

Conquering the Wind (Part 2)

by Bayless Conley

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Hello there, Bayless Conley here. I want to welcome you and just say thank you for joining me. If you were with me last week, we talked about three different winds that represent challenges that every believer faces in their life. These winds are spoken about in the New Testament. They're metaphorical and are literally three things that we're all going to have to deal with. Last time, we talked about the wind of doubt. In the book of James, it says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and God will give that wisdom liberally and won't find fault." But the person must ask in faith, nothing doubting.

The person who doubts is like a wave of the sea tossed by the wind, and that person is unstable and double-minded. They won't receive anything they ask from God. The person who doubts and is double-minded won't receive the wisdom they ask for or anything else. We talked about conquering the wind of doubt. Go to our YouTube channel or to our website and listen to that message. I would encourage you to do it. Right now, I want to move to another kind of wind that we will all face as believers, and that is the wind of false doctrine. First, the wind of doubt. We dealt with this last time, but let's launch into this one: the wind of false doctrine. Ephesians 4:11 NKJV, I'm going to read a few verses through verse 16, so listen carefully. It says,

¹¹ And He (speaking about Jesus) Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

Why? Verse 12,

¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³ till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴ that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵ but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head— Christ— ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

He admonishes us to no longer be children who are tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. How do we conquer this wind of false doctrine? First, it's pretty simple, and it ties in with what we shared in the last message somewhat. Read your Bible. Increase your knowledge of the Son of God. Some people are literally carried about with every wind of doctrine. Whatever wind blows into town, they're caught up in it and carried along with it. I've been pastoring at this point in my life for about 42 years, and I've been in ministry for longer than that. I have watched people, the latest and the greatest, the newest shiny objects that's put in front of their eyes, and they latch onto it. Whether it's scriptural or not, they get carried off into extremes. I've seen it happen time and time again.

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The truth is, most of those problems would be cured if people would just read their Bibles. Read the Book. If you know what the Scripture says, you're not going to be carried away with something that is false. It might seem exciting. It might look good, but you're not going to fall for it if you know the truth. Your greatest ally, my friend, is God's Book.

However, some false doctrines are cunningly devised, and they sound very close to the truth. It talked about that in Ephesians. Speaking about these false doctrines, "The trickery of men in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting." Some false doctrines are cunningly crafted. They come alongside the truth, and it sounds very scriptural, or it may be scriptural up to a point, but then when the Scripture turns right, it turns left. Though having a knowledge of Scripture is essential, it's not the only necessary safeguard. It's also imperative to be part of a believing church.

Those verses we just read about in Ephesians speak about the body joined together, not just attending but attached, that you're joined. It speaks of the whole body that is joined together, knit together, and every part is supplying something. It paints the picture of a local church fellowship. There's safety within a worshiping community that you don't have when you are detached. When you have relationship with other believers in a church, people are going to say something if you come up with something that's weird or some kooky doctrine. They're going to question, and they're going to warn you if you begin associating with fringe, unscriptural teaching or with people that are peddling strange doctrine.

One of the first things that a wolf wants to do is to separate you from the flock. That's when you become vulnerable, when you're not gathered together with the rest of the flock. There's safety in the multitude of counselors. The Scripture says in the book of Proverbs, get attached. Get involved in church. It's good to attend, but get involved in a smaller circle of believers. I'm just telling you there is safety. You're not likely to get swept up in some strange doctrine or something that is unscriptural if you've got friends who are willing to challenge you and question you.

It's also important. This is sort of the third thing. Number one is read your Bible, and be familiar with the Scripture. Number two, be part of a church. Number three, it's important to recognize and be submitted to spiritual authority. Those verses we just read from Ephesians begin with Jesus giving different ministry gifts to equip the saints, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the saints and edify the body. Be accountable to leaders in the church.

Listen, I am not talking about some heavy-handed dictatorial type of leadership. Yet there is the inescapable fact that God appoints leaders in church, and He gives them both insight and oversight for the leading of the flock. Listen to these verses from Acts 20:28–29 NKJV. It says,

²⁸ Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock...

Now, Paul's writing to a group of leaders gathered together.

Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God...

Literally, to feed the church of God, to feed them and lead them, is what the shepherd does.

To shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

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As a leader and as a pastor, I have a nose for wolves. God has given me both insight and oversight to shepherd and to lead the flock. The Scripture says this in Hebrews 13:17 NKJV to believers,

¹⁷ Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.

Now, that is a big responsibility. I'm to watch out for people's souls. I deal with doctrinal issues from the pulpit. Things come up sometimes. There's the latest fad; you get a group of people into this thing or into that thing. It may be a truth taken to an extreme, dealing with spiritual warfare or some other thing. Without naming names, I will deal with those issues from the pulpit and give people the truth on those issues. Also, from time to time, I, myself, or other leaders in the church will talk to someone individually about a doctrine that they have latched on to or something that they're embracing, or maybe they begin associating with some people who are into some fringe teaching or fringe type of unscriptural behavior.

We'll deal with people. We have a responsibility to watch out for their souls, but we can only help people who will listen to us. Summing it up, in order to conquer the wind of false doctrine, here's three things. Number one, read your Bible. Become familiar with the truth. Number two, be connected to a good Bible-believing local church. I know I'm talking to people around the world right now, but I bet you there is a good Bible-believing church in your area.

Even if you maybe have to drive farther than you would like, it is worth it to become part of a people where you can be fed the Word of God and watched over by genuine, called, spiritual leaders who love Jesus and love the flock of God. Number three, be submitted and accountable to the leadership that God has placed in the church. Then, you will not be carried off by some strange wind of doctrine. All right, let's talk about another wind that, as believers, we're going to have to face and one that we can conquer. It's the wind of trouble. Matthew 7:24–27 NKJV, Jesus is speaking. He said,

²⁴ "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. ²⁶ "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

We all face storms. They come into every believer's life. We face trouble, and it is just inescapable. It doesn't matter if you're a mature believer or a young believer. We're living in a fallen world. That is, a world that is full of trouble. You may be watching me right now, and you are in the middle of a savage storm in your life. The winds are howling. Maybe the winds are blowing at your marriage, threatening to destroy your marriage and the relationship with the person that you've pledged your life to. Maybe the winds are blowing at your children or at your physical health. Perhaps you're in a full-force gale wind concerning your work. You're being persecuted savagely, or maybe it has to do with your finances. It's just trouble. It comes in all shapes and all sizes. The winds of trouble blow into all of our lives.

Both people in this parable that Jesus told heard the Word. The difference was in the doing. They both heard, but the one that heard and didn't act upon the Word, the trouble destroyed

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them. The one that heard and acted upon the Word, their home stood firm because it was built upon the rock of God's Word. Two people can sit in church and hear the same sermon and get completely different results in their lives. One hears it. Says, "Amen," takes great notes, but doesn't act upon it, while the other immediately puts it into practice.

You can hear a message about the necessity of being generous, being generous-hearted, of honoring God with the first part of your income, and the blessings that are attached with that, and the safety that's attached to that, and you can say, "amen," but go out and never do it. While someone else immediately, it's a revelation, and they put it to practice in their lives, and they reap the results.

It might be a message about bless those who curse you. Do good to those who hate you. Pray for those that spitefully use you and persecute you. Some people hear it and say, "Yes, amen," but then they don't do it. But another person says, "You know what, I don't feel like doing this. This is going to be the hardest thing I've ever done, but I'm going to speak kindly to that person at work who has been so belligerent toward me and who has been so mean to me," and they act upon the Word.

I remember when my wife and I first got married. My wife is a registered nurse. Now, she has kept her license current, but she hasn't worked as a nurse since we began Cottonwood Church in 1983. She's worked full-time at the church ever since that day, and man, what an asset my wife has been. Let me just give a little shout-out to my wife. She would come in, and she developed our entire children's ministry in the beginning. It got to the point where we had 600 children. This is, we're talking 30 years ago.

We had 600 children and hundreds of volunteers. She developed the entire thing, the entire program. She got the curriculum together, and then we had to hire several people to fulfill the role that she was doing. Then, she would move on and develop another area in the church. Grow it, and get volunteers in there. The thing would just explode, and then we'd have to hire several people to take her position and do that. She's just done that throughout the history of the church.

When we were first married, I was working as an assistant pastor at another church. I worked there for two years, serving another man in his vision. Janet worked several days a week as a nurse, and she had this one supervisor who was just mistreating her. She was giving her the worst possible hours, even when her seniority said that she shouldn't be getting this. For some reason, this person just took a dislike to my wife and just gave her the short end of the stick over and over. She was being unkind to her, and Janet would come home, and she'd be so frustrated. I said, "Baby, let's pray."

We would pray for that person. That's what the Scripture says to do: to pray for those that spitefully use you, that persecute you, and to bless those that curse you. We would speak words of blessing over her, and we would pray for that woman and pray for the situation. I'd say, "Look, sweetheart, you need to go in there, and you need to be kind to that person. Retaliate with kindness, and you will inherit a blessing." The Scripture teaches that, to retaliate by blessing, and you will inherit a blessing. So, Janet would go in, and she would be kind. She would speak well of that person and got a little bit under the person's skin, this supervisor, this lady. She's like, "Why are you being so nice to me?"

There came a thing where Janet was actually given these bonuses. They were fairly large amounts, and she said, "Bayless, I don't think I was supposed to get this much of a bonus."

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Then she said, "But I've got the check." I said, "Take it back." She took it back, and the supervisor said, "No, I signed off on that. You keep those bonuses." Janet brought them home. She says, "Still, I just don't feel like this is right. There's some other people that didn't get bonuses like this, and I'm not sure I'm entitled to this." I said, "Okay, take it back. Let your conscience be clear." She went back to that supervisor, and the supervisor said, "Listen, I have signed off on this. I have the authority to do this.

I'm giving you these bonuses. Now take them!" Janet brings them back. She said, "She won't let me do it." I said, "Okay, let's take the money and run." So, we deposited those in the bank, and that supervisor, who was her persecutor, became her greatest advocate. It's because we put the Word into practice, and God turned things around.

I remember there was a lady who called one time, and our church was really small at the time. Her name was Sharon. Sharon called, and I answered the phone. I was the pastor and the secretary. Janet was the bookkeeper, and et cetera, et cetera. The church was small. So I answered the phone, "Hi, Sharon." She says, "Pastor, do we have any elders in the church?" I said, "Well, yes, we do have elders in the church." I said, "I qualify as an elder." I said, "What's going on."

She says, "I'm sick. I have this incredible flu right now. I can't even see straight. I've got this pounding headache. I'm burning up with a fever. I am so sick. I feel like I'm going to pass out. I was just reading in the book of James. It says, 'Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church. Let them come and pray over him, anointing with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall heal the sick. And if he's committed sins, they'll be forgiven him.' Pastor, if you're an elder, I need you to come and anoint me with oil and pray the prayer of faith over me." I said, "I'll be there in 15 minutes."

I got my little bottle of oil, got in the car, went to the house, and I knocked on the door. Sharon answered the door, and she said, "Man, I'm in such pain right now. I've got the worst headache." I said, "Okay, get ready!" We're just standing there in the threshold. I anointed her with oil, prayed for her, and she started shouting. It was an amazing thing. She said, "The headache's gone! The fever's broken!" She started marching around her house, shouting at the top of her lungs, raising her hand, and praising God.

I left her there after worshipping God with her for a while. She's still marching around the house and worshipping God. Well, she heard the Word, and she acted upon it. James said, "Don't just be hearers of the Word but be doers thereof. A hearer and not a doer is self-deceived," James went on to say. I am thinking about if I can share another story with you. Our son Spencer, our youngest son, when he was a little boy, had been watching—we had these videos, just to how old it was—they were like the VHS tapes, and you put this big tape in the machine, and it plays on the TV.

He was watching some kind of Bible cartoon things we had. The particular one that he'd watched was about idolatry. I think it was Gideon who went and destroyed the idol there at his dad's house. I'm pretty sure that's what it was. The whole theme of this particular cartoon was about how we're only to worship God, and we're not to worship idols. I don't know. I think the stars of the thing were a fox and a raccoon or something. It was just a cute little kid thing, but a good Biblical principle. Even in the New Testament, in 1 John, it says, "Beloved, keep yourself from idols." It's the final verse in that book.

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Anyway, Spencer finished the VHS tape, and I think he was maybe four years old at the time, something like that. His brother, Harrison—Spencer, I take it back, might have been five, I don't know. His older brother was seven or eight or something. Anyway, Spencer goes back into their bedroom, and you hear this crash, and something crashes down. We all go back in the room. His older brother, his twin sister, his mother, and I were standing there, and Spencer had this huge grin on his face, and he's holding—Harrison had won this baseball trophy. His team had gotten first place. He was so proud. He had this trophy, first-place trophy, up on his dresser, and now it's broken, and Spencer's holding the broken pieces. He says, "I did it, Dad. I broke the idol."

I tell you, his brother got so mad. "Spencer, you broke my baseball trophy." Janet and I just cracked up. How can you punish him for that? He broke the idol. He was acting on the Word just like Gideon had broken the idol in the Bible story. And we just laughed and laughed and laughed. That's the kind of heart that God is looking for. One that hears the Word and immediately goes out and acts upon it.

Whether that Word has to do with your finances, whether that Word has to do with your marriage, whether that Word has to do with your health, whether that Word has to do with raising your children, whether it has to do with responding to an enemy, whether that Word has to do with attending church, the Scripture says, as we see the day of Christ's return approaching, we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Even much more, we should gather together as we see that day drawing near. That's a Word that you should act upon.

I know there's somebody watching me right now because I didn't plan on saying that. You've had an experience with Jesus, but you're not going to church for whatever reason. You need to get your rear end in church. Get planted in a local church. You need to act upon the Word of God. You need to be a doer of the Word and not just a hearer. If you're going to overcome the winds of trouble that come into life, you got to be a doer of the Word.

Three things in the message that last time and this time we've covered. First of all, there's the wind of doubt. You pray and ask God for wisdom or for something else, and the little voice says, "Well, you're not really believing, or you don't feel any different. God didn't hear you. You better pray again." You get double-minded. "Well, I don't know if God heard me or not. I don't know if God's answering or not."

No, you need to stay steady. Once you pray, it's time to start offering thanks to God and praising Him for the answer. The way that you stay steady, my friend, and conquer the wind of doubt is by getting God's Word implanted in your heart through the act and the art of meditation. You reflect on God's Word. You read it over and over. You feed upon it, and faith is the natural byproduct of the implanted indwelling Word. You can conquer the wind of doubt by planting His Word in your life. Now, that was last week's message.

Then we began today talking about conquering the wind of false doctrine. Listen, winds of false doctrine blow through the church all the time. Don't let it carry you along. Don't be carried along with those winds. Be a Bible lover. Have a love affair with your Bible, number one. Number two, be planted in a local church. Number three, be submitted to spiritual authority. Then, when it comes to the winds of trouble, if we're going to conquer the winds of trouble, you need to hear the Word of God and be a doer of the Word. Purpose in your heart that the moment you understand it, you are going to do it.

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Let me give you something that you can act upon even now. Jesus said, "He that comes to me, I will not turn away." Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. He said, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him wouldn't perish, but would have eternal life." Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ today. Put your trust in Him. The Bible says, "We're saved by grace through faith. Not of works, lest any man should boast."

It's the gift of God, that if you'll believe in your heart, God raised Jesus from the dead, confess Him with your mouth as Lord, you'll be saved. Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins? I'm telling you, He did. He took your place, and He bore the penalty for your sins on Calvary's tree. He shed His precious blood for you to set you free and to give you a new life. If you believe that He was raised from the dead after that great sacrifice, if you're willing to bow your heart to Him and confess Him as Lord, He'll bring you into a relationship with Himself and with the Father; that is called salvation. Why don't you pray with me now Pray it out loud. Speak these words to God. Say,

Oh, God, I come to You now. I believe with all my heart. Go ahead and say it. I believe Jesus is Your Son. I believe He died on the cross for my sins and that He was raised from the dead. Jesus, I confess You now as my Lord.

We'd love to hear from you, my friend. I pray that God would richly bless you. We look forward to seeing you next time. Until then, God's grace to you. Amen.

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