

Indianapolis Church of Christ:  
Fuqua, Lamb, Arthur

**International Churches Of Christ  
A/K/A Boston Church Of Christ Movement  
Audio Tape Transcripts**

**Indianapolis: Fuqua, Lamb, Arthur  
2 Tapes**

Tape 1 Side 1  
Transcribed by Carol Giambalvo

...the last few days. Father we are depressed or are fearful of what can happen. Most of you know how Satan is rejoicing at this hour. And yet we know because we know the kind of war we're in. And, Father, we want you to work powerfully. We want you to make our hearts right toward you. Father, I pray that you will work on, you will prepare, you will soften the hearts of every single one of us. I know that some here tonight are very tense, very scared, very nervous about what will be said, what will happen. And there's a lot of pain going on right now through our family being divided in the Lord. But Father, we know that as long as we are with you, there will be victory. (amen) So, Father, we pray that you will work powerfully. We pray that your Spirit will fill the room tonight and drive out the demons. Father, I pray that you would be with Kip tonight, to be with Marty tonight. I pray you will be with every single person who has a part, but Father we know we all have a part tonight. Our spirit, our heart, our souls and our minds are all involved. Father, I pray for the parents, that we can be living sacrifices for you and we can allow you to work through (?) tonight, to you be the victory and glory, in Jesus' name. Amen. (amen)

Marty Fuqua: ...the book of Proverbs: 18:17. Let me tell you, ... that it's great to be back. in the Midwest. I'd like to introduce my wife so you can get to know her. (amen) (speaker is inaudible--too far away from microphone, people's side talk closer to the microphone was picked up) ...I know some people are fired up about Indiana and Perdue and all those things but my ? goes to Illinois University. (amen) ...the old home town. Anyway, we've been here for many, many years and worked with many of the churches here and reconstructed them in the Midwest as well as planting...and that is great.

In Proverbs 18:17 ...circumstances with you here in Indianapolis tonight. "The first to present his case seems right until another comes forward and questions him." Any of us who have been involved in any kind of counseling or talking to people knows that if you don't get both sides of any situation, you haven't got all the information. I want to give you a brief overlap of quite a few things for the last few years and then the last week.

I have been involved with the Midwest ministry going all the way back to the church planting of Chicago in 1982. At that time, of course, that was a new concept. We went to Chicago in June and Doug went over and started the church in London in July. And, of course, we began the (?) into all the world, planting churches...from Boston at that time. (amen) And it has been exciting to see the movement grow. Back in the early days in Chicago, we were definitely scrounging around, trying to figure out what to do. And as Doug and I have told you many times, the ensuing church plantings were lucky because they got to learn from all the mistakes that we made back in Chicago.

But anyway, we had a great time and I believe that God worked our efforts in a magnificent way to bring thousands to Christ, not only in Chicago, but all the Midwest. In so much of being involved, Ed and

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Bobbi, I began to be involved with them when they came and were working with ? in the Indianapolis Church. We invited Ed to come to Chicago with Roger and myself during the period of time to come in to the Indianapolis church and reconstruct it, to build it up. And Ed and I worked with the Central Sector in Chicago during that time. Ed and I have been very, very good friends for a long time. I would dare say that I was Ed Power's best friend for many years.

In 1989, Kip asked me to move from Chicago to Buenos Aires, Argentina. Not knowing Spanish, that was a very interesting challenge. (yep) But, with my wife ... to do it, so I decided.... (laughter) But, anyway, we came on back. At that time -- Chicago -- and we came on back and subsequently Ed came along back down to Indianapolis. The reason Ed was sent back to Indianapolis was because we felt that he had done a great job in Chicago. Seriously, Ed was ready for the task and the specific task of being out in a church and leading it on your own.

About a year and a half ago, I began to be very concerned in conversations with Ed that he didn't seem to have a serious drive -- a somewhat emotional ability to be out on his own. And I suggested to him that he move to Chicago and said it would be a great idea. And Ron Drabot, and the elders, talked to him about that idea. At that time, Ed was very angry, left the house, went back in. I flew up to Chicago, sat around with the elders, Ed & Bobbi, the Drabots and ..... I said, "well I'm still concerned, but you can go back to Indianapolis very soon. I felt like it would be better for Ed to be in that church, surrounded by strong people that could be with him.

Last summer, I flew here, I believe it was in August, but I don't know exactly when it was last summer. I flew here, I spoke to the church Sunday morning and I spoke to the BTL's when they had their meeting and then we left with the Powers to go down through Indiana down into the country where my folks live..... Ed stayed there with us over night, we went out on the lake. On that ride again I talked to Ed about my concern and once again, he didn't want to leave.

I want to bring you on up to date here to about February of this year. Every year the west sectors churches have more or less sort of an annual type of meeting where all the church leaders come in to Los Angeles in January for a meeting and we talk about how the previous year went and set things up for the next year. At that meeting, all Friday night, I had supper with Ed and Bobbi and others there at the table and we talked about a variety of different things, mostly on a very light level like how Indiana is doing in basketball and how UCLA is doing in basketball and there was nothing with any grand substance along the lines of concern about that the movement, concern about where they were. At that time, Kip was there on Friday night and Ed did not have any exchange at all with Kip.

My responsibilities with Ed have recently changed. My concern in expressing it with Kip and the elders that I had to get out more into the churches, in particular the churches in the Midwest, the churches in the Rocky Mountain area, the SW and the NW, to be involved with them and working with them. One of the first things that we wanted to do was have a period of time where the church leaders came in for a week of time to Los Angeles, and train them, be with them, to pray together, to talk, etc., etc. The first group I wanted to bring in, of course, was the Midwest. In some ways my spiritual roots and knowing a lot of the brothers here, training a lot of brothers that are leading these churches, I wanted to have them in and they were to arrive on Monday. On Sunday I arrived back from Dallas. I had spoken at the church in Dallas and Sunday night, I received a call from Ed.

To say that I was blown away by the things that he shared that had happened here Sunday night would be

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an understatement. As the conversation went literally Ed was doing the talking and I was doing the listening. And I said, "Ed, you did what?" I couldn't believe it. I was so fired up about the Midwest leaders, including Ed, coming on in on Monday. And this is what I got on Sunday night. I said, "Ed, I can't believe it. Why in the world didn't you call me? Why didn't you talk about this? You were scheduled to come on down Monday."

At that time, I said, "Ed, can we talk about it? I'll fly out there and we'll talk." And he said, "yes." I said, "well, I have to talk to Kip and the elders about what to do. This is an extraordinary situation. I can't believe it." I can see the importance of this phenomenon .....

We got together on Monday at noon. We talked for probably about three hours and the counsel of the different elders was you need to talk to Ed, you need to set up with him and ask him if you can go to the (?) meeting and talk to the church. And I called Ed and said, "**Ed, can I speak with the church? Can I speak to the issue that you brought up?**" And he said, "**absolutely not.**" He said, "would you let me speak to the L.A. church?" I said, "help me understand. One time I talked to you, I didn't write things down. I want you to go down with me and I will take notes on this. What did you say?" And he went over with me the things that he went over at the congregational meeting on Sunday night -- the scriptures, the application of those scriptures, etc., etc. I talked with him later on Sunday to set up a time. I said, "I'm going to be flying out on Tuesday, I'll get there late at night. On Wed. I'd like to set up a time to get together with you and talk."

He said, "well, let me ask you a question first. Are you guys calling people about a meeting you're having on Thursday to tell them your side of the story?"

I said, "absolutely, we are. They deserve to hear the other side of the story."

He said, "then you can forget getting together." And that's the last time that I talked to Ed.

Woman: "may I ask a question?"

Fuqua: We'll have a question and answer period when we're done.

Woman comments inaudible. (Go for it! Equal speakers, equal speakers!) You have...inaudible.

Interchange between the two inaudible.

Fuqua: Because I wanted it written down so I could look at it, so I could go back to Ed and see what was really there.

Woman: Can you tell us what.... (good point)

Fuqua: .....

Woman: Marty.....Sunday night you could gone over it yourself and then talked to him. That's what I'm confused about. Why Sunday night, you spoke to our leaders without notes, without reading from your convictions, then Monday saying, "well, we don't understand. What's the notes." And why did you make those phone calls Monday morning saying we should come to a meeting?

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(right. That's right, sister, we don't understand that. That's right, sister)

Inaudible

Male: ....(inaudible) .... we were told that we were no longer with the movement, that we were lost. We got a phone call from a lady in Detroit telling us if we were followers of Ed, that we were no longer with the movement, we are going to be lost. .... So we're confused. (amen)

Male: Well, that's why we're having a meeting here. I'm going to ask you why you did not to talk directly to Ed, one on one as Matthew 18 teaches us to do to resolve this before you went to anyone else. I know Ed was speaking directly to you.

Male: Let Marty speak. He's the speaker right now.

inaudible.....

Male: I've got one suggestion. Let's not bring personalities into this. Ed is not here to give his side of anything. Let's talk about the issues. Let's not talk about people who are not in this room. Let's deal with what we can change. We cannot change anyone outside this room. Let's deal with the people in this room.

inaudible response

Fuqua: .....we will deal with that. Kip will deal with that. (amen) (applause) ..... At any rate, the purpose of our meeting here tonight .... we're going to speak and then take questions and answers. I'd like to say this, I know emotions are running high here.....there's going to be plenty of time, people. There's going to be plenty of people here to talk with and every opportunity you can possibly want. (is that going to be one entire group to have discussions?) (applause)

(song) Father I adore you

Douglas Arthur:

.....involved with the Hope work and it has changed their hearts because in a situation like that, it's real hard poverty. And when your culture has told you, "well, that's your fate, and so it would be better for you to die like that." And so it's got to change them.....the government put on the opening of the Village of Hope, invited Hope to participate. So, the governor of the state of India was there, a member of parliament, congressmen, head of social services and a whole string of people sitting up on the stage that were introduced. And what has happened is a year ago there was a ground breaking in the Village of Hope.

As of this date, one year after that, we opened up the first home to the first family that we were able to move in. So there is 200 homes opened by May, 450 opened by Sept. and then a year from then, 800 total. And these are brick, and they are concrete and they have doors on them and you can lock your own house up. And it's unbelievable. It's now better in ..... than most of the people in the church have for their houses. ....was a sister in the church, she wanted to have us over for tea so bad. And ..... at the time lived in the slums. She had become a Christian, her 2 teenagers had become disciples. She has a younger

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boy also. Her husband quit drinking. He had an alcohol problem and he is studying. We bought him some glasses so he can read for himself now. And she was so happy. She was so dignified having us over to this small hut -- one room, 5 people, 2 teenagers, little kerosene stove, making us tea, boiling the water. (amen, laughter) That was a big sacrifice. And I looked at her and we were sitting there and in India, .... talking about our teenagers. And talk about the Kingdom of God. (amen) I challenged this guy about reading the Bible and stuff. It's no different. People are the same. You know what got me? I looked at her and I thought if I lived here, would I be that happy? I'm an American, too. What about you? Or would it make you grumble? And I mean to tell you, it just thrilled my heart. She's so happy because she is a disciple. Lots of people in that slum weren't that happy. I noticed that. (laughter) Makes you wonder what we would do.

Listen, guys, the Kingdom is .... unbelievable. 1500 in Hong Kong on Sunday. (amen) In Japan, there were 450 in Tokyo in a culture where people don't know who God is, who Jesus is, what the Bible is. You talk about God and you're weird. It's the most wealthy, crime-free, clean place you have ever been in your life. But the people don't know how to love each other. Why? Because without God there is no love. (amen)

I just want to tell you the last thing here about China. You have to go visit the Red Dragon once. Our church is underground in Communist China. There are 20 disciples there now. They had 7 baptisms in 11 weeks. (amen) We couldn't discuss the Bible in public. We couldn't pray in public. The Christians can't talk to each other, they have to use code words in talking to each other. And you can't invite anybody to church until they are baptized. It's too dangerous. They can literally be tortured and imprisoned. Literally. It is so exciting to have somebody go in my room, share their conversions with me and then ask about the churches around the world. And ask about the churches in America and ask about what's going on there. This guy said, "you know, someone gave me a Bible when he was going back to the west and I studied it for a year and I saw there was a God. And I believed in Jesus. And I said I want to be a Christian. And now I've got to go to church...it says in there about church." So he sought out, he went to a government-sanctioned church -- see, to go to a government sanctioned, you have to agree to propagate the government. And he tried to get into church and they wouldn't let him in. He's been....? So he went to an area where people go to practice speaking English to each other and thought maybe there was somebody there that's a real Christian. And it just happened to have (laughter) and an evangelist where the Red Dragon went was reaching out to people in that area. And he never, ever talked about anything spiritual because it is too dangerous. He gets to know people, then brings up something spiritual to see if they are interested and comes on down, studies the Bible if they are real interested. If they are REAL interested, he baptized them. (amen)

Well, this guy stood there and the evangelist told him, "I've never ever done this but for some reason I looked at this guy and I said "I'm a Christian."" And the guy looked at him and said, "Oh, I am a Christian too. I need somebody to teach me." Well, he taught him. He taught him about being a true Christian not just a Bible believing person. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ. He said, "I want to be a disciple. I wanted to be baptized. And then he counted the costs with me." And he counted the costs the way we count the costs with people, but they had 2 ..... He said the evangelist told me if I am going to be a disciple, then I won't leave China for God or for money. Because everybody in China wants out. Every salary was like \$30 a month for professionals. Now, the second part was the evangelist said "You and I, two disciples, will take the gospel to the 1.2 billion people of China." He said, "amen." And then he said, "then he took me and he baptized me and I was so happy. And then he took me to church and there were 20 people to help us." (amen) I was sitting there, "I wonder if I would have counted that cost." You understand?

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Well, if we're all disciples, the rules are the same. (that's right) You have to decide not to complain any more. We've got disciples around the world that live in much, much more difficult circumstances than we are. And they are so happy. Every disciple I talked to were so happy it was incredible. God moves disciples around the world. I just want to be a part of that. (amen)

?:

You know, Indianapolis and the Midwest churches supported for many years the evangelization of ..... And it has been very encouraging over the last 12 years or so to see that little band of 8 disciples with our incredible first service of 17 grow to 6000 disciples and 135 congregations all over the world. At this stage we're moving in the Commonwealth, we're getting down to the little nitty gritty peculiar places that you could never find on a map. We sent about 20 disciples from the New Delhi Church and at their first service they had 66 people attend. There were only 20 people and they got written up in the two largest newspapers in Nepal.

But the Lord's doing incredible things. We went to a small place in Australia -- actually in New Zealand-- and converted some people who were high up in the government in the Cook Islands. How many people know where the Cook Islands are? It was incredible because we started a church there and we wanted to be recognized as a church. And they met actually with the number 2 official in the whole country who said, "well, okay, we've got this group of 6 disciples here and we want to be recognized as a church." And it was funny. The guy was (-- gap in tape --) .....we'll miss you. The first baptisms were well underway to being established as a church. We almost started a church just a month ago in Papua, New Guinea. It was described as one of the most remote places in the world and it is the place where they last found civilization--civilization last came in the 30's and 40's. up in the hills there between Australia and Indonesia. And the church is really a powerful thing there. There's two doctors, a husband and wife combination, are starting a medical mission there which is in many, many respects funded by the government and the Lord is providing a tremendous growth down there because .....

.... good things happen in (inaudible). We had the most interesting conversion just in January. You know how it is around Christmas time. Everybody desires certain things. But this is really a great example of how you always need to pray. There was one brother in the church in DC who right before Christmas, all through the month of Dec., prayed to God for a CD player. He had it on his heart, he said, "God, for Christmas I want a CD player. I want it real bad." He prayed about it, he prayed "God, give me a CD player." Well, we have a powerful God who cares about the little details. Well, he got a CD player. And he was all filled with joy and he knew God was working powerfully in his life. Washington, DC being that incredible, safe capitol of our nation that it is, two weeks later while he was out, someone would sneak in and stole God's CD player. And our brother went back to God in prayer. He said, "God, I can't believe they stole my CD player. God, I want you to put a burden on the heart of that thief. I want you to put a burden on his heart to repent, that he can't live with himself." About 3 days later, at home -- knock, knock, knock at the door. The brother goes to the door and there was a man there he had never seen before. "who are you?" He said, "I don't even know how to say this. I've never done it before, but I was around one day and saw the door was a little open there and I came in your house and I stole your CD player. But I sold it." He reached in his pocket and pulled out the money and said, "and here's the money that I got for your CD player. Maybe you can put it toward a couple CD's. I didn't sell the ....."

The Lord is working. Two weeks later that thief was baptized.

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So, if you want something, you pray for it. We're going to have a song and then ? is going to come up.

Marty Fuqua:

I don't know about you, but when I hear a story like Doug just told, I always wonder why things like that don't happen to me. ....inaudible.....

I want to talk for a few minutes about something we all have. And it's something we all have to manage. That's our attitude. (amen) In Phillipians 2, beginning of verse 1 it says, "if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being liked-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interest of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature, God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Over the years, this passage has been one that has been such a challenge to me, I'm sure a challenge to you in your life and in your attitude. It's possible to have a good attitude. (yea) And often times we do. (yep, that's right) But it's also equally possible to have a bad attitude. (that's right) Unfortunately we sometimes do. If you are a parent, one of the things you always work with your young children on -- I suppose you do with older children, too, I'll find that out as I go along -- but at least with our young children, it seems that one of our common themes around the house is the need to work on our attitudes. I wonder if sometimes honestly if that's not just something that little children need to work on, but that we, as older children, if you will, as the children of God we need to work on as well.

Look at this passage and Paul starts it out with things that you just have to agree with. You have to say "yes" to. "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ." Well, it would be hard to say, "no I don't have any encouragement from being united with Christ."

"If any comfort from his love, any fellowship with the Spirit, any tenderness and compassion..." then he really comes in on a bit more to the point, he says, "make my joy complete by being like minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose." (amen) He goes on -- that's the thing you should do. He says, now here's some things you shouldn't do. He says "do nothing out of selfish ambition, but in humility consider others better than yourself. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interest of others." I tell you what may help us understand. If you're going to have the right attitude, then simply what you have got to do is look at Jesus. (that's right) You gotta try to have the attitude that Jesus had. He says here, "your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." Now, realize this is the end result that we are not going to reach in the sense that we've got it and we're there.

Now in rare, fine moments in our life, we may be like Jesus. But it probably really realize when you are there, you see it and you look back even and say " ....?...." I know that's not how I would respond as a,

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you know, a fleshly person. I know in the past I didn't say or react or do whatever, but you really realize, hey I was in the Lord here. The Lord's in my own life. (amen) And this takes place in the same way in our lives as it did back in Jesus' life. He says "he had to submit himself to the will of God." We read in the ..... in Jesus in the garden and that he prayed "God, I know I have a terrible, terrible task before me. There's a part of me as a human that I just don't want to go through it. Yet, not my will but your will be done." I get from that passage that he struggles back and forth, because it's not just a .... prayer, but he's laboring in prayer. And he says it again and again to the Father. The fact is you work out this whole thing in its own light.

It says in verse 7, "he made himself nothing." He lowered himself. Verse 8: "he humbled himself." You know, these are things we have to do with ourselves. Often times we want to do these for other people. (laughter) I want to humble you. But, you know, really that the task is to have an attitude that's correct before .... in dealing with yourself.

In verse 9, he goes into a promise there. "Therefore God exalted him." Therefore God lifted him up, it says he got his attitude right and he did what was right. Then, of course, in verse 10, "that every knee will bow...." etc., etc. Let's go on in the passage and look at those things that deal with attitudes. "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose." (amen) What a passage! ....about the attitude now. Okay, let's go on down to some application of real life, guys realize what's happening. If you are working out your own salvation, you are dealing with issues of your salvation being with the Lord or your salvation being separate from the Lord. You're dealing with your attitude. That's really a launching pad for what happens in life is what's going on inside. And then you come to verse 13 and he says "it is God who works in you." That's quite a little statement right there. God works in you, not just a guy over in Katmandu. God works in you. (amen) In your own life. A God of gods. Dealing with the issues of heart and attitude, God is going to work in your life. ....yourself. Dealing with this stuff and in some sense can I be right--I think I want to be the kind of instrument in a large sense that will transform itself out to my actions that God can look out on Marty and say "He is a proper instrument for me to work through and the evidence is his heart. He is struggling with and dealing with his heart." And, therefore, God is working in me to will and act according to his good purpose. That's awesome. (amen)

Verse 14: "do everything without complaining or arguing." The old grumbling or complaining passage that we love to throw out on our children. Quit grumbling and complaining. See, there's some passages in the Bible that are addressed to children, aren't there? (obey your parents) We can read to children, "obey your parents." Is this passage addressed to children? (no) Can it apply to children? (yes) Alleluia! But it's not addressed to children.

This is an issue of the heart. And I don't know about you, but I find myself some times that I can get crabby. Tough to work with. It is a funny thing, I have sort of heard this all my life. It's not just a real novel thing. You know, my mother, my dad would say "hey, you're getting crabby." Didn't your parents ever say anything like that? (no) I remember so many instances in grade school, junior high, high school, maybe even college -- I can remember along the line there teachers acting real perplexed with me. All of us have grumbled. I deal with it, you guys deal with it, you had to deal with it. (amen) We're all going to have to deal with it. It's just something that goes on in the heart of a human. But the heart of a human that submits itself to God, there now is a battle where the human person wants to grumble and complain and complain and argue, but the spiritual self realizes that I have a responsibility to keep the heart pure. Keep



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the heart right. I'm not going to grumble, I'm not going to complain, I'm not going to argue because that is God's way of dealing with my heart here to keep me in a position where I can be used by God.

He goes on to say, "so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life--in order that I

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...may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me." (amen)

I want to just say in the time here tonight is that truly every one of us we dedicate ourselves to saying I need to grow to have the attitude that would be a proper attitude. I need to see Jesus as the ultimate role model. That's the great thing, we can go back to the scriptures and we can read those scriptures and we can glean from them what God is teaching us in our spirits and attitudes and we can be the kind of people God can work through. We can fight the battle of the heart. We're supposed to be the people who will shine out like stars in the world as we share the word of God with people and as they make the decision to make a difference. (amen, applause)

Song

Douglas Arthur:

Open up in your Bibles to 1 Cor. Marty, as Bob Gemple and many others have had a lot of discussions with us to bring about the unity. Marty has asked me to just share a few thoughts, some of which may be a little confusing. How many were here last night. Probably looks like half. Well, I'll go over a few things that we talked about last night, although you had a much more colorful history of the movement which we will not be able to do again tonight. But, we're here willing to work out unity. I know that a lot of us have come from a different perspective, different situations. Tonight the way we're going to run the devotional together is we're going to look at some issues, we're going to talk about some things. Marty and Rob were in a great meeting with Ed for quite some time (amen). It was very good. And they'll be able to bring us more up to date on those things in a little while. Afterwards we'll have a time of questions and answers.

We're not really going to entertain questions during the talk, because frankly it's just not the most constructive way to do things. The Bible says God is the God of order. And I just want to say that for all of us, we need to really have the right heart and we get in and study the scriptures. (amen) Let's pray together before we begin.

God, we know that you have been in control forever. And, God, even in moments like this and in times of crisis, we try to grab control ourselves. And Father, we fear that things are getting out of hand and yet we always know God, that you still are in control. Father, you know, you've known even before things happen what was going to happen. You either caused things to happen or you have allowed them to happen. And God, you promised us if we continue to love you, good will come out of it. Father, I pray tonight for a

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...?... -- there's not a sinless one among us, God. As we admonish and teach one another and encourage each other, God, let us remember first and foremost that all of us are sinners. All of us need forgiveness and all of us would never, ever, ever have a chance to be in your Kingdom had you not been willing to send your son to die for us. Father, we look in the scriptures today, let us get the sense of personalities out of the way and the sentimentalities out of the way. Let us not decide on the basis of individuals or personalities, but let us decide on the basis of what is right. God, we know that the Indianapolis Church will not stand before you as a collective group on judgment day. But each individual person will have to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. And each and every one of us has no one to blame for where we stand before you except ourselves. Father, let us have convictions because we are taking our spiritual life in our hands right here. Father, let us dig deeply into your scriptures. Let us get convictions, let us be willing to stand for the truth. Father, even as we do that, though, let us also have a charitable spirit for one another. Father, in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

We're going to talk about just a few issues because some of the issue that have come up and some of the things that have been expressed in terms of concerns -- and there are a variety of issues that we want to deal with tonight -- and then also we want to talk for a little while about how we need to deal with them in terms of our own (fault?). Because, I know for most of you who were here last night, there were many apologies at various points. Many outbursts of anger and tension and a lot of hurt feelings and we really have to conduct ourselves as brothers and sisters. And so we're going to talk about one of the first issues that has been proposed or discussed and that is the issue of autonomy.

And, if you would begin by turning your Bibles to the book of 1 Cor. and we'll begin in chapter 4 because again, some people have sought or proposed -- many people in different church of Christ backgrounds, whatever, by the way -- those of you here last night from a Methodist background, praise God I'm from a church of Christ background. We're going to say all kinds of derogatory things about Methodists tonight? No. But in 1 Cor. 4, sometimes the ..?...says, "hey, wait, freedom in Christ means freedom to go out and do our own thing and the church over here just does this and the church over there does this and in one sense, out of our independent, American spirit, that seems very appealing. And yet when we look in the scripture, that's not really what we find in the Bible. That's not what really is going on as we look at 1 Cor. 4 and we begin in verse 16 it says, "therefore I urge you to imitate me." Verse 17: "For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church." Do you get right here the idea that Paul said. There's a kind of a uniformity of sorts. He says I've got it somewhere....it's the gospel, it's based on the Bible, it's based on the teachings of Jesus. But he sends Timothy, his own disciple, he's familiar with Paul's way of life, which agrees with what his teachings that he teaches everywhere in every church. I'm sure that doesn't mean that every single church is identical. But you get the sense that there is a brotherhood. There's a sense that we all work together. There's not one independent church here, one independent church there. Paul says, here's the way we all do it. There is a brotherhood of believers together.

Another example -- some people will look at that passage and say Paul can do that because he is an apostle. But if you are not an apostle -- which we don't have any these days, amen? -- we don't have any apostle -- well, if you are an apostle, you can do that, but you are just regular Joe Christian like all the rest of us, then you have got to stay restricted even to one particular situation. Look at the book of Titus. Titus 1 -- we'll go there briefly -- briefly addressing the question should all the churches be independent of one another or should the churches be organized in a structured sort--as a brotherhood to work cooperatively together? We find in Titus 1:5 -- I would ask anyone to bring me a glass of water. "For this reason I left Crete...."

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I'm sorry, in verse 5 of chapter 1, "the reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town as I have directed you." Now you find right here Titus is being assigned to this area to straighten out matters in the church. Some people may propose what are you doing here, Douglas, why did you come here? What is Marty doing here? You know, I think it's important to say, hey, Titus was told to go in there and straighten things out. Let's get it together. We've got a challenging situations here, let's fix some things up. And we find very much Titus here in going into the situation to go out to the churches to appoint elders, to straighten things out and to get water from brothers. (laughter)

Let's skip down to verse 10. In verse 10, "For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group." Be glad that's not our controversy today. (amen) (laughter) I'm not going to argue about that problem. "They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things that they ought not to teach--and that for the sake of dishonest gain. Even one of their own prophets says Cretins are always lazy, evil brutes, lazy gluttons, liars--everything." (laughter) "This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or the commands of those who reject the truth." You know, again, you find Titus challenged here to go into these churches and straighten things out. Because there are some things they taught that ought not to be taught. Rebuke them. Silence them. That's important. Are churches autonomous? Not in the NT they're not. Now you say, well maybe somewhere in the 1800's in the churches of Christ were, but we're not following the church of Christ in the 1800's.

The second question: are we the only saved ones? This is very important and very interesting and serves a lot of questions. Recently I went back to the church in London. It was a church I started and lived there for 10 years. I came back to challenge the brothers and sisters. I talked to a brother before I went in and he said, "you know, go back there and challenge people, make sure they're solid that there is only one church." I said, "why would I do that? Everybody knows that." And he said, "well, just go and just lay it out." I remember standing up there before the church in London and I said, "hey, we are the one church." And it was quiet. About as quiet as it is in here. You know, we don't like to say that. (that's right) But to those against us, that seems so stinking close minded and superspiritual. And I frankly, coming from a engineering background before I repented and went into the ministry (laughter), I don't want to say that either because I'm being so dogmatic. But then I realized something, at least about the London church. I said, we've been in London now 11 years. We've got roughly 1000 disciples who share their faith regularly. Folks, not as regularly as we need to, but still we share our faith regularly. These 1000 disciples going and inviting people all the time for 10 years. How many other true churches have we found in London? They're just not there.

End tape 1

Tape 2 Side 1:

Douglas Arthur (continued)

Yes. They are what they call process of elimination. After you have exhausted all possibilities and you search and search and search and search and there's no one there at the end, you say "they're not here." You need to realize there are not other churches out there that teach what we teach. (that's right) We're so naive. I just wouldn't believe good things can happen and I was inspired when the church went to Amman, Jordan and we stumbled into 8 disciples. Actually we met and we talked and "do you believe you have to

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become a Christian." Yes. "Do you believe you have to be baptized to be saved?" "Yes." "Do you believe you have to be ... disciplined?" "Yes." Unreal. The Amman team went there with 8 disciples and they met 8 more disciples. Real, live disciples. (amen) They said "awesome." Unbelievable. "How did you all get going?" There was a brother who was converted in San Diego. After he became a Christian, he went back to Jordan and was never heard from again. But as he was there, he preached the word to his family. (amen) And his friends. And one by one over a 7 year period, now he had 8 disciples. (amen) And the movement then caught up with him. We sent a mission team to Amman and we doubled the team over there. (sparse applause) Amen. We found 8 in Amman, Jordan. ....inaudible....We found them. That was awesome.

Might there be an individual who found the truth? Yes. That's what we can hold out hope for. Yes, that's true. However, be realistic. How many .... gap in tape ... (amen)

....they're weird because they teach things no other group teaches. They believe things that nobody else believes. Are we the only saved ones? We're the only church. Are there saved individuals somewhere? I hope so. But precious few.

You know, for so long we said, "well maybe in Africa." Hey, who started the church in Lagos, Nigeria? We started the churches in Africa. Ron's been down there. They have been in a lot of places. We didn't find them. "Well, maybe in Russia." We went to Russia, didn't find any churches. Maybe in New Guinea? We didn't find them there either. It's normal and natural to want to find them. And I rejoice for to me, the wider the gate is to heaven, the more fired up I am. But we've got to be realistic. You go to Indianapolis to share your faith for years, they're not there. They're just not there. They're just not there statistically. Figure it out. Anybody who follows the Bible, they can be saved. Are we the only church? Absolutely. (amen)

Number three: this is a favorite one of mine. Let's look at 2 Cor. 8 -- missions money. I got to say thank you to all of you who supported me for many years, amen? And to give those contributions in support of the evangelization of the Commonwealth. And that was very encouraging. And now you support other things and that's all .... But it has been brought up that sometimes giving in the movement is like a compulsion. It has been brought up that at times we're just so intense on the finances that people have lost their joy. I've heard about what happened in the Indianapolis church last year. As you were given a goal which some defined as arbitrary or random and said, okay, here's what we were made do. But you didn't do it. So we went back again. Let's do it again. Didn't do it. Why don't we do it three times? Boy, this is getting to be a lot of fun. I just want to go one more round. It was a discouraging thing. There was a lot of hurt and a lot of attitudes created in that situation. And then sometimes you say, "well what we need to do it we need to not give under compulsion, we just need to do like the bible, give generously out of the overflow of our hearts. That's the way it needs to be." I think we need to give generously. I think that we need to give out of the overflow of our hearts. I also know as the leader of a church that has given 25 times contributions and all of these other things at times, my job as an evangelist is to equip the saints for worship service. And if we are called upon selectively to go and share our faith, there's not one of us but not many of us who don't struggle with commitment sometimes. My job is to inspire. "Let's go, we can do this, God is with us." That's my job. That's what I'm going to do. I want to lift your spirits. And, you know, you've been that way before. You've worked with .... got so fired up, you share with everything that moves. (laughter) Even small kids, "you need to come to church." You have had your spirit lifted. As well as some of the time when you've been grinded. (laughter) But we are true disciples. We carry crosses and we have a big one for you. You've done that, I've done that. The same Jesus is there. The

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same .... is there. Sometimes you are just half way and other times you don't want to do it for anything in the world. Same things true with Jimmy. It's the challenge of the leadership to inspire us to give. And sometimes, like I said, you look back at those times and think "oh, it's just so spontaneous. It's so easy."

Let's look at these scriptures. Now you're going to have Paul as the leader of the church here. And now it's coming time for special contribution. Let's go to 2 Cor. 8. I'm in a lot of trouble. Here we go. Now here's what I want you to understand. The job of the evangelist, the job of any ministry is to inspire and lead the people. That's what you're instructed to show. That's the gift God has given. If the people didn't need inspiring, you wouldn't be an evangelist. Ever think of that? If everybody was just fired up all the time, totally -- look, you don't have a coach for eating. You don't have to hire somebody in your life, support somebody to motivate you to eat all the time. You're motivated just by life itself. Some hire coaches to get them to stop eating. But when it comes to deal with our spiritual lives, it's hard. It's a battle, it's a war. We need inspirational leadership. (amen)

Look at what Paul does. "Now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability."

You know, sometimes we go, "well, it's all I can give. Don't ask me to give beyond my ability." Paul said, let me tell you something, there are some people here who gave all they are able, even beyond their ability. Now look what it says.

"Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us -- see that you also excel in this grace of giving." Paul right here in the initial motivating of these people says "okay, I want to first of all tell you about the people in Macedonia, just so you will have a little perspective. They are really poor, prolonged poverty, suffering they welled up into extreme generosity. I just want you to know that. Secondly, you excel in so many good things. You're awesome in faith, in love and cared for us. Get in there and inspire us with your giving."

Let's read on, Paul doesn't just stop there. What it says in verse 8: "I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others." Some people say, "hey, why do you say this church gave this, so you need to give that?" Paul says "I want to test the earnestness of your love. I want to see how sincere you are. "How can you tell my heart?" Well, I can tell your heart when I compare what other people gave. See, your money is where your heart is. Your heart is where your money is.

The point I want to make here is that Paul, in inspiring the people to give also says to them, "look, I want to tell you I'm going to compare what you give to what they give. And I know they are sincere. Some of us say "Bro, I think you ought to give .... ahhhhhh .... you're compelling me! My joy is going now." (laughter) Paul said let me tell you, I'm going to compare it.

"For you know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became

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poor..." by the way, work of the Lord, you know. And you see, funny thing here, a little comparison. He said Jesus went from rich to poor. Our brothers want to say rich to rich, don't give very much. He said I just want to remind you Jesus went from rich to poor..."so that you through his poverty might become rich."

Let's skip down and go to verse 13. "I desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality." (amen, come on bro) Now here is an important concept in dealing with the issue of randomness in the kingdom. I realize how few people really understand this, but even in talking with ..... today, who is obviously one of the leaders in the movement, and I hadn't heard of this until last night, and so I want to really explain this to you. This is very important. We all want to win the war, amen? (amen) We all hear of these things, but we know that America is 5% of the world's population. God bless us, we are the richest 5%, but it's only 5%. For every one of us there is 19 other people out there in the world. WE know that we want to evangelize the whole world, but its not best for us to go in Katmandu all the time. It's better if we can find someone else like from India or from Nepal to go to there. And so, as we spread out and we are evangelizing the world, we come together as a brotherhood and we say, "okay, now here are the church plantings like Oslo, like Katmandu, like the Cook Islands, like Papua, New Guinea, like places in India that you never heard of -- cities of 2 or 3 million people -- (?) city of 5 million people in Indonesia. We started in last month.

The brothers come together and say, "look, here's what we need to do. This is what the Lord is giving us." Now how does a guy who is guided by the Lord and is guided by how the Lord has blessed us with leaders who are prepared to go into these places. But we come together and we say, "okay, here are the needs in China, here are the needs in Africa, in Central So. America. Here are the needs in Russia." Some of the things going on in Russia are incredible. We come together and we talk and I'll tell you what, brothers and sisters, as one who has received mission support over the years and is now in the U.S. and giving mission support very eagerly, we even get together and cut the budget of third world churches. One of the things that burdens me is this: anybody who goes to India or to Indonesia and see the way people live and see the lifestyle, you see what's going ... I'll tell you what, for most people, what's going on in England, and you come back and say, "God bless America." (that's right, come on brother)

We get together and say, guys, we don't have any, but the cries have been heard "hey, nobody listens to us!" If you were Paul, if you have been a Christian very long, you know in the old days missions contributions used to be like 30 times. 35 times. That's a lot. That was hard. And for those of us who were around, we sold everything we had the first two or three rounds. (laughter) There's nothing left.

And then it all came out, the burden is too heavy. We've got to reduce how much we require of the brothers and sisters in America. They can't handle it. So it began to come down from 25 to 22 to 20 and 16, to 14 this year. And the goal is still to bring it down. We've told the brothers and sisters in India for 3 years "no more money. What you got now is what you get. You've got to grow with what you've got. No increase for 3 years." They doubled the number of disciples and tripled the numbers of churches. (amen)

What we do in terms of the contributions, we come together and we say, here's the needs. Here are the bare bones. We get right down to it. And then we even set a limit. Now what we're going to do is with all of the brothers and sisters in the first world -- and this is a big change. Because, see initially London was receiving support. Initially we were being supported in London and people said, "well, okay, but London is also at the world's view, first world." So now London joins with America. So does Tokyo. So does Sydney. So does so many other places around the world. We come together, we figure out what the need

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is and we divide by what our weekly contribution is. And we say, "Okay, everybody, around the world -- all of us -- London, in Australia, in Melbourne, all around the world, in America -- we're going to give the same amount. And we're all going to share the load equally." (amen) You tell me, you can share equally around the world. And you have been given a goal of whatever it is, it's equal, it's the same challenge. You say, well we only did a third of ours. We only did a half of ours. What do you think the right response should be? Somebody else, we gave only 10 times, you guys over there give 20. Because we just don't feel like we can be joyful enough to do what we need to do.

You've got to have the right heart, brothers and sisters. I don't want you feel bad about the special contribution. The bottom line as a leader in the movement, I know that my job as a leader is to inspire people and lead people. And I'll tell you flat out, a lot of you are learning things tonight. you say, "hey, if I had known I would have been all fired up." I understand that. We got together last night and told them well what can we do differently and number one is we've got to inspire people and let them know. (that's right) But let's not get this super.... "nobody can tell me, I want to be motivated by God."

Let's read on and see what Paul says. Chapter 9:1 "There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the saints. For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give, and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action." You know, it seems to me even in the bible times, some people got fired up, some didn't. He said, man your enthusiasm has stirred most of them. You know what I feel even in the church? Somebody says, "well what if someone can't do it?" Hey gang, we're in America. One brother can't do it, another brother or sister needs to step up and take the load. I know we can do it together. He said, "this stirred most of them to action. But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow..." What sort of inspiration does that seem like to you? "But that you may be ready, as I said you would be. For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we--not to say anything about you--would be ashamed of having been so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given."

Here's Paul, I'm talking the 2nd apostle. He knows what is an issue. He has figured that out. He said I've been boasting about you guys. Those Macedonians, they're going to come with me, they better be ready. They come with me and you guys blow it, I'm going to be embarrassed--say nothing about how you're going to feel. All of this motivation. Now look what he said. Gotta read the Bible in context, amen? "Remember this, whoever sows sparingly, reaps sparingly and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." Okay, now he's ready to come in and close. "Each man should give what he decided in his own heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." And in case you have any doubt, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you so that all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." Would you have been comfortable in Paul's church? (good point) If we only picked that one tiny little verse -- we say "don't compel me!" Paul says fine, I'm going to tell you all the reasons why and then I'm going to ask you to have a good heart. In the end that's the way it should be in this church. And even as it comes to special contributions for this coming year, here are the other brothers who say "Hey, bag it." A lot of people say, "we want to give." They said "bag it". Just to make sure everybody's got a good heart, to wipe the slate clean, let's forget it for one year. Let's just have a time where you refresh. You say, "well I still...." Save it if you want to save it. And give it another time. But just have the right heart. Let's not get confused about what was viable examples of generous giving. (amen)

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On another issue, Romans 14. Opinions. Opinions. It has been proposed that there is no room for opinions in the Bible. Or not in the Bible, in the church or in the movement. In Romans 14, let's begin in verse 1, "Accept him whose faith is weak without passing judgment on disputable matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything but another man whose faith is weak eats only vegetables. The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge someone else's servant. To his own master he stands or falls and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand."

I believe in this passage totally. I think that there are disputable matters in the kingdom that we need to have some flexibility on. Some have proposed the movement is rigid. This, to me, is an astonishing concept. When I think of the things that have changed. What we believe and what we practice over the years, it is fallacious to propose that there is not room for differences of opinion. I remember one of the most joyful adjustments ever made was when we stopped having Sunday night services. (amen) I'll never forget, it was in Boston and I was at B.U. and rode the B.U. bus. The BU bus used to take us to church, took us an hour to get to church. Get on that BU bus, drive to church, have church for 2 hours, ride another hour home. Be home hour and a half, get on that BU bus another hour to church, be in church 1-1/2 hr. this time, get back on the bus another hour home. Four hours every Sunday on the bus. But as a movement, we move, amen? And that was encouraging. We said, okay, this is not the best--let's spend the time fellowshiping together. Simple, little adjustments.

They say, "oh no, you can't say anything bad." Hey, there were a few of us, myself included, who said I'm getting sick of this 4 hour bus ride. Things changed.

Our giving to the poor in the movement. That's something that just changed. We weren't doing it and now we've got Hope Worldwide. I don't know about you, but I get fired up. Where did this come from? The autonomous churches can't even get it together enough to do something. That's why we need a brotherhood. I think the concept of church planting--just going -- that was a shift, just fundamentally different than what has been done so many times. Even this year we've got the women's role in the church. People say "oh, there's no room for debate." You tell the sisters haven't been debating this baby for a while. This is a debate that has been going on for a long time. We've been trying to figure out what appropriate and take it slow, do it easy. Let's not rock the boat. Let's not shake the banks of salt. Let's move slowly. And even now in our movement, you find some churches where the women will get up and give communion with the husbands--not preaching, not teaching, but sharing, amen? (amen) You see that in some churches. I don't know if they do that in Indianapolis or not, but if you go to a different church -- "what's she doing up there?" Some churches have women ushers. It's no big deal to have a woman usher. You think it would be a mob scene?

The issue of instrumental music. Some people have been to LA. and say "oh, hold it, I'm in the wrong church." They say, "oh, no this is the right church." You know, because there may be a little instrumental music. Even now in the movement, there's a difference of opinion. Some churches they do it every Sunday. They've got some good musicians. Other churches have just a few scrounges and don't do it so often. And you look around and you see differences. Some people have pretty firm convictions. They don't think it's bad. Other people have convictions and they think it's awesome. But there's differences of opinion. It's a disputable matter. Decide to loosen up.

To say that there's no room for disputes or discussion is absolutely contradictory with everything that



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history has proved out time and time again. Let me tell you something right now. We don't even know what the new challenges are going to be. Thank God, we've nailed down the circumcision issue. Got that part squared away. But I don't know what the next issue is going to be. There are all kinds of discussions. The role of the elder is a presently hotly debated topic. Just so you'll know. The role of teacher is being explored and discussed. Is there room for disputes and opinions? Absolutely. The Bible is very clear on those things.

Those are just four of the issues that I am aware of. And perhaps you have some other questions -- which we will do in an orderly fashion. I want to address a couple of other issues ever so briefly.

Issue #1, the perils of leadership. Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 20. You see, to take on the challenge to be a leader is very challenging. That's a redundant statement. What is right. And those of us who have stepped into leadership at some point in our lives know how challenging that is. When you begin to feel responsible for another person -- that's not to say you're over this soul in some sort of Catholic sense, but you know when you have responsibility for a person you either brought into the kingdom or have discipled, it is a hard job to be a leader. And the truth is it gets harder as you move up. Often criticism of the church: it's a pyramid structure and at the top, they hear every--they get the scoop on everything. Can you imagine having a life where you hear the bad news of everybody's life? I feel bad for Kip sometimes. Kip-- anybody has a problem in their own spiritual life, and they don't want to take the rap for themselves, they are going to blame somebody else. And half the people he doesn't even know--he's never even met--they have a raging bad attitude towards him. That's a tough life. He's got the job of leader of the movement. He's leading the movement. That's awesome, but he's not an apostle. He's just a brother. He was here last night. We had -- his least favorite thing. I had to urge him to go to Indianapolis. I talked to him on Friday and said, "brother, you gotta go." He said, "Oh, I think I do. I know the brothers and sisters need it. Boy, this is challenging." Imagine--those of you here last night--coming into a group with your brothers and sisters as hostile as that room was. All you were trying to do was trying to help. You come it, and oh..... Things got a little agitated once or twice, but he held on. It's hard.

We're going to talk about the parables of being a leader. Because we put the leaders in a position and we sit back and judge them. I've seen a lot of leaders "you're not matching up in this area and this area and this area." Why don't you step up and do it better?

Let's look in Matt. 20 about leadership. It is a good chapter. Let's turn over--that was good all the while I was there. 20:25. There you go. I've been reading it all day, amen. Let's read this. Praise God I found it. You have no idea the pressure you feel when you can't find the scripture. One of the perils of being a leader.

Verse 24: "When the ten heard about this, they were indignant..." You know, that was the request of James and John "hey, how about we get the right hand and the left." Funny, everybody wants to be a leader, amen? Verse 25: "Jesus called them together and said, 'you know the rules of the Gentiles lord it over them and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant. And whoever wants to be first must be your slave. So the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life for a ransom for many.'" You know, right here we find the comparison when we find someone who wants to be a leader, is the temptation that leaders feel to lord it over people. That is wrong. That is a sin. That is wrong. And that is one of the perils of leadership. And as you go trying to lead, that is one of the dangers that you must watch out for.

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Let me say this to the whole group. Harshness is wrong. That's wrong. People are harsh to each other from time to time. That is not right. It never has been right. And it's still not right. The authority that a leader has is given by God and it is to direct the work of the ministry. We ought to try to make their work a joy and not a burden. There are times when frail human people who are leading get frustrated and get harsh. That is wrong and that needs to be apologized for. That is one of the perils of leadership.

But what I want to encourage you with tonight is that's not the only peril of leadership. There are many of us who think that is the cardinal sin. that, in and of itself, is so hard and so difficult to deal with and it is. But let me tell you something, brothers and sisters. Everyone has been dealt with harshly in the kingdom somewhere along the line. And I would dare say that every one of us who has tried to be a leader at some point has either been harsh or neglectful. See, here's the perfect balance of Jesus when it comes to leadership is extraordinarily difficult. And sometimes people sin on the side of harshness. To resort--just so you will understand it--to your authority to motivate people should be a last resort and not a first. It's very much like the authority between a husband and a wife. I think to learn to motivate our wives to do what I think is best, if I am unsuccessful in motivating my wife to joyfully do what I think is best, I sometimes resort to "I am the husband and the Bible does say submit." And that works. Once in a blue moon. If I resort to that kind of motivation repeatedly, I guarantee you I'm going to have a long marriage counseling session and many things I will have to repent of. The same thing is true with the leadership in the church. We do have the authority to direct the ministry, however, it is one of the perils of leadership to fall into the trap of being harsh and lord it over. It is wrong, but it is one of the perils.

I want to target a few others. There's also the peril of being selfish in leadership. Look in that well read book of 3 John. I know all of you know it. Chapter 2. And if you're looking for it, you're in more trouble than I thought. 3 John, verse 9. Another peril of leadership. "I wrote to the church but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. So if I come, I call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers. He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church."

Another peril of leadership. Another peril is getting into an egotistical type leadership. It's something we all have to watch out for. There is some glory that goes with being a strong leader. There are a lot of challenges. There are ..... But there's also some glory with it and it is possible for people to be caught up into that. That's also a peril of leadership.

Jeremiah 6, we find another peril of leadership. You see, it's not just harshness. One of the things we get confused about is everybody tries to get on the bandwagon and say "hey, hey, harsh, harsh, harsh." And, I by all means, believe harshness seems to be top. But some of us believe that if we can just avoid harshness, then we can have a idyllic church. But you see, there are also other challenges and other traps that leaders fall into. Not just the harshness trap. Now sometimes we feel the harshness trap more. But let's look at another challenge of some leadership. Jeremiah 6:13 "from the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain, prophets and priests alike. All practice deceit. They dress the wounds of my people as though it were not serious. Peace, peace they say when there is no peace. Are they ashamed of their conduct? No, they have no shame at all. They do not even know how to blush, so they will fall among the fallen and they will be brought down. I will punish them, says the Lord.

Another type of leadership peril is healing the wound of the people lightly. One of the great tragedies about this peril is that the people love it this way. But don't you see, they just as much as you can be too

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hard on a person--and we've done that before-- you can also be too soft on people. You can allow sin and bad attitudes can creep up into heart and then you see them fall away. Happened to my best friend. In the church in Boston. And I saw his heart was starting to drift. He was my best friend. I love him with all my heart. I was about to be married and he was going to be the best man in my wedding. And he disappears. Being the head usher in the church in the Boston Church and he would scream at everybody, .... by high school basketball companion...and he slipped away because I was always up to this. I always said, peace, peace when there was no peace. You know, when he fell away and he is still fallen away, he gave me in my heart another great peril of leadership which is to say peace, peace when there is no peace.

You know, in Ezekiel 33, you can just write down the reference. Verses 1-6, another peril of leadership is silence in the midst of an alarming situation. In Eze. 33, to describe right there as the watchmen and he said if the sword is coming and you don't sound the alarm, the people will die from their sin, but I will hold you accountable for their blood.

And the last one is the populace peril of leadership. 2 Tim. 4 because as we consider leadership, there are many perils that all must be avoided. You see there's another peril of leadership in verse 3 it says, "for the time has come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure the hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry."

You know, you find right here another peril of leadership. You can get into people pleasing. You can get into a thing and you'll have all the friends. He says there will be a great number of people who will follow this type of leadership. I want to urge you, as you watch your leaders, be aware of harshness. Be aware of selfishness. Be aware of the silent watchmen who doesn't sound the alarm. Be aware of the populace leader. Do not fall into this emplastical trap of thinking as long as nobody treats me harshly, then everything is going to be all right. There are many traps and perils in leadership.

You know the teacher? James 3:1 "not many of you should presume to be teachers, for those of us who teach will be judged more strictly." You've got to have compassion for your leaders. They take on this challenge with all these perils and then again, God says, guess what, I'm going to hold you more accountable. Then some of us have developed a bad attitude towards leadership. And that's not right.

We're going to close on the last section. Not only are there perils for leadership, there are perils of followers. Some of you are leaders, and you need to take to heart everything that we have said here. All of us are followers at one level or another and we need to take these things to heart.

Acts. 20. The perils of being a follower and that's really the decision that we're all dealing with at this point. Verse 25: We find Paul talking about the Ephesians, talking to the chiefs and elders here in Acts 20. Peril #1 is following men and not God. You know, on the last day you've got to be following the Lord to make it into heaven. That's the challenge we've all got to pray about and deal with. Now in verse 25, "Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. Therefore I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the Church of God which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number, men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on

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your guard. Remember that for 3 years I have never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears."

There's been a lot of sadness. There has been a lot of night and day with tears. You know, the thing we're all going to pray about -- you had to pray about this when you became a Christian -- remember when you first started studying the Bible? You figured out a lot of people you really loved weren't doing the right thing? And it's so confusing because you talk to one, you talk to the other, you get all tangled up and you just said "I don't know what I'm going to do. What am I going to do?" And finally someone said, "Hey, hey, hey get it, study the Bible and decide what's right and then you'll be able to figure out who is right." (amen)

We're in a situation like that. You've got to have the heart to take peril #1 of being a follower--I don't want to be a follower of men. That doesn't mean we don't have human leadership, but it means I'm going to base my faith--and I've always based my faith on the word of God. You can say I like this person and that person. Praise God, amen. We've got to love everybody. But you've got to have the heart. Peril #1 is

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to follow man and not God.

Peril #2 is rebellion. God, not man -- I know you know what I'm saying. Amen? (amen)

Peril #2

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