26-1122a - Detailed Summary

26-1122a - *Examine Who?, Mike Mathis*

Bible Readers: John Kessler and Roger Raines

See the transcript: Transcript HTML - Transcript PDF

See the outline: Outline HTML - Outline PDF - Mikes Outline PDF

Examine Who?

1st Reader (0:04 - 0:27): John Kessler **Acts 20:28**: John read the first reading from Acts 20:28 in the New King James Version. It calls the overseers to take heed to themselves and to all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers, so that they may shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.	**2nd Reader** (0:32 - 1:04): Roger Raines **1 Corinthians 11:27-28**: Roger read the second reading from 1 Corinthians 11:27-28. It states that whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. Therefore a man must examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 28:39), Preacher: Mike Mathis

(1:09–5:43) Introduction: Origin of the Lesson and the Problem of Fault-Finding

The sermon opens with the title posed as a question—"Examine who?"—and explains that the lesson arose after reading several issues of one of the brotherhood papers. Older members would remember the periodical **Contending for the Faith**; today there is a continuation of that paper, only four pages long, which Mike receives online. "The lesson that I present comes as a result of a few articles that I've read in this paper." The previous month's issue focused "on the purity of doctrine, which was a good lesson". Within it, whenever one particular subject was mentioned, it was connected with the name of a well-known brother associated with Apologetics Press who "brought up the notion that elders should be re-evaluated." That idea "was an immense battle that was brought up on account of the unscripturalness of re-evaluating elders. That was unscriptural". From this Mike draws the obvious human tendency: "We can see someone else's mistakes much better than we can see self's faults. Oh yeah, we're brothers so-and-so, sister so-and-so, we've done this, done that, but did you see what they did?" It is difficult for self to recognize its own faults. The morning's Bible reading, he notes, is telling us "to pay attention to oneself inwardly".

Supporting point: The sermon's controlling idea is self-examination rather than scrutinizing others. The paper's articles on doctrinal purity and elder re-evaluation illustrate the human tendency to focus outward.

(5:58–9:47) Workplace Illustration: Focus on Your Own Responsibility

Mike illustrates the problem with a story from his job. There was one lady who was line leader "but she acted like she was plant manager." After she left, he was placed in her position. People began pointing out what some other person was or was not doing on the line. After being "a little bit

perturbed that I been shown about somebody else," he spoke to everyone and said, "Don't pay any attention to other people and what they're doing. We've got the department heads, we've got the boss man, the one who owns that organization around, and if he disapproves of what we're doing, he would let us know… And if that meant that our lack of whatever we're doing or something we should not be doing is enough to have us terminated, we would be terminated". He told them to look at the name on their own paycheck: "If I was given a paycheck, it should have my name on it. And if I was unhappy with what I made, the amount I received, there was something that I needed to do, maybe go check… I needed to straighten it up".

Supporting point: The anecdote reinforces the biblical call to self-attention. Responsibility is personal; others' performance is for the "boss man," not for peer scrutiny.

(10:01–17:00) Acts 20:28 – Take Heed to Yourselves; Elders' Authority from the Holy Spirit

Returning to the first reading, Mike says the Scripture "shows the overseers/elders, which all came together at Miletus." Paul instructed them: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood". Some claim that "the translators are the ones that gave the elders authority. They really don't have. And their statement is, they are examples. I agree with that. They are examples". Yet those who argue that elders are just like anyone else with no special authority "are not reading this verse, and also in 1 Peter 5, 1 through 5." The text says the Holy Spirit "has made you overseers. That is not the translators that are giving them authority. That is the Holy Spirit… If they are overseers, they have some authority". How did the Holy Spirit make them overseers? Through the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9. "Bishops, elders are the same people". As Steve had emphasized in Bible class, "this book is the product of the Holy Spirit. He's a member of the Godhead." The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are members of the Godhead. The Spirit does not speak on His own; what He says in the book is "God-breathed." The word "inspiration" comes from a word that means God-breathed, so the authority of overseers comes from the Holy Spirit through the God-breathed Word. "Now how can they oversee something if they're not made overseers? And as I said, this book is a product of the Holy Spirit, and we need to listen to it".

Supporting point: Elders are overseers by the Holy Spirit's appointment through the God-breathed Word, not by human translation or tradition. They are examples **and** possess God-given authority.

(17:10–21:49) 1 Peter 5:1-5 – Overseers as Examples; Mutual Submission with Humility

Turning to 1 Peter 5:1-5, Mike addresses "those who were against elders having authority, some authority. They don't have all authority, but they have authority". Peter, "who am a fellow elder" and also an apostle, "a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed," exhorts the elders: "Shepherd of the flock of God, which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion, but willingly. Not for dishonest gain, but eagerly. Not as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock". Mike agrees they are examples, "But notice, they have been made overseers. They are overseers. They should serve as examples". When the Chief Shepherd appears they will receive the unfading crown of glory. "Likewise, you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders." If that statement is unwelcome, the same verse continues: "All of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility. For God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble". Even though the congregation does not currently have

elders, “some of us will submit to another… I’m glad that it doesn’t take very much to ask someone of the number of an occasion comes to fulfill a duty if someone is not here”.

Supporting point: Elders are overseers who serve as examples (not lords). Younger submit to elders; all submit to one another in humility.

(22:01–32:22) 1 Corinthians 11:27-28 – Examine Yourself at the Lord’s Supper

Moving to the second reading, Mike notes that 1 Corinthians 11:27-28 deals with “partaking of the Lord’s Supper that we took care of earlier” and with how the Corinthian brethren were to partake. “Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” Some mistake “unworthy” to mean “I’m not worthy. None of us are worthy if we really look at it,” but the real problem was the way the Corinthians were partaking: “they couldn’t call it the Lord’s Supper. It was reduced to a common meal”. “For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others. And one is hungry and another is drunk”. Some take the question “Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?” as forbidding eating in the church building and therefore opposing a potluck downstairs after worship—“We call them antis.” Yet Paul is speaking about the Lord’s Supper: “They were eating ahead of others”. Mike illustrates with the upcoming December fellowship meal: if someone got a plate before everyone else came down, “We couldn’t call that a fellowship dinner… We’re getting ahead of people. He’s talking about the Lord’s Supper here, how they misused it”. Paul then reminded them of what he had received from the Lord: the institution of the Supper on the night Jesus was betrayed—“This is my body, which is broken for you… This cup is the new covenant in my blood… For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till he comes,” which points to His resurrection and living presence. Their unworthy manner consisted precisely in “getting ahead of people and they were taking, some of them were filled… with the cup. They weren’t waiting on everybody to meet together. But let a man examine himself”. Therefore, “if we’re going to take of the Lord’s supper, we need to focus on the fact that he died for me. He died for me. Yes, he died for you… Think what that means for you. Think what it means for me.” The one who eats and drinks unworthily “eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body”. While taking the bread we remember that Christ “sacrificed his life for each one of us, but not only for us, but for those out in the world… What would I be if I was not cleansed in his blood? That’s what’s keeping me cleansed from all sin”.

Supporting point: “Unworthy manner” is contextual (divisive, self-first eating that reduced the Supper to a common meal), not a statement of personal unworthiness. Self-examination focuses on Christ’s death and the meaning of His body and blood.

(32:22–34:22) 2 Corinthians 13:5 – Examine Yourselves Whether You Are in the Faith

Mike next turns to 2 Corinthians 13:5, noting that “this isn’t talking about the Lord’s supper.” Paul writes, “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves”. This does not mean thinking about “brothers or sisters, so-and-so. I’m thinking about what I’m doing. Not what he’s doing or she’s doing. Examine. He’s telling them to examine yourselves collectively and individually. We are to examine self. Test self. Whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves”. The text continues: “Do you not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless, indeed, you are disqualified. If we’re disqualified, we’re not with him”.

Supporting point: Self-examination is personal and collective concerning whether one is truly in the faith, not an exercise in judging others.

(34:31–40:28) Galatians 6:1-4 – Restore Gently and Examine Your Own Work

In conclusion Mike reads Galatians 6 beginning at verse 1: “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself”. He applies this to employment: when someone is slacking off and others must bear the load, “still, yes, I need to consider myself not to be like that person over there. Go ahead and do the work that was handed to you”. Verse 4 says, “But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.” Even if others are not doing their part, “when I come face to face with God, God isn’t going to judge me on the basis of what someone else did or didn’t do. I’m going to be judged according to what I do or don’t do”. Mike recalls someone who once told him, “I made him look bad.” His reply was, “No, I’m not making you look bad. That’s all on you. If you’re not doing what you’re supposed to be doing, you’re making your own self look bad… each one of us is going to be judged on what each one of us, each one does. You’re not going to be judged on the basis of what I did or didn’t do. It’s what you did or not, and accordingly”.

Supporting point: Restoration must be gentle and self-aware. Judgment is individual. One’s own work, not comparison with others, is the standard.

(40:37–46:38) Conclusion and Invitation: Christ’s Sacrifice and the Cleansing Blood

The thought, Mike says, is that “we need to be careful. We might see another doing something wrong. We need to restore such a one, but do it in gentleness, and then consider my own self or consider all self because I could be just as bad and might be”. “Christ made the sacrifice for each one of us. He died while we were still ungodly sinners. He died for those that are outside, out in the world… they need to know that Jesus died for them… All the refreshing water of life that they could have is pure because it comes from the pure God, the source is pure. It is unmixed by man”. Therefore, if anyone needs to respond to the gospel invitation, “Why not come repenting of your sins, confessing your faith in Jesus as the son of God who died for you, who became the perfect sacrifice for you, and who can cleanse your sins when you are buried with him in baptism. He can wash away your sins, your past sins,” and as one walks in the life there is the promise of fellowship with Him “who cleanses us from all sin”. Some need reminding that one is not simply “a doer” of sin no matter what: “If you’re actually walking in the life, his blood cleanses you, continually cleanses you from all sin.” Those who have named the name of Christ yet “departed from him, disqualified… can come back, be restored. We can have the church pray for us that God will take us back. He is faithful and just”. “It is Jesus who is the perfect sacrifice, who lives perfectly without blemish, and it is his blood that can cleanse us from all sin. So why not come if you need to… Why not come to him now while we stand and sing?”.

Supporting point: Self-examination leads to dependence on Christ’s perfect sacrifice and continuing cleansing, and to an invitation for response or restoration.