

## ***Love Wins: Being a People Who Delight in Jesus' Leadership***

### **I. THE CERTAINTY OF VICTORY IN THE MIDST OF THIS CURRENT DARKNESS**

- A. I am grieved that the highest court in our land has defied the authority of God's Word; yet I am filled with hope that the Lord will use what the enemy means for evil and turn it around for great good. We must see what God's Word says about the coming crisis while also seeing His glory in the crisis, so that we are spiritually prepared to trust His leadership and love well in all that is coming.

*Last week was one of the most historic and significant decisions in America's history, June 26, when the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage and mandated it across all fifty states. I want to address this very multi-faceted subject. I can give only a snapshot of some of the perspective I think that the body of Christ needs in order to be strengthened so we can cooperate with what the Lord is doing. The subject is far bigger than one message or one address, but I want to highlight some of the broad stroke ideas that I think that we can agree with before the Lord.*

*I am titling this, **Love Wins: Being a People Who Delight in Jesus' Leadership**. Now I rejoiced to see many across our nation prophesy, "Love wins." They had the wrong application, but it was the right prophecy. Jesus said that if the people are silent, the rocks will cry out. Really, the truth is the banner in the spirit, so to speak. "Love wins," well, that is the great theme of the kingdom of God, of who Jesus is as King, and of His leadership.*

*Now we will interpret this hour best through the lens of Jesus' leadership, the biblical view of Jesus' leadership. What I mean by this is that we are engaging with a real Man, a real Person. It is so much more than a religious argument or a political debate or an issue of the constitution. Those are important things, but we are talking about the most loving, beautiful Man in His character, His wisdom, in His power and His leadership over the nations of the earth. We not only submit to His leadership because He is Boss—He is the Boss by the way—but there is a bigger story. He is delightful, He is winsome, and we delight in His leadership when we understand Him best. It is more than just at a distance. We submit and we say, "We delight in who You are!"*

*I am like many of you and many across America in that I was very grieved, terribly grieved, that the highest court in our nation defied the authority of God's Word. They did not give the right to marry—equal rights to marriage—they redefined marriage, which only God has authority and wisdom to define. Again the God who defines—His name is Jesus, and He is fully God, fully man—He is the perfection of love. All of His commands flow from love and all of His commands, when understood properly, produce love. The One who is love is the One who has defined marriage, and He is the steward of love and truth in the created order.*

*I am not only grieved that the highest court in our nation boldly defied His authority, but I am also terrified because this One who is love is so zealous for love that He will not be silent. His judgments, when understood, are God removing everything that hinders love. The judgments of God are not a temper tantrum. They are not a momentary fit of rage where God acts outside of His character, but His judgments are a consistent expression of His zeal for love. They remove the things that hinder love. He is so zealous in His love that I am terrified that our nation has raised its fist in defiance and challenged His zeal of love, not just His authority, but His zeal.*

*I am not just grieved and terrified, but in the very opposite emotion I am filled with hope. I have more confidence than in any time I have ever had in my relationship with the Lord. My confidence is in what He is unfolding in this hour in history, that what the enemy meant for evil He has the power and the desire to turn around for good.*

*Now what is important in this hour is that we see what the Word of God says about the coming crisis, but also that we see what the Word of God says about God's glory in the crisis, the manifest glory that is in the crisis. The One who is leading the nations, again, is leading the nations to love. Love wins, and love does win. He is leading our nation and the nations of the earth into something greater than we have ever experienced before. Beloved, I have good news! We are on the right side of history. There is a great debate on what side of history we are on, but I assure you, we are on the right side of history.*

*It is important that we understand how God sees this so that we are spiritually prepared. What I mean by "spiritually prepared" is about preparing for the end times. What I mean by that, I do not mean storing up guns and water and food in a cave. I am not talking about preparing physically. Some folks have insight about that; that is not something I am really focused on, but I am talking about preparing spiritually. What I mean by preparing spiritually is that we understand what the Word says so that we do not respond in fear, we do not respond in confusion. We know there is a plan and there is a powerful leader who is leading it into love. His plan cannot be thwarted or stopped.*

*The enemy wants to cause us to be overwhelmed with fear, confusion, deception, and offense. He wants us offended at God, and he wants us offended at one another. When we understand what is happening, then we trust His leadership and we love well. We have confidence to respond in love when we have confidence that there is leadership and we are going somewhere better than we have been. I am talking about the human condition, the human family.*

B. *"We weep over our sins. We don't celebrate them. We don't institutionalize them." —John Piper*

*Why is this such a serious moment—June 26—that will go down in infamy, when the Supreme Court mandated the legalizing of gay marriage? Now it is much more than an issue about marriage, much, much more. It is much more than an issue of equality; that approach to it is a diversion. The reason I am saying that—I am not trying to put people down by that—is that we miss the storyline and we might as believers just say, "Well, equality. Why do we care if they get married? I mean what is the big deal?"*

*In one sense that completely makes sense, but when you understand the gravity of what is going on, it is far more than a decision about marriage. That is what it is presented as, but it is really the legal institutionalizing of sin in our society.*

*I read John Piper's blog, and it was so good. I recommend John Piper. He is one of my favorite Bible teachers. He wrote a blog on this and he said that we weep over our sins as believers; that we sin far too often was his idea, but when we sin, if we are responding in the right way to the Lord, we confess it, we are sorrowful over it, and we repent of it. We do not celebrate our sin. What happened in this historic tragic decision is the institutionalizing of sin. He went on to say that homosexuality is not a new thing and even the celebration of it is not a new thing, but the legal institutionalizing and the normalizing of it throughout our culture is a new thing that will have tragic results in our nation. Not only is it institutionalized and will go right through the legal system of our nation and be embedded in our culture in a far stronger way, it is so much more than being about equality of marriage. If that is all that you see, then take a step back and say, "Lord, let me understand the bigger drama that is going on."*

*Another thing that will come with this institutionalizing of same-sex marriage into the legal code is the systematic presentation of the homosexual lifestyle to children seven-, eight-, nine-year olds throughout the public system. They will learn about all different types of sexual encounters and experiences and potentialities. Not high school, junior high, but now the dialogue is such where they want to establish this in the elementary schools, teaching the entire scope of transgender options and homosexual experiences. They want to present*

*this to seven-, eight-, nine-, and ten-year olds systematically through our school system. This is going to normalize sexual immorality and saturate our culture with it beyond anything that we are experiencing right now. We are experiencing a lot of sexual perversion in our culture, but it is going to explode after this decision.*

*Then another issue is the infringing upon religious freedom, and not just of believers. It will target those who stand true to the Word of God, but it will reach beyond that. The implications of that targeting and assault and the infringing upon the religious rights of believers will have economic, social, and all kinds of other implications on universities, institutions, federal loans, visas, grants; all kinds of implications will be tied into that one issue right there. There will be a whole new series of hate crimes that are under the banner of discriminating against people. That if you will not sign your approval, if you will not give hearty approval to the homosexual lifestyle and agenda, then you will be called a bigot and there will be discrimination against you. This is a huge shift in our culture. This is not a small thing that is only about, "Why do we care if a few people get married? Leave them alone." Beloved, it is a far bigger issue than that.*

- C. We are living in a critical turning point in human history. We see America in a time of transition. The coming season is an important step in training the Church to walk in faith and victory in the context of the events related to the Lord's return, when pressure will greatly increase.

*So what does this mean for America? We are at a time of transition in what I just described. Society will be different by the normalizing of immorality, the infringing on religious freedom, the saturation of our culture in immorality starting with the systematic presentation of it to school children and in the media. We are at a critical turning point for the whole planet right now. This one decision, not that it stands alone, but it is catalytic.*

*America—the most influential nation, not only in the world, but also in history—by the economics and the media and all that is going on has signaled to the nations of the earth the stand of our nation. It will be catalytic, and it will embolden many nations and people groups around the earth to follow suit, not that they needed our example, but they will be emboldened. The darkness will escalate in a far faster pace after June 26, 2015.*

*Well, it is more than a turning point for the nations and our nation. I believe it is also a turning point for the Church. I see a season of crisis next. Beloved, that season has started, and it is going to escalate right now. So, a season of crisis in our nation, but taking a step back in the big picture, the crisis that is unfolding in the years ahead is not going to be as intense or severe as the crisis that is yet coming, prophesied in the Scripture, called the Great Tribulation.*

*Jesus is the One who referred to it as the tribulation that was great. There will be none other like it in history than that crisis that is yet further down the road. Now it is my opinion—it is not a prophecy; it is an opinion—that we are nearing that timeframe in history. It may be some decades out. It may be farther than that; I do not know. It may be sooner. I believe that what is happening in this immediate new crisis is that God, in His graciousness, is actually giving the Body of Christ a chance to work our spiritual muscles in a new way, preparing for yet a far more severe crisis down the road that might affect our children, grandchildren, or there after. Who knows for sure the timing of it?*

*So I take a step back and can imagine the Lord saying that when it is all said and done, you will actually see the value of this next season of intensity because it will be a preparation for a season that would follow after that. It will cause the Body of Christ to become clarified in what we believe. There is so much biblical illiteracy in the Church right now. A lot of the confusion and debates that are going on in the Body of Christ are because there is so much biblical illiteracy. So many believers are fiery, but they do not have a foundation of the Bible.*

*I believe this issue is going to change that. I believe the connected leadership teams all over the world in the Body of Christ are going to begin systematically to train the people in a very more deliberate clear way to respond in a biblical way. I believe there will be a far greater intentionality of unity across denominations and streams and ministries in the Body of Christ. This is good; this is preparing us. There will be a new resolve to live in righteousness in our personal lives and to get rid of sexual impurity in its many forms that is entrenched deeply in the Body of Christ.*

*Beloved, I have said over the years that I have been far more troubled by heterosexual immorality in the Church than homosexual immorality in the Church. We have very little authority to address homosexual immorality while we have been so slack and so silent on heterosexual immorality throughout the ranks in the church.*

*The Lord is saying, "I am going to help you. I am going to help you get intentional about unity, intentional about purity, intentional about your marriages being strong, intentional about training your children to respond to these things, intentional about understanding these things in the Word of God." So I see the Lord's grace even in the midst of this crisis that is unfolding and I am encouraged because the Lord is up to something big.*

- D. Love wins; it never fails. Love wins when it is in agreement with the One who is love incarnate. One of the foundations of Christian faith is that Jesus is love. He is the perfect embodiment of love, liberty, justice, grace, and dignity. All who resist Him are resisting true love, liberty, and human dignity. Humanistic approaches to love can never bring people to genuine love.

<sup>7</sup>[Love]...**bears all things...hopes all things, endures all things.** <sup>8</sup>**Love never fails.** (1 Cor. 13:7-8)

*In 1 Corinthians 13:8, Paul the apostle said, "Love never fails." I mean that is a powerful statement. Now it is true. Paul was not just trying to be really positive one time and say, "Hey, you know, love never fails, not really." He was making a very, very important spiritual statement that is true, that from God's point of view every decision that you make for love—when you are ridiculed, when you are in a conflict, when you are suffering loss of an economic situation because you have stood for truth, when somebody has responded to you in a demeaning or belligerent way or they are trying to hurt you and you respond in love—the Lord says, "I will not forget it, ever. Even if you give someone a cup of cold water in the name of the Lord, I will remember that forever. Every detail of love, every movement of your heart for love, I will remember."*

*The point being that though there will be much hostility against the faithful in the Church—and the faithful, by the way, are millions and millions worldwide, hundreds of millions—every response of love that you return fits into the plan of God in your life and it fits into the greater master plan of what He is doing in the nations. So no matter what push back we experience or how we might lose in the court of man in a debate of a demeaning situation, where we respond in kindness and tenderness—beloved, I have good news for you—it does not fail. It wins. The Lord says, "It is contributing to My bigger purposes in your life and in the nations."*

*It says here in verse 7 that love bears all things, hopes for all things. Here is what it means that love hopes for things—well, it means a lot of things, but I am just going to add a thought or two—that even in the midst of the darkness in the crisis, instead of a cynical, "Give up and give in, who cares?" love hopes. It hopes all things in that we believe for a breakthrough against all odds, in that we have a different perspective than those who have no hope in the Lord. We say, "Lord, who knows? You might suddenly reverse this situation in our nation in a dramatic way." We never know what sudden reversal might take place when we are responding to the One who is love and engaging in His leadership.*

*So instead of giving in to cynicism and an angry spirit, we have this element of hope. It says here, "It endures all things." Instead of responding in an angry tone, instead of responding in bitterness when we are insulted or*

*degraded, we choose a loving response. I mean it is Christian against Christian right now on social media. I believe it is painful to the Lord's heart to watch His own people arguing and defaming each other and seeing who can embarrass whom at the largest sphere. The Lord is saying, "No, no! Love wins. Every decision for love will fit into the master plan. No! Endure the insult and respond in tenderness, respond in humility. Do not let bitterness or cynicism or revenge in. Do not win an argument, but engage with Me, a Man whose leadership is love itself."*

*Now the only time that love does win is when it is in **agreement with the One who is love incarnate**. That is the only time love actually wins, and it wins every time. Now this is not just in agreement conceptually where we agree with His commands and His statements of truth, but where we agree with Him **in the spirit in which we carry our heart in the midst of the conflicts**. I know a lot of folks who will agree with the truth and the commands of God, but they will not agree with His heart in the tone and the spirit in which they carry that truth. Beloved, it only makes sense that, as we are preaching the gospel and we are bringing the message of Jesus to our nation in this hour as the Body of Christ, we are contending for love. We cannot succeed in contending for love unless we have a spirit of love in the **methodology** and in the way that we carry our hearts.*

*The tone that has exploded in the Body of Christ I think makes the Father's heart very, very sad. Now I want to encourage you back away from that if you see someone doing that. If you want to rebuke somebody because you are fighting for their greatness, because you are fighting for their breakthrough, get with them in person. Do it in a relational context, not on a public platform where you can show your theological wit. Make it relational. Get with them. Say, "I care so much. This is about your heart. This is about your greatness. This is about your destiny. This is not about me looking good on social media." Beloved, I have good news! Love wins. That other way does not win. Love wins, and that is the prophetic declaration.*

*Now He is the only one who is qualified to define love. He is the steward of love in the nations. God the Father has put the leadership of the nations and the stewardship of love under His care. Now there is a counterfeit opposing love; it is called humanistic love. It is in dynamic opposition to His definition of love on many points. There are some points where they overlap. I want to say this about the humanistic approach is to love—and you know it—though they use the words **love** and **liberty** and **justice**, if it is not love on His terms, it will never bring the human experience into love. It will not work. It will not succeed.*

- E. Marriage is the only social institution ordained by God *before* the fall of man—the only means of procreation, resulting in eternal human beings. The new law in America will demand the promotion of homosexuality through the public school system; it will criminalize those who resist it, with new hate crimes bearing consequences—economic, children removed from the home, prison, etc.

*Why is the institution of marriage so unique? I have had believers ask me, "Why not let them do what they want to do? They do what they do, and we do what we do, and everybody just be happy?" Well, marriage is the only social institution in history that God ordained before the fall of man, before sin entered the human experience. There is only one social institution that existed before Adam and Eve sinned.*

*God said, "This social institution **I** am establishing." The marriage relationship is the context of the protection of many things, but especially protection for bringing forth new human beings into the world. It is the only social institution that is ordained by God, and it is the only one that procreates. Beloved, think about this: eternal human beings—not temporal, but eternal—are born out of this union. God says, "I determine the boundary lines of that one because the fruit of it are eternal beings; they live forever. If they make wrong choices, they live forever in the lake of fire. It really matters. Nobody can move these boundary lines because I*

*know the reality and the importance of the eternal dimension of what is being created in the bonds of marriage in these children. Their decisions are so vitally important that I want to protect that decision-making process.”*

*The norm in society is a family with a husband and a wife, a father and a mother, and that was God's norm that He set up. This is not just an equality of human beings where everybody does what they want to do and everything turns out right. Again I appreciate some dimensions of equality and some of the arguments in some of their limited ways. I understand that. But there is a bigger storyline going on.*

- F. How we respond to the deep cravings of our heart or body is an important part of our relationship with Jesus. Our love for and commitment to His leadership is expressed when we face our cravings in a spirit of faith and obedience, knowing that this is the way to true love, liberty, and dignity.

*Now this is a very important point that sometimes we overlook and miss. It is how we respond to the deepest cravings in our body and the deepest cravings in our emotions, our heart. All of us have several deep cravings, not a long list, but a few. Here is the problem. The deep cravings of our heart make us vulnerable and cause us to interpreting the Word of God and the perfect leadership of Jesus in a way that is different, because this intense longing is so powerful in us.*

*Let me explain a little bit more what I mean. I believe that—this is critical to the dynamics of what is taking place right now and our response to it—one of the most painful human experiences, emotional experiences is the idea of deeply longing for romantic love and having it not be fulfilled even a little bit. Very few things equal this; I can think of one or two. I believe intrinsic in every human heart is the longing for romantic love, at least to experience it a little bit for some of their life. The idea of never experiencing that is a terrible, painful feeling that hundreds of millions of people face all over the world, in many different situations. They face that craving of their heart, and I mean that in the right sense, this deep longing. This longing is so great that they will take the Word of God and say, “Well, Lord, I have to switch this out for that, but I have to get this longing satisfied.” I have tremendous sympathy for the sense of the pain that hundreds of millions of people feel now.*

*There is the single person who has never been married, and they long for marriage, and many will get married, but for some the years unfold. They feel, “This pain is more than anybody understands. Nobody talks about it. I am in great pain.” That is legitimate; that is real. Another person loves somebody, but it is not reciprocated. The person does not love them back. They are just in anguish. I mean very few things equal it. There is the other person who is deeply in love with somebody who is already married. That is not a joke. It is real, and it is painful. There are others who are deeply in love with somebody of their own sex. I can think of ten other examples. I gave you about four or five examples. There are about ten more that I could list. There are many diverse expressions of that.*

*Here is my point when we are talking to someone in the gay community. Some believers want to be faithful to truth, and I love that part. We must be faithful to the truth because truth is not a static religion or argument. It is the engagement with a Man who is love, who only knows the way to love. So we got to remember that truth is not just a religious concept; it is a person. So when engaging with some in the gay community, the well-meaning believer presents the options. The gay person answers, “So okay, my options are go to hell forever OR be saved and live with no love for fifty more years. That is it?”*

*The faithful believer responds, “Yes.”*

*The guy says, “That is it? I cannot see to the other side of this. That is it?”*

*Then—and not all believers do this but—some point with the “Wicked Witch of the East” finger, “You sinner, you better watch it!”*

*The guy is thinking, "Okay, hell—no. Fifty more years with no love—ugh, ugh, ugh!"*

*"Then you wicked sinner..."*

*"Aaugh! That is it?" Beloved, that is horrifying! The need for empathy, the need for tenderness, the need for a pastoral sensitivity in addressing the liberating message of the gospel—that really brings it to love. Remember, heterosexual and homosexual believers cannot see through the other side of that; it does not make sense. I mean they know it technically, but it does not feel right.*

*There is the heterosexual stuck in pornography or they are stuck in immorality with a member of the opposite sex. The homosexual, it is the other situation, but they are stuck. The church leader says, "Get with it or else!"*

*They think, "Can anybody help me? Can anybody listen to me? Can anybody even be aware how I am hurting right now? I am a real human being, and I am hurting! Is there another way?" The answer is yes! The leadership of Jesus is adequate. We have to partner and take hold of one another in a relational context and walk together in tenderness and not just give disconnected, railing statements.*

*Now many do not do that. Many do not do that, but that is the stereotype. And too many really do that as well. Then they will get a demeaning comment back. Then the believer will go to another believer, and they will go back and forth, and the whole thing goes downhill, and it is very, very terrible.*

*I disagree 100 percent with the homosexual lifestyle because the leadership of Jesus says that love is experienced under His leadership and **on His terms**. But I affirm the homosexual's desire to belong and to be loved. I mean we have got to answer that while we answer the other. I do not mean that we come up with some new option, but as a spiritual family, and as the Body of Christ far beyond us, we need in a very intentional way to posture our heart where we can go forward listening and hearing and learning, learning about the pain and the plight and about how to better equip ourselves to partner together and help people through this.*

*I believe that we here at FCF, IHOPKC, and in the Body of Christ, owe the LGBT community an apology. The apology that we owe them is regarding the angry tone—not of all believers, but of too many believers—and the minimizing of their pain and their plight. We need to apologize for not prioritizing the need to hear and learn and for not having pastoral sensitivity to the issues so that we are in this thing together.*

*Someone asked, "Are homosexuals welcome in this spiritual family?"*

*I said, "Yes. Homosexuals are totally welcome; they are valuable human beings." I said, "Heterosexuals addicted to pornography are welcome. Liars are welcome, cheaters are welcome, gluttons are welcome. Yes, everybody is welcome, for sure. However we are mandated, not in every conversation, not in every ministry time, not in every dialogue and relational interaction, but we are mandated in every one of these situations and in all of our own situations and struggles to call people out of areas of their life that are in disagreement with the Lord's leadership that are in sin."*

*Sin is an unpopular word, but it is a biblical word. We want believers to break their agreement with sin—heterosexual, homosexual, pornography—whatever it is, we want them to break it. The guy says, "Well, I am trying."*

*I say, "You know what? If you are repenting, and you have postured your heart in that direction, we are going to partner together. Everybody is welcome, absolutely." Because again, though I do not agree with the homosexual lifestyle or the heterosexual immoral lifestyle, I do agree with both groups in their desire to belong and to be loved and to experience love. I get that. We as a people need to engage that in a far more specific and intentional way.*

## II. SOME DYNAMICS TO CONSIDER IN UNDERSTANDING THIS HOUR

*I have already said most of this here in Roman numeral two. What I want to talk about here are eight different dynamics. I have eight different dynamics written here; probably there could be ten or fifteen. What I want to show you here is that this whole issue is far more than a marriage equality issue. There is a far bigger storyline with many components. It is one big banner statement, but there are many components that are on God's heart and that are working into the situation we are in right now in our nation.*

*The reason I want you to see the multi-faceted components is so that you do not yield to the temptation to pick one of two of these and then apply that one or two wrongly, that is, you just separate them from the other ten or twelve components. So we see one—we want our Constitution and our rights—that is good, but that is one part of the larger story of what is happening. We want purity, that is good, but that is just another part. There are a number of things going on all at one time. Because we are human beings, we have a tendency to lock into one or two and forget the other eight or ten or fifteen—whatever this list could be—this is just a little snapshot.*

*I have already said most of these, so I will be quite brief on these.*

A. **Jesus' leadership:** We commit to His leadership and His zeal for love that flows from mercy.

*We are committed to Jesus' leadership. We are committed to a real Person who has real zeal for love. We are not committed to winning a religious argument, but engaging with this Man. That is the central issue. When people lose sight of that, they want to argue, believer against believer, and they get mean-spirited and try one-upmanship on each other.*

*I say, "No, no! It is about a Man! There is a Man we are engaging with, and He is indescribably lovely. His leadership is proven. When He had everything, He gave it away for love for our sake. He is proven. His love has been proven in history."*

B. **Institutionalized sin:** This results in an increase of darkness that defiles a nation.

*There is the institutionalizing of sin. This is a crisis! It is destroying lives and families and society itself; that is another issue different, though all these overlap.*

C. **The coming crisis:** The crisis will include war, terrorism, economic pressures, and persecution.

*There is the coming crisis at the end of age. I believe we are approaching that timeframe obviously more and more as the years unfold. Again, as I have said over the years, I believe we are in the early days of that generation. I could be wrong. It is not a prophecy. I think there are people alive on the earth who will actually see it. Maybe it is the two year olds—I do not know—maybe it is their children. Maybe it is you! I do not know, but there is a crisis coming.*

D. **Preparing the Church:** God will overrule darkness to prepare the Church for great revival.

*God, in His graciousness, is preparing His Church. He knows that will produce love. He is strategically training leadership. Again what we are doing now is more than a trial run, the next couple of years in this crisis in our nation. It is real. It is a real issue, and it will prove to be valuable in focusing us on intentionally becoming unified, to seeing the value of other ministries, to systematically training our people in more practical and skillful ways in the Word of God, to many being insistent on righteous living, many things. God is raising leaders up for another hour even while they are very, very important in this hour.*



E. **The falling away:** Many will leave the faith in the end times (2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-2).

*There is the end-of-the-age great falling away. This is a theme of end-time prophecy. The greatest spiritual crisis in human history is at the end of the age in the years before the Lord returns. Jesus said it. Paul the apostle said it. Others said it as well. There are going to be people who once claimed allegiance to the Lord—a large number of people—who will lose their spiritual vitality, who succumb to fear, deception, the seduction of the culture, the confusion of the issues, and they end up actually breaking their allegiance to Jesus and losing their spiritual vitality. They actually step away from Him.*

*I think that we are in the early days of that escalation right now. When people began to take a step away from what the Word of God says about marriage, the next step is thinking that the Word of God is not as relevant today as the archaic Word was back in the ancient days. Then the authority of the Word of God is challenged. It is only a year or two later until the deity of Jesus is challenged, and, soon after, that His one way is salvation, and then they are just backing away from the Lord.*

*It is a very slippery slope. I have watched this for forty years. They start inching their way forward; I am talking about believers who had a vibrant relationship with the Lord. There is an issue on which they get crosswise with the Lord and disagree with Him. Then they begin to minimize the authority of the Word, then they start moving to the person of Jesus Himself, and the thing just moves. It takes often about five or ten years, but it is a very quick, slippery slope. I believe that many are being sucked by the air currents in this hour right now in that direction.*

*I believe that these things are going to escalate in the decades to come, if we have that much time, or longer if we have more time. It is a serious crisis. It is the greatest spiritual crisis in history in the people of God. It is coming in the future, and I believe the early winds of that are already sucking people into the vortex of that storm right now, I mean people who claimed allegiance to Jesus for years.*

F. **Compassion for pain:** the deep pain of people related to not experiencing romantic love

*There is the issue that we talked about, the compassion for the pain of people in sexual brokenness and situations, both heterosexual and homosexual. We need to share with them in a relational context and contend for their greatness, not win an argument, not rail at them. Again I want to apologize to the gay community, and even to the heterosexual community that has been stuck in sexual sin, that we have minimized your pain and we have not been sensitive to the plight you are in. We need to do a better job. We need to learn to do this better if we are going to effectively disciple people.*

G. **Contend for democracy:** We recognize God's gift in granting us a democratic nation.

*The next issue is really a big one. We could spend an hour on this one. I hate mentioning it in just ten seconds: the contending for democracy. Now we do not need a democracy for the kingdom to prosper, because in the book of Acts they did well and they were not under democracy. The Body of Christ throughout 2,000 years has mostly been a counter-culture people against a government that was against them, almost throughout history in many, many situations.*

*God gave this nation—and other nations as well but this one in a very special way—the gift of democracy. That is a big story! It is not a small thing. Many people sacrificed many things, and there were many miracles and the activity of God.*

*Our religious freedom is not something where we say, "Oh, whatever! We are just going to trust God."*

*He would say, "No, I want you to contend for that, I want you to be an active participant in the society with civil responsibility. I want My people acting as witness in society, not just in relationship one to another."*

*You know they say there are sixty million believers in America out of 300 million people. Of 300+ million, sixty million are believers, and thirty million of sixty are registered to vote. Only half of the believers registered to vote, only thirty million out of sixty. Only fifteen of the thirty million actually went to the polls and voted.*

*You know what? The last two elections were decided by the smallest measure, the smallest measure. If the believers would have been involved in the polls, more things could have radically different. Many believers just look at the gift of democracy and they say, "Well, you know, what will happen will happen." If the Body of Christ had been mobilized in the last two elections, we would have different Supreme Court justices and this decision would have been very different on June 26. The Body of Christ is sleeping. It is not that they have a theological difference or opposition against being involved, but that they are just too busy in their own life. They think, "I do not care."*

*The Lord would say, "Do you understand the gift I gave you in a democracy?"*

H. **Respond in love:** Respond to Jesus as faithful witnesses, to people in kindness, to society in service.

*There is the growing in love, responding in love. We cannot win the cause of love without responding in the spirit of love.*

### III. THE END-TIME DRAMA

A. There will be a falling away in the end times (Mt. 24:9-13; 2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-7).

***<sup>3</sup>Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [Jesus' coming] will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin [Antichrist] is revealed. (2 Thes. 2:3)***

***<sup>1</sup>Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...<sup>3</sup> forbidding to marry. (1 Tim. 4:1-3)***

*We are going to do page two just ever so fast. I am going to give just a thought or two and leave it to you to read on your own. Look at the second verse here, 1 Timothy 4:1, "The Spirit expressly says in the last days, in the latter times." For the Spirit to say something expressly as Paul is saying, the Spirit is emphasizing this in a special way. Here it is. The Spirit is saying, "I want you to know I am emphasizing this: there will be a departure from the faith."*

*People are going to give heed to deceiving spirits, doctrines to demons. One of the manifestations—this was 2,000 years ago he prophesied—they would forbid marriage. This was so startling and shocking 2,000 years ago! Paul said that in the latter times there is going to be a falling away and one of the signals of it is you will find governments forbidding marriage.*

*Beloved, we are on the cusp of that happening right now. This is alerting to anybody paying attention that we are in a timeframe where things are escalating according to these lines. This is a unique signal of the end times, and the forbidding of marriage is an escalator of the darkness of the end times as well. Paul prophesied this 2,000 years ago.*

B. The Lord has planned tribulation as the context in which *many* will be purified in love (Dan. 11:33; 12:10). The Lord's plan for His Church will greatly succeed—multitudes will love and honor Him.

<sup>33</sup> *And those of the people who understand shall instruct many. (Dan. 11:33)*

<sup>1</sup> *There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was...your people shall be delivered...<sup>3</sup> Those who are wise shall shine...those who turn many to righteousness like the stars...<sup>10</sup> Many shall be purified, made white, and refined...the wise shall understand. (Dan. 12:1-10)*

<sup>9</sup> *“...a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne...<sup>14</sup> These...come out of the great tribulation.” (Rev. 7:9-14)*

*I just want to point out one point in here; it is the word **many** here in Daniel 11-12, Daniel's vision about the end-time generation, the generation the Lord returns. The message is God is going to have many, not a few, who respond to righteousness. Look at this, and “the people who understand,” faithful believers, “will instruct many.” Now I believe this “many” is going to be millions and millions, and I believe it will be through the Internet. Beloved, you may be eighty years old, sitting at home writing a blog that goes viral, that is seen by ten million people, and you do not even know it the day before.*

*Look what it says in Daniel 12. It is going on with the vision; it is the same vision. It says that there will be a time of trouble such as never was. Jesus quoted this verse. It is the Great Tribulation; that is what He called it.*

*Look **many**, “those who are wise shall turn **many** to righteousness.” Here is the good news: many are going to turn to righteousness, many. Many in the Body of Christ are going to break their unity with compromise and live in a vibrant righteousness, and many unbelievers are going to come all the way through to righteousness in their lifestyle, many.*

*Look what it says in verse 10, “many will be purified,”—many, not a little ragged remnant, on the side of glory. Beloved, millions are going to say yes to the leadership of Jesus. You are on the right side of history. John the apostle picked up on this in Revelation 7. He said, “a great multitude.” In all the nations, every tribe, every tongue, multitudes are saying yes.*

*So do not look at this hour and say, “Well, you know, a lot of young people do not really do the Bible and they go with Facebook instead of Jesus. Though they are on the church worship team, they do not really do this stuff.”*

*I have good news for you! God has His young people here and in the nations who love righteousness. They are going to be messengers of righteousness and they are not this kind of, “I just do whatever is on Facebook and I do not really do the Bible.” Maybe there are young people like that, but I have a prophecy from the Word of God that many of this generation are going to come all the way through in faithfulness and in righteousness, in purity and love, until the end. I think this is the greatest hour of history to be alive in.*

#### IV. HOW TO RESPOND

- A. We are to respond by loving Jesus, as faithful witnesses of the truth, loving people with pastoral sensitivity, and loving our nation by our full engagement in the work of God's kingdom.
- B. God's people are to be faithful witnesses: we are to be bold, clear, and kind in speaking and acting with a spirit of love, confident in Jesus' leadership, which alone brings love, liberty, and dignity.

- C. We must boldly teach what Scripture says about sexuality, including the gift of sexuality and what the Word says about adultery, fornication, divorce, and homosexuality. Scripture prohibits same-sex intercourse (Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10; cf. Lev. 18:22; 20:13). It is a double standard to speak of homosexual immorality while not being zealous for heterosexual purity and honoring marriage. Jesus offers tender mercy to all who have yielded to homosexual or heterosexual immorality; He offers forgiveness, freedom and grace to repent and to walk in His ways

***<sup>9</sup>Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,<sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.***

***<sup>11</sup>Such were some of you. But you were washed...you were justified. (1 Cor. 6:9-11)***

***<sup>26</sup>For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.<sup>27</sup>Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful...***

***<sup>28</sup>God gave them over to a debased mind, to do things which are not fitting. (Rom. 1:26-28)***

*I am going to read one more verse. I just want to ask you **how** you read this verse. That is the only reason I am reading it. We all know the verse, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. "Do you not know the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom. Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators..." I want us to know the Bible is clear about this, and here is the point. We all know this verse well. It is all over the media. Here is my question. **Do you read this verse with a vindictive tone or do you read this verse with tears?***

*One Christian reads it this way, "Do you not know the unrighteous will **NOT** inherit the kingdom. Do **NOT** be deceived! Those adulterers and sodomites, they will **never** enter the kingdom." I know Christians that talk that way.*

*There is another type of Christian who says, "do you not know... ..their relationship with Jesus, their inheritance of the kingdom...Lord, this is so intense. Oh, they will not be a part of the family. Fornicator, oh, do you not know?" That is how a faithful believer should read that verse.*

*Look at verse 11, He said, "But you are washed." There is a way, God says, "I will cleanse you, I will give you a new beginning, I will set you free, I declare you clean."*

- D. We can be faithful to the truth and show great kindness to people in immorality, both heterosexual and homosexual, and to Christians who understand the Word, as well as those who do not.

*Father, we say yes to Your Word. We say yes to Your leadership. We say yes to operating in love. We want to do this thing Your way.*

*I want you—if you will just close your eyes so you are not distracted around, just you and the Lord—to think, "How can we contend for love, the gospel going forth without doing it in a spirit of love?" If you are interfacing with anybody on the internet or in person with an angry tone, I am asking you right now to call out to the Lord and say, "Lord, that is me." Get a hold of that person on Facebook and undo that angry tone. Say the truth, but say it in tenderness. I am asking you right now to repent and talk to the Lord and say, "Yes, Lord, love wins. Yeah, that means I have got to undo the...oh my goodness. Yeah, love wins. It is worth it."*

*Others of you, how can we contend for purity in the homosexual community when the heterosexual community is filled with immorality and all kinds of things? The Lord says, "I will forgive you. I will cleanse you, but I want you to break your unity with it. I want you to be genuine about this and tender in the process."*

*Lord, we say yes to that.*

*Others are totally disengaged in this whole drama. The Lord says, "I want you involved in it. I want you involved in your community. I want you involved in being a faithful witness. I want you to be a clear spokesmen for what is in My heart."*

*So Lord, we are saying to You yes to that as well.*

*I want to invite you to stand. I want to invite any of you who want to come forward for prayer for anything. These things I said you can talk to the Lord about in your chair or you can come forward. If you would like prayer for anything or you are saying, "I need to repent on one of those three or four issues you mentioned and I am going to be different, I am going, yeah I am going to be a faithful witness. I am going to be tender and I am going to undo that angry tone and I am going to have empathy in the process. I am going to apologize to some of the people I have talked down to." I am going to invite you to come forward, if you want prayer for any of that or for healing in your body or anything.*

*Lord, I want to be bold, but I want to be tender. Lord. I want to be tender, but I want to be bold. Lord, I want to be tender and bold, but I want to be clear, I want to be schooled in the message. Lord, we love Your leadership. Lord, in this great hour of history we say, use me Lord. Here I am, use me. Have mercy, Lord, on us.*