to worship the idols that were placed there
    - He says use that money to begin repairs on the temple
  - And he says do not ask the workman selected to perform the repair for an accounting of the money they receive
    - Because anyone who Josiah trusts enough to repair the temple of God is certainly trustworthy enough to handle the money for the assignment
- So repair work begins...

[2Kings 22:8](#) ¶ Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan who read it.

[2Kings 22:9](#) Shaphan the scribe came to the king and brought back word to the king and said, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD."

[2Kings 22:10](#) Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it in the presence of the king.

[2Kings 22:11](#) ¶ When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes.

[2Kings 22:12](#) Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Micaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant saying,

[2Kings 22:13](#) “Go, inquire of the LORD for me and the people and all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found, for great is the wrath of the LORD that burns against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.”

[2Kings 22:14](#) ¶ So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they spoke to her.

[2Kings 22:15](#) She said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Tell the man who sent you to me,

[2Kings 22:16](#) thus says the LORD, “Behold, I bring evil on this place and on its inhabitants, *even* all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read.

[2Kings 22:17](#) “Because they have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods that they might provoke Me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore My wrath burns against this place, and it shall not be quenched.””

[2Kings 22:18](#) “But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD thus shall you say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel, “*Regarding* the words which you have heard,

[2Kings 22:19](#) because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you,” declares the LORD.

[2Kings 22:20](#) “Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes will not see all the evil which I will bring on this place.”” So they brought back word to the king.

- As work proceeds, the workman come across a most curious discovery
  - The scroll of the Word of God – specifically the Law of Moses
  - And the words of the Law so struck the king, that he immediately appreciated their importance, and he tore his clothes in mourning and distress
    - This was not a people without religious fervor – there were idols everywhere
    - They looked very holy – but it was an empty shell
    - The appearance of holiness without the substance

- In fact, these words were so foreign to the King's ears, that in verse 13 he asks the priest to inquire what these words mean – what is the verdict from God for Israel's disobedience – for his sake and the sake of all Israel
  - What will God say to this people for how they have treated his word
  - For how they have tossed it aside and buried beneath their idol worship and forgotten the words from neglect
- And finally the answer comes to the King from a prophetess
  - God will bring judgment for those who trampled His Word, but He will bring relief in Josiah's day because He had a heart for God's word and respect for God's power
    - Because he humbled his heart and wept before God
    - Because Josiah felt the same pain as our Father in Heaven at the thought of God's people rejecting God's word
- As I end this series, I leave you with two final thoughts
  - If you seek the power to truly live the faith you claim, if you seek to know the peace that surpasses all understanding, if you seek to hear your Lord say on the day of your glorification, "Well done, good and faithful servant..."
    - Then you need only spend time with your Lord, in His care and under His instruction, through His Word
    - Service is good, fellowship is helpful, prayer is important, home groups have their place, and the Christian bestseller list may offer encouragement from time to time...
      - But only the Word of God has true power
      - The sovereignty of God through His Word means that only the Word has the power to change who you are, and what you do, and how you think
- And finally, I know you have embarked upon your search for a new pastor, and though no one asked for my advice, I would like to offer some nonetheless

- As you consider the qualities that make a good pastor
- And as you try to list the various characteristics that determine success
- As you consider your candidates, consider this:
  - Though a man can deliver the most entertaining 25 minute sermon you've ever heard
  - Though he has the resume of Billy Graham
  - Though he has the accounting skills of a Alan Greenspan, the counseling skills of James Dobson, and the management expertise of Jack Welch
- Though he has all those skills,
  - if he has no delight in exploring the mysteries hidden in the Word of God
  - If it is his habit to present his flock with the same diet of milk Sunday after Sunday and shrinks from declaring to his congregation the full counsel of God – the height and depth and breadth of the Word
  - If he will not exhort the congregation to study the Word themselves – to make knowledge and understanding of the meat of the word their priority in obtaining the holiness that pleases God
  - And if he does not make knowledge of the word and the ability to teach it the principle qualification for spiritual leadership in His congregation
  - Then he may be effective, and he may be sincere, but his ministry will lack the power to bring maturity and true growth...for he will have come in his own power
- But if you will seek first a man who devotes himself to the scriptures,
  - A man who would not neglect the teaching of the Word even to feed the widows of the deacons
  - A man who believes there is no better solution for that which troubles the soul than the one God has already provided in His Word
  - if you find a man who would weep over the discarding of God's word as Josiah did,
  - Then you will have found more than a man. You will have found man of God who comes with God's power

- I pray God sends you such a man man, so that by his instruction, you all may grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. As Peter wrote:

[2Pet. 1:19](#) ¶ So we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

[Psa. 1:1](#) ¶ How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,  
Nor stand in the path of sinners,  
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!

[Psa. 1:2](#) But his delight is in the law of the LORD,  
And in His law he meditates day and night.

[Psa. 1:3](#) He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water,  
Which yields its fruit in its season  
And its leaf does not wither;  
And in whatever he does, he prospers.

[Psa. 1:4](#) ¶ The wicked are not so,  
But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.

[Psa. 1:5](#) Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,  
Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

[Psa. 1:6](#) For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,  
But the way of the wicked will perish.