

# Understanding A Rhema From God

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Welcome to A. T. Stewart and Sons Ministries. I'm your host A. T. Stewart. I'm glad you've chosen to join us today as we look into the word of God. So take your Bibles and let's hang out in God's word for a few moments and see what God would say to us today.

Next week, Josh will be sharing about his short-term mission trip to China, and we prayed for him; we as a church supported them so he and his wife will be sharing with us during this time next Wednesday night. So just spread the word as you would so those who prayed for him and his wife can get a chance to rejoice in what God did during their week over there in China.

Tonight, we are continuing our study of faith. Now, remember the Bible defines faith in Hebrews 11. It's the only place faith is defined. It says now faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen. The things that are not seen are either the things of the spiritual world which we cannot see with these eyes, or the things in the future that we have not seen yet. It doesn't take faith when you can see. Faith always involves things in the future hoped for, you don't hope for something that's in the past, you hope for that which is in the future, confident expectation of future things. So it's the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Now, since they're not seen, well, then how do we know that they're there? Well, we know from God and his word. That's the only way we know. And so faith, if it's going to be the conviction of things not seen things unseen, then that means it's got to start with God, not with me. It's got to start with God telling me what is the unseen thing that I must have the conviction of. So I must seek God's will, God's wisdom. I must seek his mind, a word from him to know what I am to believe and what I am to act on because faith is always active. And we defined it as acting like a thing is so, the unseen, because God said it is so. You don't know it until God tells you. Even when it doesn't appear to be so, don't matter what it looks like, there's no matter to what it... don't let what it looks like put you off. That's not what's important. Once you've heard from God what your human eyes see don't matter even though it doesn't appear to be so in order for it to become so, right? When we act in faith, we release the power of God into our human situation.

Now you remember Noah over in chapter 11 of Hebrews. It says, "By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen." See, faith is a conviction of things not seen. Noah was warned by God. God told him of some things that are going to happen that no

eye has seen and that was a flood. Now many commentators and I happen to agree, believe that before the flood there was no rain, there was just a mist. It seems there was a canopy of clouds that surrounded the world before the flood and a lot of the water that brought about the flood came from those clouds, that canopy that surrounded the earth, as well as the waters from the earth came up. And again, many think that this canopy that surrounded the earth was kind of like a hothouse effect, and therefore it kept much of the radiation from the sun from coming down and therefore you have people living a lot longer. It seems that maybe the people didn't age like we do now because after the flood you see a dramatic drop in ages. You don't have the two and six- and 700-year-old people after the flood, and so many people think that canopy had something to do with the longevity of life. And also again, it talks about the mist in the garden. It doesn't say rain, it says the mist, and again you had the hothouse effect. But no rainbow. Obviously, you would not see a rainbow because again, there was no rain as such and sun as such. But God said it's going to rain, he said there's going to be a flood. Never, they had to put that word in the dictionary after God said it because it wasn't even in their vocabulary. There was no such thing as a flood. Noah probably had to say, "Now God, explain to me what is a flood." But once God told him there was going to be a flood, look at what it says, it says, "being warned by God about things not yet seen," the coming flood, "in reverence," literally in fear, respect, in awe, he "prepared an ark for the salvation of his household."

So Noah believed there was going to be a flood because God said there was going to be a flood, even when it didn't appear that there was going to be a flood, in order that there was a flood. So how would he act if he thought a flood was coming? He'd build an ark. So he did. Nowhere close to the ocean. How many people build huge ships in the desert? You know, it just added to his ridicule. And you know they had to laugh. They made fun of him. They mocked him as they walked by and there he was building this huge boat miles and hundreds of miles from any huge body of water. "How stupid can you be, Noah?" God's going to send a flood. "What's a flood, Noah?" I mean in human eyes, Noah was an idiot and that's what they thought about him, wasn't it?

But by faith he obeyed, he built the ark for the salvation of his household, "by which he condemned the world," and he condemned the world because he was acting in faith, they were not, "and he became an heir of righteousness," look at the rest of that verse, "which is according to faith." Faith. Righteousness comes through works or through faith? Faith. What's it the conviction of? The unseen reality of the cross of Christ, that somehow 2,000 years ago a death on a cross could be payment for my sins in 2011 There's no way to figure that out. No human way you can put that together and make sense out of it, but we believe it because God said it, don't we? By faith, and when we believe it by faith God credits us with the righteousness of Christ. All by faith. That's all God's ever wanted was a people to believe him. So trust him.

And we're talking about getting a word from God, and we'll use the same outline that we used last week because I didn't finished last week, and now that we've talked about the difference between Logos and Rhema translated in the English version as "word," both of those Greek words are translated "word" in the English. So when you read in the Scriptures man should not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the

mouth of God, you don't know if that's Logos or that's Rhema; from your English you just can't tell. And so there's a difference, though, in the Greek, and we've been talking about that. Logos is the revelation of God. The whole Bible is the Logos. But when God takes the Logos and speaks to you about your particular situation, when he makes that word come alive to you, and some of you have been sharing with me since we've been in this series how God has spoken to you in situations, and you just knew it was God. I mean, it's just like heaven opened, it's like nobody was on this earth but you and God and God said, "This is My word to you right now, I'm speaking to you." Just like there's nobody else around, "Me and you are talking and though this was written thousands of years ago, written to somebody else for some other occasion, I'm speaking to you right now." And you knew it. It's just like instant Insight was given. Instant illumination was given. God revealed truth. And God can, in a split nanosecond, he can show you more truth than you can ferret out on your own in decades. And when it hits you, you know. You know God has spoken, he has revealed truth. Light is what it's called and it is. It shines, that light shines and you know it, God's spoken, and it ministers to you, and we're going to talk about that in a moment.

So we're talking about getting that word from God that Rhema from God, and he doesn't have to use the Scripture. Miss Sue was sharing about how God told her that her daughter was going to be healed and he didn't give her a verse but he spoke to it, and just as clearly as if he had said it out loud, wasn't it, Sue? Out loud, it was out loud. She heard it. Amen. Everybody else thought it was thunder, but she knew what it was. Hallelujah. All right, and she knew God has spoken.

Now we said when God speaks to you, that's his word to you. And you remember, faith comes by hearing and hearing the Rhema of God. So when God gives you the word he gives you the faith to act on it. So you don't have to then try to muster it up because faith comes from God as well as the word. But you can't expect other people to get on your word, so don't be surprised when they don't see it the way you see it. When they can't act on it like you can, that's fine. They haven't gotten that word. Don't let them discourage you, though. You see, that's the key, don't get discouraged by their lack of willingness to act on the word God's given you because he hasn't given them the faith that he gave you.

Now I want to take this truth about Rhema and Logos, particular about Rhema, and I want to open up some passages of Scripture to you that I think you'll see differently than you've ever seen before when you see this concept. And one's over in Matthew 4:4. Again, this is a temptation of Jesus. We saw it a few weeks ago. This is when Jesus has been in the wilderness for 40 days. He's fasted. He became hungry. At that point, the tempter came to him and the tempter said, "If you're God's Son," and over in that area of Israel around Bethlehem, I've been there and there's just a great number of stones that are round. They look like little cakes of bread. I mean, so you know when you're hungry, everything reminds you, you know? And all these little stones around and he just basically said, "You know, if you're the Son of God just take one of these stones and turn it into bread." And the temptation, as we said, was for Jesus to use his own power to help himself instead of trusting the Father to feed him when the Father was ready. Satan was basically saying, "Look, You've been here 40 days. God hasn't fed You anything. What

makes You think He's going to feed you now?" You know God helps those that help themselves, right? He's given you the ability. That's where it came from the devil, right? He gave you the ability to do it and now go do it. That's right, he expects you to do it rather than trusting him to do it. And that's when Jesus answered by quoting from Deuteronomy 8, "Man shall not live by bread alone." In other words, this physical world and feeding your physical body, that's not the most important thing at all, "but on every Rhema that proceeds out of the mouth of God." I think Jesus was saying to the devil as he refuted that temptation, "Look, whether I eat or not, that's not the important thing. What's important is that I walk according to God's Rhema. God's word will from My life. That's the most important thing there is." And so that tells me that our life as Christians should be a living out of God's word, both the Logos and particular the Rhema. As you seek God about situations in your life and he speaks to you, your life should be a living out of those words that God's given you, acting like it is so because God said it is. He wanted it to appear to be so in order for it to become so. So I think it's important that we do seek the Lord, we learn how to seek the Lord, and we walk in obedience to his word.

Now over in Luke 5 we see another incident that we talked about and this is where Peter had been fishing all night and caught nothing. Jesus told him to go out. He says, "But you know, we've been out all night, we didn't catch anything so it really doesn't make sense to go out." But in verse 5 he says, "But at your Rhema I will let down the nets." And when they had done that, they enclosed a quantity of fish that was too much for their nets and the nets began to break. Now what I see in this passage is that obeying the Rhema of God brings blessings. Obeying God's Rhema for your situation will bring the blessings of God into your life.

A third the truth, Luke 9:45, now let's look over in that. Luke 9:45 and we'll begin in verse 43. "And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples, 'Let these words sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.'" Verse 45, "But they did not understand this Rhema, and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this Rhema." Sometimes you will not understand immediately the word that God gives to you. I shared with you last week or the week before about the word God gave me about the guy that was in prison, and how I understood part of it that the guy was not going to have to serve time, I did not get the full meaning of it that he was going to give sight to the blind and the fellow is going to get saved in it and that he would deliver him from the dungeon until after it happened. But then I went back and I saw that indeed God had spoken that word. I shared with you as well last week how I felt that God had given us a word about having a son, and yet it didn't happen as we thought because we had the timing messed up.

So you need to recognize that when God does give you a word, don't just jump up and run off with it thinking you understand it completely and totally. You need to wait, ask the Lord to give you wisdom about it, let it settle in, get understanding of it, maybe talk to somebody who you respect spiritually, has insights, and say, "This is what I believe God's saying to me but I want to be sure because I want to obey God, and I want to make sure I've heard Him right," because we have to recognize in our humanness we can

misunderstand what God's saying and we have to allow for that. And if it's ever a situation like I found myself in when it didn't look like God did what he said he's going to do, I knew it wasn't God that was wrong. I knew it had to be on my part. So then you've got to step back and say, "God, you know, I really thought I understood what You're saying, but I guess I didn't."

All right over in John 6:63, Jesus is speaking. Now, if you've ever gotten a word from God, you're going to know immediately what I'm saying. John 6:63. Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the Rhema that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life." Life. And when God gives you that, Rhema, it does minister the life of Christ to you. And I think that's part of the faith, impartation of the faith that comes with the word. But you know, it just ministers to you. It just ministers to the deepest part of your being. It just ministers life, that's about the only way I can say it. And if you've ever had it happen to you, you know what I mean. It just brought light. It brought life. It brought understanding. It brought faith. You entered and moved into a deeper level with the Lord and Jesus said, "My words are spirit and life."

Now look over in John 8:47. John 8:47. Jesus says, "He who is of God hears the Rhema of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God." I believe as a child of God that if you will seek the Lord, as we talked about that holy desperation, that God will in his time and in his way give you that Rhema that you so desperately need as his child. And you'll talk to people sometimes who'll say, "Well, you know, God's never spoken to me that way." That concerns me a little bit because Jesus says, "He who is of God hears the Rhema of God."

Now I believe, again, when we all got saved God spoke a word to us. We didn't understand maybe what it was but there was insight, there was life, there was light that suddenly came into us and we realized our condition apart from Christ as never before, and we realized his sufficiency as never before, and we wanted him. We wanted him more than anything and we were willing to give ourselves totally, absolutely to him, right? And you don't come upon that on your own. God has to give you that understanding. It might have been a verse. It might have been something that was said in a sermon. I think it was Augustine heard these kids out singing a song. Do you remember that? And God use that to give him the word that brought conversion. I forget the song, it was something about, do you remember it was about to cross or about love or something? Take and read. Kid's saw it. Take and read and he picked up the Scriptures. Amen. Said, "Our God can use me." But that spoke to him. He knew God was speaking to him. Amen. Amen. Hallelujah, isn't that good? Amen.

And I remember it was one of Wesley brothers, remember he went to the meeting of the... They were going across the ocean and the Moravians, it was a storm and he was scared to death. He'd been a missionary over here in Savannah for two years and he was headed back to England and there was a tremendous storm and he was scared to death, but the Moravians on the ship with him had perfect peace. He knew something was wrong with him and his religion because all he had was a religion. And you remember he went, there was an altar gate where he went to the Moravian meeting and he said his heart was

strangely warmed. I think it was a passage in Romans or something? Yeah, how about that? You see? There you go, Lucas. See how God works? Amen. Amen. And you can read Christian biography after Christian biography and you'll see this, and if you look at your own life, you'll probably see it in your own life as well.

I remember when I was six years old and I'd grown up in church and been to church and we were having a revival at our church, back in those days, you know, you had revivals in the spring and in the fall, and this was a spring revival. And I told my folks, you know, "I want to get saved." Well, they called a preacher to come in and we talked, and we got through talking and he basically said he didn't think I was ready. So he left. So my mom said, "What do you think about that?" I said, "I still want to get saved." She said, "Well, let's go pray about it." And back in those days before you had air conditioners, so the windows were down, and we went down and knelt beside my bed. I remember it like it was yesterday. And we began to pray. As we prayed, the old chimes at the church, you know, back then, they used to have chimes that would ring, and they's play songs and they were they were not real chimes, they were records, but anyway they sounded like chimes, and you could hear it all over town. Small town, you hear it all over town. The windows were down and just as we started praying the chimes started playing and God just spoke to me and said, "Come unto Me." And we got through praying and my Mom said, "What did God say?" I said, "He said come unto Me." And she said, "That's what He said to me." So I went down that night and it stuck. Amen. It's stuck. Hallelujah. Praise God. But that was God's word to me. Amen. A little. 6-year-old boy. Didn't know any theology except I knew I was going to hell and I needed Jesus and I loved him and I wanted him. Amen.

So with the word comes spirit and life. He who is of God hears the words of God. Now look over in John 15:7. John 15:7, we may open up this verse to you as you've never seen it before. John 15:7. Jesus says, "If you abide in Me, and My Rhema abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." Now just reading that verse on the surface it may look like an open-ended prayer check. Write any amount you want on the check. You pray it, you ask for it, you'll have it. But that crucial understanding of the Rhema changes all of that, doesn't it? "If you abide in Me and my Rhema abides in you." I've sought the Lord about my situation. He has spoken to me, given me his word about my situation, so now I'm going to pray according to that revealed will of God about my situation. And so he will answer that prayer because it's in line with his will. I'm not just out there trying to figure out what I want and asking anything I wish, but when he conditions that request by, "If My Rhema abide in you," he's saying right there, "I'm the initiator of this, not you. You get in touch with Me. I speak the word to you. Then you can pray in line with that word and I'm going to answer it." Same thing in 1 John. If we pray according to his will we have the confidence he hears our prayer. If he hears it, he will answer. And so rather than being a blank check, God has said clearly it comes through the Rhema, the word. Ask anything you want once you've got that word abiding in you, you're going to ask according to his will.

Over in Matthew 12, here's a passage that puzzled me for years until I understood it in the light. Of God's Rhema. Matthew 12:36. Jesus speaking, "And I say to you that every

careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned." For years that passage troubled me deeply because how many times have I spoken a careless word? How many times have you spoken a careless word? I mean, what exactly constitutes a careless word? I mean, I'm always joking around. Are those careless words? So I think, man, that's going to be a hard day for everybody.

But now let's look at it from this new perspective. "I say to you that every careless," that's not a real good translation of that word. That word is better translated "non-working, idle," and some translations say idle. You remember when Jesus told a parable about the man that went out early in the morning and got the guys sitting on the corner and said, "Hey, come work for Me. I'll pay you a denarius." And he goes back a few hours later, he gets another crowd and tells them the same thing. Do you remember that story? And then he goes back toward the end of the day and he says to the ones who are there, "Why are you sitting here idle," careless is the same word, "non-working all day?" In other words, they've been nonproductive, they've just been sitting there. And their answer was, "Nobody has asked us to work." But what I want you to see is that word clearly doesn't mean careless there, "Why have you been sitting careless all day?" What they've been doing is they've been nonproductive, non-working. Literally the word is a privative which means not, like amoral, not moral, and then the word working. So Jesus said, "For every non-working Rhema that you speak you're going to have to give an account for."

So what does that say? That says when I go and seek the Lord about his will for my situation and he gives me that word, now the only way that word is going to be non-working is, what? If I walk away from it. If I don't follow through in the act of faithful obedience to that word. If I don't fight the fight of faith. If I don't carry through believing God, trusting God, sacrificing, doing whatever he calls me to do to obey his word, to act like it's so even when it doesn't appear to be so. But if he gives me that word and yet I halfway through the process get tired, stop acting like it's so, give up when the fight gets hard, then what is that but a non-working Rhema and I'm going to have to give an account for that someday. Now doesn't that makes sense?

And then he goes on to say, "For by your words you shall be justified," set right." If Noah had given that word about the flood, had not carried through, well, we wouldn't be here today, would we? So I think what Jesus is saying there, he is saying that every non-working nonproductive Rhema that you speak because you have been disobedient and not carried through believing God, working, trusting, obeying, you are going to have to give an account for that. So when you start seeking God for a word, remember once he's given it to you you'd better act in faith and see it through till he brings it to fruition. Amen?

Now let me share with you in our closing moments the word God gave me about coming to West Side, and it was 19, over 19 years ago. I had a friend of mine who had come here and was talking to the church, and I hadn't seen him in several years but we ended up finding ourselves together at a meeting. And so we were just catching up and he said, "Man, I'm talking to this church over in Mableton and I'm going to be going there to preach in a few weeks in view of a call." And I said, "Well, tell me about the church." He

said, Oh, man, it's nontraditional church. It's got a lot of young couples." And he kept talking about it and I remember thinking to myself, "Man that's the kind of church I'd like." I mean, God had always put me in churches with a bunch of older folks and I don't have anything against older folks but at that time I was young, and I even have less against them now than I did. You know, but I just always wanted, I always had a heart for young families and just said, "Lord, I'd love to be in a church with a lot of young families." Nontraditional. I'd always been in traditional churches and nothing wrong with that, but I just was ready to get into a little less tradition. So I just kind of put that in the back of my mind.

Well, I didn't see him again for several weeks, and so when I did see him, I said, "Well, how's it going? Are you going over to the church?" He said, "No." I said, "What happened?" He said, "They voted not to call me." I said, "Well, I said I'm sorry about that," but I said, "You know, if you want to stick my resume in there I'd be alright with that." I said, "I think I might be interested." He said, "Well, I'll turn your name over to them." So he did. Several weeks later I got a call from the search committee. Slater Davis was on it, you all know him. Bud Solomon was on it man, many of you know him. Another couple you don't know was on it, Mick and Gloria James, and Roger Curry, who some of you know and don't know he was the Chairman of the committee. So they called me to come over and speak with them and I said great. So I came over and we met in Roger's office and talked for several hours, and I sensed really things were going good and just really was excited about it, but I wanted to find out what the Lord wanted.

So I remember going back and this was in August of '91. So next couple days I just said, "Lord, I really would like to hear from You about this situation. I'd like to know what You're doing." And I was reading over in Isaiah 43 and God just gave me a Rhema here, he spoke this to me, "But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel, 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you. For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior. Since you are precious in My sight, Since you are honored and I love you, I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life. Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, And gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar And My daughters from the ends of the earth, Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made." And then over later in that chapter he says, "Do not call to mind the former things, Or ponder things of the past. Behold, I will do something new, Now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert. The beasts of the field will glorify Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I have given waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My chosen people. The people whom I formed for Myself Will declare My praise." Now you may be thinking, "Well, I don't see anything in that that has to do with coming to West Side." Well, when God speaks to you, he can interpret it ways you



don't really see but I knew from that he was saying I was going to come to West Side. That's all I understood about it. I didn't understand all the details, but I understood that.

So I gathered my family around. I had the three older girls. Tiffany, the oldest was in ninth grade in high school and they went on down. I said and told Terry, I said, "Guys," I said, "God has spoken to me and I've talked to this church over in Mableton, and we are going to be their pastor." And then I was thinking, of course, now it'd be great for this to happen before school starts. You know, you don't have to pull up kids in the middle of school. Well, we didn't have about three weeks for this thing to get on the ball before school started. But I said we're going. I didn't hear anymore from the committee though. But God hadn't told them yet. I didn't hear anything. Weeks went by, I didn't hear anything. Well, I called up Tommy, the guy that had been here and they rejected him and I said, "Did you hear anything?" He said, "Yeah, they're calling a guy to come in that is a prospective pastor." And this is probably getting on about August. This is probably getting on about October. So there's a guy who worked with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, I think and they said he's going to be coming in and meeting with the church and they're going to be voting on him. Well now, if I had heard from God, I knew he wasn't coming, right? So I said to my girls, I said, "Kids and Terry," I said, "this is what's happening but don't worry, he's not going to go." And I said, "And I can tell you something else, he's going to reject them. They're not going to reject him." I knew if the church had rejected the second man the committee had brought, the committee would have to dissolve. I mean, you know, a committee can't take that twice. It's hard enough to take it once. How many times have you heard of a church rejecting the search committee candidate? Rarely, but West Side's a rare church.

So anyway, they did, right? I mean, I've never heard of that really. Well, one other place. Okay. So, and that was the last church I was at. So here we go. I guess I just end up at those places. So anyway, so I said he's not, I said, no, it's not going to happen. Well, a few weeks pass, I get the word. He came, he visited with the church, he preached, he went back and he called them up and said, "You know, I just don't think God's in this." So I said, alright, God's in it. And then God brought my attention to the passage where it says that he says, "I will say to the north, give them up. And to the South, do not hold them back." Well, this guy was from up in the north part of Atlanta. Give him up. Well, my friend Tommy was from the South part. He was down around Riverdale.

So I called and I was talking to I think Roger, and I said, "Well, I hear the other guy's not coming. You know what's going on with us?" He said, "Well, there are members on the committee, they want to go back and talk to the first guy again," the guy that was rejected by the church. It didn't make sense to me, but you know they wanted to do that. Now if the church had rejected him the first time, what made them think he was going to come back and they were going not reject him? But anyway they wanted to do that. So I said, "Okay, God," you know, "You're in control and in Your time." So then they came back and that didn't work so they said, "We want to meet with you again." And so I said, "Okay, now we're getting on the ball, Lord, thank You." This is getting on about November. So I'm thinking, okay, you know, maybe we break during the midterm, you

know, take the kids out of school during Christmas break and start them in a new school and that would be a good way to do it.

So I came over and I talked to them and we had another talk. We talked about, I told them what my salary was where I was and all of that stuff. Well then I went back and just waiting in a minute, hear that call, come on, let's keep going. And then I get a letter from the search committee and they say, "You know, we really enjoyed meeting with you, but we just believe God's leading us in another direction." Now I have gotten letters like that before and I didn't had a problem just saying, "Yeah, that's fine. I don't have a problem with that, God. You know, You open and close." But I. just knew this, "God, You spoke it. This can't be right. This just can't be right." I was holding this letter in my hand and I was showing it to Terry and I said, "This can't be right." I said, "God said we're going." And God even told, he gave Terry a word out of Isaiah 55 that we'd be going and he talked about the trees clapping, and that passage told her we were going in that passage. And so God just, you know, he just kind of spoke to me and said it's the salary. They don't think they can pay you what you're making now.

So I called up Roger and I said, "Roger," and I said, "You know, if y'all really don't think I'm the man," I said, "that's fine." I said, "I'll walk right away, think nothing else about it." I said, "But is salary the problem?" And he said, "Well, to be honest with you, yes." He said, "We like everything about you. We'd love to have you, but we just don't think we can..." And I had my six kids then, "We just cannot pay you what you're making now." And I said, "Well, if that's the only problem," I said, "I don't want that to be a problem because I believe God's in this thing." I said, "Well, tell me how much you can pay me, and then I'll pray and see how I can crunch things all around and twist things and see if we can do it." And so they told me what they could pay. So I went back to Terry and I explained it to her and so I started looking through and if we cut here and we cut there and do without this and do without this and quit putting money in retirement and this, that and the other. It was close. And because God's going to make it so you have to trust him. You know he's not going to make it, just it works out. But you know it didn't take an insurmountable amount of faith to see, "Lord, You're just going to have to provide here."

So I called him back and I said, "That is not a problem. God is going to provide for us." So I figured, hey, we still got time to get it before the school year starts. You know, before the second term. Well, they came over, they heard me preach. We met again. And then God started dealing with me about some issues that needed to resolve it themselves here at this church. There was a guy on staff here who was the associate pastor, David Egger, many of you know him. And David had said that he would step down when the new pastor came. Well, I didn't feel like that was what I wanted to do. I didn't want to leave him out in the cold. So I basically said and I was studying through the life of David and I happened to be in the passage where David had a chance to take out Saul and his comrade said, "Do it. God's anointed you, you're the man. Take him out." And David said, "I will not touch the Lord's anointed." And I felt like God was saying to me, "You know, if you go in there and he has to leave and he doesn't have a place to go, in a sense, you're cutting off his ministry. I will move him when it's time for you to go."

So I said to the committee and this was like January, I said, "When God leads him away, then I'll know it's time for me to go." Well, they said, "We don't know, that could be years." I said, "God is in control." So probably about three months later, probably March, those of you that were here then remember, God led David Egger down to Thomaston, I think it was in South Georgia to a church. Well then the way was free and the rest of it's history but I needed that word from the Lord because there were days and have been days that I've been here, that if I hadn't had that word from God, I'd have pulled out my hair worse than it is. I had a full head of hair when I came. Literally didn't I, Tom? Tom will bear that testimony. And it was mine too. I paid for it every dime. It was mine all the way. But when you came I had a full head, though. I said it's mine, I paid for it, every dollar.

Alright, so anyhow. Seek the Lord, get a word from the Lord, and then walk out in faith and watch God do great and mighty things.

Alright, let's close.

*God, we do thank You, thank You for Your word. We thank You for the joy we can have in You as we just see how You work. God, You have a tremendous sense of humor and we thank You for that. And we know that You enjoy Your people and we enjoy You. And just give us Your word. We want to obey You. We want to walk with You in the way that brings You the most glory. And I know that when You speak and we walk in faith and You work, it brings glory to You, and it deepens us in our faith and our walk with You. Bless us each now in Jesus' name. Amen.*