

Hanging in the Balance

Sermon Title: **Hanging in the Balance**

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Let's look at Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3. This was written by King Solomon, the one whom as a boy was given one wish, and he asked for wisdom; and from that divided heart became the wisest king of man who had ever lived. We read some of his wisdom here in the Book of Ecclesiastes, the last book that he wrote in his life as an old man, after he had gone through the experiences that life had to offer. I pray that all of you would open your ears and your spiritual ears today. Make sure that you are not that person that his message is meant for.

Ecclesiastes 3, starting at Verse 1, reads: *“To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heavens: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sow; a time to keep silent, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth? I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. He hath made everything beautiful in its time; also He hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.”*

This passage here that was written about the time and season and purpose for everything and this entire Book of Ecclesiastes for that matter is most commonly read at funerals; but I tell you that King Solomon wrote this for the young men and women as a guide for their lives once he become old. This was written for the living and not the dead. Here, Solomon was telling us there is a time for everything under the sun.

The subject today is “Hanging in the Balance” ... “Hanging in the Balance”.

This particular text is not only about timing, but it is about balance. It is dealing with the balance of life, positive and negative, ups and downs, ins and outs. “Hanging in the balance” is a common idiom that we use in the English language. When I looked it up to see exactly what it meant, it meant to be in a situation, especially if there are serious warnings in which the result is not certain, whose outcome is doubtful or in suspense, or where something is still to be decided. It implies that there is a risk that something bad may happen. So “hanging in the balance” means it is hanging between up and down, between hot and cold, between in and out. It's not fully decided yet; the decision is still hanging in the balance, swaying. No outcome has been decided for certain.

Some people's definition of "balance" is having equal amounts of the Kingdom of God and of the world's system. But a balance used in the laboratory of science is an instrument used by placing a measure that is known, that is a standard, on one side of the balance, and on the other side of the balance you would place an object where the measurement is unknown in weight. Judging by how it sways the known weight up or down, you can determine the weight of the unknown.

I tell you today that the world is not our standard to place on the other side to balance against the Word of God. The Bible is our known standard. It is that truth which has existed since the beginning of time, that which is ever unchanging, that which is solid and always true. That is the standard that our lives are to be placed upon the other side of the balance and weighed and compared against.

In the Book of Proverbs 11:1 it says: *"A false balance is abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is His delight."* That particular verse was talking about cheating, having a false balance or using fake weights to get a little more out of somebody than they think that it weighed; but it also can apply to measuring our lives against a weight that is not a standard. For instance, sometimes we measure what we do by somebody else on the street. We'll sometimes say, "Lord I might not be doing all that I am supposed to be doing, but I am not doing that like Johnny over there," that is measuring against an unjust weight or something that is not a standard.

But even the entire justice system is represented in America through the symbol of a woman wearing a blindfold holding a balance to represent fair judgment.

I brought a little balance here today to demonstrate it to you. This demonstrates our lives. In our lives, we are not just balancing one thing. There are many things that we are juggling on this hand and on the other hand. As pressure sets in from one thing, we get one thing just about balanced and it gets just a little bit out and begins to increase in the balance. Before you know it we begin to sway off balance in our lives in an area. The 'off-balancedness' grows until the swaying is greater and greater and greater. We become off-centered, and we go to the right and to the left more and more and more as the things in our lives begin to juggle off-center. Then we become as this balance, swaying off-balance nonstop.

I tell you, once you get off-balance, it is sometimes hard to catch a balance. It is easier to keep your balance to begin with than when you are about to fall. That is how our lives are. The more off-balance we get sometimes, the more it keeps us off-balance.

I am going to take you back to school for a minute. I know some of you may have been out of school for a long time, but how many of you had a chemistry class when you were in school? You might not remember chemistry, but I am going to take you back to school for a minute here.

In all of physical existence, matter is made up of atoms, and atoms are made up of protons, neutrons and electrons, which are positive, negative and neutrally charged particles. In the entire physical world that God created, balance is inherent in the atom of everything that is physical upon these Earth. The negatively charged electrons must equal in number the positively charged protons in every atom. Even when nature tries to get off-balance, God built into the system for it to naturally snap back into balance and rebalance itself.

If an atom loses or gains an electron or proton, it becomes what is known in science or chemistry as an ion, that which overall has a positive or negative charge. But even those particles seek to balance themselves in the order of nature, and they begin to join with opposite forces of equal power to balance themselves.

Table salt is an example of that which is positive and negative combined together. Positively charged sodium combines with negatively charged chloride to form sodium chloride, and when in the body it tries to find a balance with potassium. When there is less of a level of potassium in the body, your blood pressure gets off balance. That's why your head goes to swimming when you eat some pork that may be heavily salted, and it throws the blood pressure off and you say, "Child, my head is getting a little dizzy; but it sure was good with that redeye gravy on the hamburger. My head is swimming a little bit." The body and bloodstream have gotten off-balance. When toxins get out of balance in the body, the body, just as all of nature, just as every molecule and every atom, tries to balance itself. The body says, "There are too many toxins you've put in here. I've got to balance it before it kills me."

As you drink water, it begins to use the water to dilute the toxins. That is why you begin to get water retention around your ankles and do not understand why your stockings and socks are growing wider and wider, because the body is trying to retain the water to balance the toxins there.

Built into nature is a balancing system. I tell you that even in those atoms, the power of the desire to balance itself is so strong that as man and his technology discovered fission and nuclear fusion, he sent particles in to break up that order in an atom. With just the amount of uranium on the tip of my finger, if man destroys the order and the balance of that uranium, the resulting explosion would be enough to destroy this entire block, just by disrupting the balance of enough matter that will fit on the tip of a finger. The importance of balance would blow this entire block to smithereens with an amount that you can hardly see with your eyes. Now, "smithereens" may not be the most scientific word; but I think all of you know what it means.

All of nature seeks balance. If I poured this cup of water on the floor, it would not stay in the form that it exists in this cup. It will begin to spread, and it will try to balance its level across its entire surface area. When heat comes out of the vents, it does not just come out and stay in a cloud of smoke; or when you breathe in cold weather, even though you see it coming out, it does not remain there like a balloon, but it seeks to dissipate itself and to form a uniform temperature throughout the area and space equally to balance itself. The body in its nature tries to balance itself, for every bit of blood is part of an entry for blood. For everything, there is an order in it. For every breath that goes into the body, there is an equivalent breath that comes out of the body. For every morsel you eat that goes into the body, it is used, stored or excreted from the body. For every action, there is a reaction.

In all of the nature from the beginning, God created order, and in that order, He established balance. Your lives must be balanced. There is hardly anything good that, if not balanced, will become bad when you think about good things in nature.

The Bible talks about how Jesus was the Light of the world, and light is contrasted with darkness to represent good and evil in the Bible. Light is one of the best things that you can think about. If you go outside right now, it is sunny outside. If you tilt your head and eyes and look up at the sun, the source of the physical light of this Earth and you stood there and stared for five minutes at that pure light, that which is good, that which is unadulterated, by the time you got ready to look to see where you were driving, you would be blind. All you'd see is that same sun everywhere; you would not be able to see your wife or your husband; you would not even be able to see the steering wheel. All you would still be able to see is that light. The light would be out of balance in your eyes.

Exercise is something that we all know we need to do, but even it can be out of balanced either way, good or bad. Most Americans are on the bad side, though, with all of these areas. They do not exercise enough. It is not a matter of knowledge; they just don't get around to it. They know better, but ... I am guilty of that myself sometimes. Sometimes it is just hard to make time. Sometimes it is hard to get the energy at the end of the day.

On the flipside of that, we all know the bad side of exercise when we don't get it. You can do too much exercising. You might not have exercised in six months, and you can go out and try to run five miles, and a lot of people will drop dead by doing that. Pastor even told you about how he had gotten off his program and he went and said, "I'm going to get back in shape all at one time. I am going to do it all today," and he put his bicycle on the back of his Jeep and went out to a bicycle trail and said, "I am going 50 miles on this bicycle." He said he got out 25 miles and got ready to turn around, and he felt his legs cramp and his mouth close in on him. He said, "I know I have messed up now," and he had 25 miles to go back.

Even with muscles, most men like for their women to be firm; but you can get to the extreme. Some of you have seen the bodybuilding women on TV, and their muscles are bigger than any man's in this church. It can get to the point where there is too much muscle for you and get off-balance.

Another positive thing that you would think there would be no negative is giving. Most people, again on the negative side of it, in giving not only in money but in time, the latest statistic is like only 30% of Christians in the church tithe, as the Bible instructs us.

But on the other side, if no balance is there with giving, you can give so much money and time that your own family can be at home hungry while you're out there giving and helping another. You can spend so much time helping other people that your children become lonely and say, "I miss Mama, and I miss Daddy." That is the reason why they have the term "PK", which means "preacher's kid". When people hear that, it represents usually a child's behavior with a few problems. It should not be that way. If the preacher is the one giving the instruction, you would think his children were happy the most. Many times what happens is the minister has to spend so much time counseling and administering to other people's needs that his own family and children go without...balance in all things, balance.

In the area of education: Jessie Jackson and the other leaders all talk about the importance of education. We all know it, but I tell you that if all you did was stay in the books and did nothing else, you would be off balance. You'd have no social life, no friends, no relationships and no associations. And when you go out to get a job, you might know how to work in the lab or work on the computer; but when it comes to corresponding with your coworkers, you'd have no people skills. You'd be off-balance. There must be a balance in all things.

In the area of money, there are problems when money gets too low, but there are problems also when money gets too great. With greater money comes greater problems and issues and responsibilities. As the Render My Money class here at the Ark has taught us, we all need to be saving a certain amount of our money. Gerald teaches us to give to ourselves, and that is good on a true principle; but if you become off-balance, even with that good thing, you become like Scrooge in saving every dime. You never want to go out to eat and enjoy yourself every once in a while. You say, "No, I won't go to the movies; I will wait for it to come on TV because the movie costs \$9.00." You may have a million dollars in the bank, but off-balanced you'd be eating cans of sardines every night because you do not want to spend the money, saying, "I will save it and just eat these sardines." There must be a balance to everything in life, but most of us with money are not on that end of it.

The area of looks: We should be concerned about the way we look; but it can go too far sometimes. Sometimes I have to slow my wife down. My wife will go out and get

\$60 to \$80 braids and say, "This is what I've really been wanting..." She would explain it to me 30 minutes more trying to convince me why she needed them. She'd say, "This way I won't have to fool with my hair when I get up in the morning. I can go six months and won't have to spend time to go to the salon and these braids will eliminate all of the work." The next week rolls around and she's tells me, "I think I'm going to get these things cut-off"

Some people can spend two hours in the mirror every day fixing themselves up, making sure everything is just right and everything is in the right place; that everything is laid just right. But we need balance. On the other hand, you should not have let yourself go, either.

The Bible has the practice of baptism, of being washed in the water, but that should not be excluded to just baptismal Sunday. That should be a daily practice with the saints.

The balance of work and of rest: Work is good. They used to say in the old days, "Hard work never killed anybody;" but nowadays, stress kills plenty of people. Too much work increases stress and affects and weakens every system of the body. It wears the body down. On the flipside, too much rest makes you lazy and drains your energy. How many of you have been on vacation for a week and just slept maybe four hours in the day and eight hours at night and said, "It looks like if I'm getting more rest, I'd have more energy." But you just hardly have the energy to go out to the beaches; you are dragging more so than if you were working every day. That is because on the flipside, if the blood is not stimulated and invigorated, energy will go down. There must be a balance between work and rest ... not too much, not too little, never to the extreme.

There must be a balance between talking and quiet. I'll finally get some men to say "Amen" on this one. Too little communication can destroy a marriage; but on the flipside, if you are all day long just listening to it, that can run some men out of the house. He'll say, "Baby, I just can't take it any more. I've got to go get me some silence!" I know some men who just have to go sit by the lake and relax. They just can't take it any more and have got to have some peace. Not expressing yourself to each other can cause problems in a relationship also. You should not be expressing yourself all the time, either.

It goes both ways. It must be a balance, not too far to the right, not too far to the left, not too high and not too low...balance.

Energy, we all need it to do what we have to do throughout our day; but there is a balance that must be maintained. There are people whom you see that lack energy, and they will drain your energy if you look at them. They will say, "Hey, y'all. How

you doing today?” Just listening to them and just watching some folks walk just drains your energy. But on the other hand, I know some people who just cannot be still! I mean, they will sit down and they will still be moving; their legs just get going, and they are just talking constantly. They’ve got to go around the house to straighten up this and straighten up that. You’ve got hyperactivity, and you got both ends of it. But there must be a balance. There must be a balance.

This next area is a little touchy, but that is the area of weight. I don’t have to tell you all that there must be a balance in this area. You can get too fat or too skinny. It depends upon the person. I know that everybody has different genetics and different frames; but sometimes on some of that stuff, it’s not big bones.

But even on the flipside, I know when I was coming out of high school, they had a big deal of issues that were growing in the country about anorexia and bulimia. Because the supermodels were becoming thinner and thinner, it caused women to eat what they wanted to and go to the bathroom and regurgitate. So there must be a balance between being too skinny for your frame and being too overweight.

Insurance companies say in their statistics that there is a 40% higher chance of death with obesity than without obesity. I got this revelation this morning. When you go to the doctor, even before any checkup or anything they are going to perform on you, what’s one of the first things that you have to do? Get on the scale. That scale is called a balance scale, even. He spoke this to me: “For a lot of people, with that balance that you get on that scale, even represented with your body, your health, or even your very life, is hanging in the balance. Weight kills a lot of people. Your very life or your very health is there, hanging in that balance.”

We are talking about “Hanging in the Balance” today. And as you go to restaurants to eat, after you get through paying the bill, it is customary to leave a tip for the waiter. But that which we have just eaten can many times begin to tip the balance and tip the scales upon our body.

When Dr. Moore came here and spoke about health and dieting unto us, he said something that a lot of people just didn’t see anyway. He said, “The ideal weight for most people is somewhere between 10 and 15 pounds from their high school weight.” A lot of people said, “Well, I don’t know about that. People can’t even recognize me from high school.” But that is what he said. He is a medical doctor and that is what he found in his research. It is possible, people.

When I finished high school, God put the wisdom in me to want to change my diet. I knew that my mother had heart disease running on her side of the family, and my father had been stricken with heart disease very early in his life. So common sense came to me and wisdom came to me and said, “Son, if you don’t want to go down

this path with it running on both sides of your family, you've got to do something different. You've got to take an action for your health."

I began to read and study every book I could find on health, and I began to implement those changes in my life and in my diet one by one. I became a vegetarian. I gave up red meat first, then I gave up chicken and then fish. I went all the way down and became a vegetarian, coming out of high school going into college, at the time when the eating is worst usually in the American diet. I got to a health class there, and one of the assignments we had to do first in health class was to take the measurement of our body fat. Then they took our blood and measured the cholesterol for every person in the class, and there were over 100 students in that class. Out of those students, I had the lowest cholesterol of the entire class. So I saw in one year what that best-weight diet that the Bible gives did in my body. My weight now, staying on that best-weight diet, eleven years after high school is the exact same weight as it was the day I graduated to the pound; and that is eleven years after high school and five years after marriage.

Marriage is the other time that usually puts a little weight around the midsection on most men. Even my wife's diet changed. As she became one with me, she began to eat like I ate for the most part.

Sometimes, a few things still tempt her every now and then. She just had her fourth child five weeks ago, but she is still within 15 pounds of her high school body weight. She has not even begun to exercise yet because the doctor told her to wait six weeks. So five weeks after the baby on the best-weight diet that Dr. Moore outlined in the crusade, she is within 15 pounds of her high school bodyweight.

The next area that you would even consider to see no way possible to be out of balance is the area even of witnessing; 99.9% of all Christians are probably on the low end of this one. We get a little nervous when we are around other people telling them about the goodness of God and what He has done for us. But even that can be taken to the extreme.

C. Elijah and I used to go a lady who owned a shop, and she was on the other end of the extreme. We would go in, and everything she said was almost straight from the Bible. Every little thing was spiritual. She'd say, "Do you want a scoop of this Hallelujah ice cream? Do you want a slice with this praise-the-Lord cake? How are you, praise the Lord, doing today? How are you, glory to God, feeling, Son? How you been, glory, hallelujah, doing in school?" Every sentence was filled with it. People would come in, and even though she was trying to minister to them, they would get turned off. That is too much 'hallelujah-ing' for me. I cannot take that much in one sentence.

That was the other end of the spectrum. The next area that you would not think that you could be out of balance in, again, 99.9% are on the low end, the area of prayer. But the Bible says that faith without works is dead. If you pray all day and night about your life to God and your situation and you never got off of those knees once He gave you that guidance and put that guidance into work, you will still move no farther in your life than you are then. Faith and prayer must be combined with obedience and with work.

The next area is spending time with your children. Most people, again, are on the low end of this. They said when they looked at the amount of quality time fathers spend with their children it was something like three minutes a day. Three minutes a day average across this country is what fathers spend with their children ... balance, balance, balance.

And on the flipside, you could have a child and it may be your only child. You could say, "This child means the world to me," and you could put the child on a pedestal and the child could become an idol to you, even loving him more than God; or you could take a baby and hold the baby day and night and just let him sleep on you at night and hold him in your arms all day, and this baby would become spoiled from holding it too much. The child would become dependent upon us holding it.

The next area with children is disciplining them. They took discipline out of the hands of teachers. They can no longer spank children in school. Today, children are getting away with everything, even at home. On the other end, though, you have some people who can't control their tempers, and they go into child abuse. They leave marks on the children and hit the children upside the heads with their fist and all types of things. There must be a balance between being too lenient and too strict.

It's the same way with freedom and children. Some parents say, "There is too much danger in the world. I've got to hold on to my child under my wings." They never let the children go out, even to ride a bicycle. They say, "They may skin their knees out there in the street." The child will have been smothered all of his or her life, and they get out into the world unprepared, unbalanced. A lot of times, the parents are so strict with the children. They are thinking their children are going to stay on that strict path all of their days; but those children go off to college, and they get buck-wild out there. They say, "Mama hasn't been letting me go out at night; I'm going to stay out all night long" It become off-balance: too much freedom, too little freedom; too strict, too lenient.

The Bible in its order of the household says that the man should be the head of the house but that is out of balance in most households. I have had some people come into my house, and they were surprised at the way my wife and I operated. She said, "Are you really operating like this?" Even though they knew it was supposed

to be like this, they had never even seen it before, the man even being the head of the house. In most households, they are out of order ...out of order. But you can have it on both ends. On the other end, you can have a dictator to tell the woman, "The Bible said I am the head of this house; you've got to do what I say do" and everything is as they said ...out of order. On the other end is the weak husband who the wife is leading around ...balance, balance.

The area of diet needs balance too. Most of you from the crusade know the bad side of diet from Dr. Moore. But even the good side of some things, anything you eat to the extreme is bad for you. Honey is good, but if you go home and eat a pint of honey all by itself, you will get sick. Even with the purest thing in nature, which is fruit, that which was given to Adam and Eve, that first diet, if you ate only fruit now because of the lack of vitamins and minerals in this soil, you would probably get deficient in some things in your body if you ate no vegetables, nothing but just fruits. I know some people whose immune systems went down, because that is all they had. Even that which is best for us, when restricted to only that, became hazardous to our health.

Pastor Nathaniel one time got to the point where he had been eating some things, and he said he is going to cleanse his body. He said, "What I am going to do is, this day I am going to fast on nothing but oranges." He said, "I'm going to just let this acid eat some of this bad stuff out of my body." He said, "I am going to just clean myself out. I just like orange juice, fresh." I called him later that night about 10:30 to see how he was doing. He said, "I had about 20 oranges today; but," he said, "Man, I had to get out of bed. These oranges are eating my stomach alive." He said, "They're about to eat the dang lining out of my stomach, all of this acid." So even an orange, when taken to the extreme, will eat our stomachs out.

C. Elijah taught on divine healing for a solid two years, but he understood balance with it. During that whole time, he was going to the gym three times a week himself. In the morning before he got ready to preach, he wasn't sitting there at the table with Tracy eating salty pork chops, quoting Scriptures and saying, "By His stripes I am healed." He wasn't going home, picking chitlins out of his teeth with dinner, talking about, "I'm redeemed from the curse of the Lord." He had balance with it. He wasn't smoking two packs of cigarettes a day, coughing, and talking about "I've been healed by Christ." He understood balance with it.

Some Christians today have gone beyond even smoking cigarettes. I heard some people say that in the Bible in Genesis it said, "God gave every herb of the field, and He said it was good and that is why I am smoking these herbs. God gave it to me!" People, it's even gone from cigarettes to a weed, marijuana, Mary Jane, whatever you want to call it. They have misinterpreted that Scripture. He said it was good to eat, though, but not to smoke. Get that right, now. That is Genesis 1:30; go look it up. He said, "I have given every green herb for meat," and you are not using that for

any meat if you are out there with it with smoke coming out of it. They have taken even that verse, "I have given every herb for meat," and have taken a slice of A-T off of that word "meat" and they translated it to, "He has given every herb for me" and just left the A-T totally off of that and mistranslated it.

There is hardly anything in nature as pure as just straight water. We don't get enough water in our diet. Most people don't drink eight cups a day. Without enough water, our bodies begin to dehydrate. But even on the flipside of that, you can drink too much water. Those of you who went on the fast, how many of you tried to catch up on your water at one time? You may have drunk like three or four cups on an empty stomach, just started getting queasiness and said, "Whoa! I shouldn't have drunk all this water at one time." Let me see any hands. Has that happened to anybody where you drank too much water? I see some hands. You start getting queasy, even with water.

Wine, they recommend one or two glasses a day for your heart with the statistics, but some people have taken that and turned it into one or two bottles a day.

They've gotten off-balance with it. When you overindulge in wine, it throws off the equilibrium. When your equilibrium gets off, that is the area of the brain where your sense of balance is. You begin to drink it, and as it gets thrown off you begin to walk like the whole Earth is moving and it seems like the room is spinning. Your balance is off and you say, "Wow, the Earth sure is spinning today."

It seems like everything around you is off-balance, but the change has only been internal to your own mind; only your own head is off-balance. And it seems like your entire environment, all of the things affecting your life, are off-balance, but it is internal. Nothing in the external is off-balance, and that is what inebriation can do to us.

Even herbs, I talked about one kind of herb, but every medicine that is even prescribed today, its origin is in a plant at some level down the chain; but the amount that is taken makes the difference in whether we consider it a medicine or a poison.

C. Elijah was doing a lot of juicing at one time with carrots, apples and celeries, and he got to the point he was juicing every day. He said he was really going to put these nutrients and a lot of stuff in his body. As he began doing it a whole lot, he began to start getting sick every night. He began throwing up every night, and he said, "What in the world?" So he started eliminating one thing from his diet each day. He said, "I've got to figure out what in the world is happening to my body." So he eliminated everything he was eating day by day, and he got down and said, "I've got enough of this fresh juice. I know that can't be doing that." So he stopped taking

the juice for a few days for all of his queasiness, and he never he threw up again. He said, "What in the world?"

So he went to the library and looked it up to see what could be causing that, and he found out that in the seed of an apple is a derivative of cyanide; it poisons the system, and his body was bringing it back up. When he stopped juicing the apple seeds, there were no more problems. The balance between a little or a lot could be the difference between a poison and a medicine in your life.

Entertainment: some people are just being entertained all the time. They are watching five hours of television a day and going to the movies all the time, doing this and doing that. On the flipside, some people never get out; they never go out and do anything. They never take out the thoughts of their friends. It becomes off-balance either way.

Going to church, it can be too little or too much. We've got some members who are in the CME denomination, and Christmas, Mother's Day and Easter are the only days they meet. On the other hand, there are some people who are in the church every time the doors open and in three churches every time and every day of the week while they have families at home who are longing for their time. Their kids are being lost. They are in church too much. There is such a thing, even in the church. The church had to learn a balance between Word and Spirit. Some of the churches all used to just keep caught up in the Spirit, and there would be hardly any Word going forth. The flipside, there are some churches that are like a classroom. Everything is just pure Word, pure straight-by-the-book, and the Spirit can't get in there with a crowbar. People can have a Ph.D. in the theological schools and study Scriptures all day, know the Bible from backwards to forwards. Yet, they do not believe in divine healing when they get sick ... no Spirit. Those on the other side can say that they are lead by the Spirit and say, "I do not need a man to tell me anything. I can hear it for myself. I do not have to go to church; I am just lead by the Spirit, and I can get out and hear things and not check them to make sure they line up with the Word of God, line up with wisdom, and it becomes off-balance either way. There must be balance between the Word and the Spirit.

The area of pride, we all hear about the dangers of pride. But without enough pride, you would lack self-confidence. You must have a certain amount of pride or confidence in your own ability to be able to function in the world. Without any amount of pride or confidence, your boss will give you an assignment on the job and say, "Can you handle this?" and you'll say, "Well I don't know. My skills are not all that good. I just can't do anything." It will hinder you. You need a certain amount; but yet you don't need to get to the point where you think you are doing it all, you think you are all that. There must be a balance between too high and too low. You must not put yourself above other people; but when you put yourself beneath other people, as well, it will keep you from climbing to a level. Sometimes God has shown

us some things in our lives, and we'll say, "I can't do that, you know; I am just not good enough, done too much sin." We do not have enough confidence in what God has placed in us.

Many times in our lives, what we are looking for in our lives, it is left. We are looking all in the wrong places; but in the end, it is all left there, hanging in the balance, when we go back to find it. Sometimes we are pulling our hair out with stress and we're looking for our peace and we've left it there. Your peace is hanging in the balance there, swaying. Sometimes we are trying to get our relationships back together, trying to restore romance and love back in our marriages, and we are looking everywhere for it, reading books, going to this program or that program; but it is left there, hanging in the balance. Sometimes we are looking to get our health back, and it is left there; hanging in the balance is where we will find it.

We wonder sometimes even why we cannot hear God's voice any more. And it is left there, hanging in the balance between too much work, too much play; too much entertainment with no time for God. It is left hanging there in the balance. All of it between up and down, too high to too low, between in and out, between talking and listening, between busy and resting, between loud and quiet, between moving and still, between work and play. It is left, the very things you are looking for many times in your life. It is there, hanging in the balance of your life ... hanging in the balance.

In auto mechanics when a tire gets off-balance, even though it may only be one-quarter of the car, it starts maybe with a little wobble at first. Then after a while you keep driving on it and say, "I am short of money. I am not going to get it fixed right now." It keeps growing and growing and growing, and the next thing you know when you hit 50, 55 and 60 on the expressway, you can hardly hold on to the steering wheel it is just shaking so much from the car being off-balance. It begins, one little off-balanced inch, begins to shake the entire two-ton car. It is shaking it at its very steel core and foundation because one little tire was off-balance. The tire begins to thread unevenly because of the unbalance when it is unfixed; and if it still not taken in and balanced, that little tread begins to grow and grow and grow, and before you knew it the steel will come through the radial and you will be riding on a flat tire. And if that is not fixed, you will be riding on a rim; and if that is not fixed, you won't be riding at all. It will throw and kick the entire car out of commission, out of a little \$30 balancing job.

That is how humans are. If you never go on vacation and just work all the time, your nerves can become raw and cause a nervous breakdown in your life when a one- or two-day vacation or a two-day rest, could have prevented it. It throws the body completely out of commission. And even one little tooth out of order that is aching will put the entire body and mind out of condition. You cannot even read right if your tooth is aching; you cannot work right. All you can think about, even

though the rest of the members of your body may be perfectly fine, if one tooth is out of balance and aching, it will throw your entire being out of balance. You won't even be able to pray; all you will be able to think about is that tooth when you have been down there praying ... balance, balance, balance.

The bad part about having my wife here today is because I wanted to talk about her a little bit, and if she wasn't here I could stretch that freely. This next story is about her, too. She caused herself to become an inventor one day and she said, "I've got a brilliant idea." She said, "Instead of my always coming in here spraying air freshener, this is what I am going to do." She said, "I've got this little stick right here. I am just going to stick this stick on one of the fan blades of the ceiling fan; and then as we cut the fan on, that fan will go around and spread that fresh air all through this room. It will just smell like a field of daisies all through here. We won't have to do any spraying or anything. Nobody thought of this before, so I don't have to go out and buy all these dispensers that automatically mist every 30 minutes; I can put a \$2 stick up here and solve the problem."

It sounded like a real good idea to me. I mean, I didn't see any problems with it. But as time went on, it began to throw the fan off-balance day by day by day. And after a few weeks of enjoying the fresh-smelling breeze, it seemed like when we turned it on that fan was going to cave in the whole ceiling, it was just shaking so badly from the ceiling. Even though it was smelling good while we were asleep, we were sleeping with one eye open and one leg hanging out of the bed, so we'd have a half-start in case that thing fell on us as we slept.

She had to call her father, who is a real good handyman, to look at the fan to fix it and put in a new fan. He came over with his expertise, analyzed it and said, "The only thing that is wrong with it is, it is off-balance." He took the stick off and rebalanced the fan, and now we can sleep with both eyes closed.

Over in the Book of Job 8:11 it says: "Can the rush grow up without mire?" And this may sound cryptic to most people, but you can look at the mire as a mushy type of mud. It is wet, soggy, muddy ground. What this is asking is, can the rush, the little things that grow out of that mire, grow without that supporting fertile mire there? The reason it says that is because the rush can only grow in very specific, delicate, balanced conditions. The rush will only grow in the type of situation where it is not too cold, where it is not too hot. It will only grow when it is not too wet and it is not too dry. It won't grow in Georgia red clay; it will only grow where the ground is not too high, but yet not too low. It will only grow in a balanced soil.

Those rushes represent even the areas of the life. Some areas we rush and don't take our time with them. The area cannot sprout up until we slow down and begin to regain balance in our lives. When the soil begins to become right, where it is not too hard and not too soft, where it is not too cold and not too hot, then that blessing

of the position that we have been waiting on, that business, will begin to take off when the soil and the conditions are in balance, because God knows in our lives sometimes when we are waiting on it we wonder what the holdup is on some things. He knows that if we got the position that we wanted sometimes, it will cause us to travel too much, and our family would be destroyed because of it. He knows that if He gave us that house sometimes too early, we would get haughty with pride, and it would damage our spirit. He knows that if He gave us that fine automobile we wanted sometimes too early, it will get us caught up in paying bills that we cannot afford. "Can the rush grow without mire?"

Let's look at Job 6. "But Job answered and said, 'Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me. Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder? Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg? The things that my soul refused to touch are my sorrowful meat. Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that He would let loose His hand, and cut me off! Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would hearken myself in sorrow: yet Him not spare; for I hath not concealed the Words of the Holy One.'"

Here in Job's voice, he talked about his sorrows and grief when weighed in the balance; that it was heavier than sand, just as his balance. His life has become overwhelmed with grief; and even though he was a good, righteous man, when God saw his just and fit to tear, when his life became too off-balance for him, he prayed unto God and said, "Lord, my only request is for you to kill me." He desired suicide when his life began to get off balance.

Even our personalities need to be balanced. I attended a managers' seminar one time, and they taught about the three personality types. You have A, B and C people. They said that leaders have a combination of the A, B and C. So it even showed me there that the balanced people those were the managers; those were the skills they were trying to teach us in how to have balance even in our personalities. Even you can imagine with today's leaders, you can take, for instance, the Governor of this state and imagine that he was just, say, a pure B person who went and made all the decisions just based on his gut, just went out and said, "You know all these five criminals on death row? I just feel like they need some sympathy. I am just pardoning all of them" without even checking the cases, just operated off his guts.

Imagine on the flipside if he was an A person and was just totally logical and all he went by was information and based every decision only upon information, only upon black and white. It would depend upon which lobbyist would give him the most

information about an issue and how well they had expressed it. Imagine a huge law firm given a case with a team of lawyers, trying to tear down an old nursing home with a person that is only going by the facts and figures. The lawyer would get up and make a long case against the nursing home. All of the laws, he would go through explaining why it needed to be torn down, whereas a representative living in that nursing home may get up and with simple, broken-English vernacular unlearned and say, "If you take us out of this nursing home, we will die. We have been here too long; if we change now, we will die." In that case, you need an inner leading to know. You cannot always look at just the facts.

My wife and I went to the mall yesterday, and I saw a business opportunity in the mall and told her this would make a good business. She said she wanted to get together with her friends and do it. I began to explain to her that with every business opportunity or a new venture life, I ask myself two questions when I am presented with it. The first question is, "What will I gain if I endeavor in this venture?" The second question I ask is, "What will I lose if I endeavor in this venture?" Then I compare the two and make sure that which I would lose is not greater than that which I would gain. Make sure the gain is greater. Missing your son's baseball game might give you an extra hour-and-a-half at work, but what did you lose? Working two jobs may allow you to drive a nicer car, but what have you lost? Working on Sunday may allow you to get paid overtime for the week, but what have you lost? Watching the football game instead of helping your son with his homework may entertain you, but what have you lost?

On the goals for even this church for the year, one of the instructions God gave the pastor was to spend more time with his family than he did with Mountain Wings and this church combined, because God understands the balance of it. He could have written more issues and inspired more people; but what would he be losing? Everybody wants to make more money; but do you ever stop to ask, "What is making more money going to cost me? What are the costs?"

Even to give you a physical demonstration in the physical of making more money, the more money you make, the bigger your wallet gets in a sense; the more cash you have, cash represents money. A chiropractor told me, "Don't carry your wallet in your back pocket, because as it gets thick if you've got a thick wallet, what will happen is as you sit on it, it will throw your back off-balance. One side will be higher than the other." He said, "Don't carry it in your back pocket. It will throw your entire posture off."

And God gave me this revelation this morning. The bones in your body, the shape and the structure, the entire body and what is represented in the spiritual is demonstrated in the natural. Having too much money in your wallet, just sitting on it without helping others, without giving, without being a blesser, would throw your whole body structure off-balance and change your posture and skeletal formation.

Even with a great revelation, some of you still are saying, “Well, I would rather just be walking with a limp with a big old wallet”

Well, think about this. What if it malformed your spiritual structure and skeletal in the same manner and threw off your spiritual posture? Would you still be ready to give up that which seems like it will benefit you?

I will close with one story that is a true story. It gets a little gross; but it is true, and it demonstrates how sometimes all that glitters is not gold. We will go to church and especially revivals, and we go looking for a blessing more times than we ought to just to go to be a blessing. We want to see what we can get out of the service instead of to see who we can help.

My wife and I went to a revival to hear a prophet at another church, and she took one of her friends with us to the church. As we sat there in the church listening to the prophet, my wife’s friend’s son was with her and he began to get edgy. She said, “What’s wrong, son?” and he said, “I’ve got to go to the bathroom.” I didn’t want them to miss the service, so I said, “I’ll take him.”

So I took the young boy downstairs to the small bathroom in the basement. As we got down there, I said, “What do you have to do, number one or number two?” I was praying it was number one; he said “I’ve got to do number two.”

So I took him on in and was getting ready to shut the door behind him when he said, “Brother James, can you stay in here with me?” I thought, “Ooh! I should have let that boy’s mama take him.”

And I tell you, it was like that boy had not been to the bathroom in two weeks. That little boy filled that whole commode. I began to look for a window, and there was no window in the bathroom. I began to try to take a little bit of a breath, and I couldn’t. I looked around under the cabinet for some air freshener, and I couldn’t find anything. I started to just hold my breath; every few seconds, I would go out and take a deep breath, then come back in, sit with him and say, “I’m still here.”

And he filled that thing up, and I said, “Are you finally through?” He said, “Okay, I’m finally through.” So I said, “Phew! Let’s get out of here.”

I got ready to flush the toilet, and I said, “Oh my goodness!” There was no noise, nothing but the clinking handle. I said, “Oh, my Lord! This is the time we need prayer now, son. Get on your knees, son, and pray.” I said, “Let me try this first. I know sometimes if you take the cover off the thing and just pull the lever that will get it to flush this time.” I opened the cover, and there was no water in the tank. I said, “Oh, Lord!” So I said, “What we’re going to have to do, son, is we’re going to

have to turn on the water and just take water in our hands and throw this thing over into the tank and flush this toilet. We can't leave this bathroom like this! This is horrible!"

I went to turn on the water. I said, "Oh, there is no hot water." I went to turn on the cold water; there was no cold water, and I had just washed him. I said, "Lord, have mercy! I've got to wash my hands at least!"

I said, "Lord, there is no water in this whole church, it looks like!"

And I tell you, I said, "What I'll have to do since I wasn't able to wash my hands after I got through wiping all of this," I said, "we are going to rush straight after church and just get out of here." I said, "I will have to go to the nearest gas station, restaurant, whatever I can find. I've got to wash and get this stuff off my hand."

This is totally true. As I got back upstairs into the service with the prophet, as soon as I sat down, the prophet said "You, sir, right there who just sat down." He said, "I'm seeing the Spirit that God has given you hands of gold"

I said, "What kind of prophet is this?" He said, "Come up here, come up here." So I came to the front, and he began to prophesy about how all this money was going to come into my hand, and he said, "Let those of you in the audience, I'll tell you right now, the Spirit of things, this boy has hands of gold." He said, "Come up and shake this boy's hand before he leaves this service. Money will flow in carpets unto you!" And as I went to take my seat, every person jumped up, "Let me shake it, let me shake it." And every person that shook my hand did not know what they were shaking. They were hoping for a blessing, but they ended up getting a mess.

That is an example of how that which we think sometimes is blessed when there is really a mess when you get the truth of it. So I apologize again for those of you who may have been there that night and shook my hand. There was nothing I could do. I did wash them when I got out of there, though.

I want to just leave you with a question to ponder. As you look at a balance notice how it swings from left to right and back and forth. Close your eyes and bow your head and think about the areas of your life. If you have an area of your life off-balanced that is rocking with the wind, unsteady, and there's no peace, consider it right now and consider how to get it back into balance. Think about that area which is too high or too low, too cold or too hot, too soft or too hard, what in your life is left hanging in the balance? May God bless you.