

## John 14:1-3

Sunday 9/4/2011

I thank the Lord that you are continuing strong in the faith, going forward for the Lord. Forward, always; backwards, never. Amen. Let us go forward for the Lord. Don't ever forget it.

A lot of times, allow me to say this, we just arrived back to the United States on Wednesday. My family and I left my family in Indiana. I flew out here. I am going to pick up a vehicle and go back this week to Indiana, and I will be traveling around in the States for a while. It is a blessing to be here.

A lot of times, you probably know this, but a lot of times somebody from outside has to come in and tell you the blessing that you really have. Because a lot of times when you are in the middle of things, you do not really realize what God is doing. Allow me to say that coming from the outside, God is really blessing your church. Things are happening. People are growing. The church is growing.

Don't forget that. Don't forget that you are part of something bigger than yourself. Being a Christian is being part of something that is much bigger than who you are as an individual. So go forward for the Lord, and I encourage you to do that.

I thank the Lord for the opportunity to see family and to see friends. My brother Keith and Shelley are taking care of me while I am here. In fact, my wife, she pretty much sent me without anything. She sent me with the suit coat and the suit pants. She said, "Your brother will have a pair of shoes you can wear, and he will have some shirts, and he will give you everything else." I said, "Come on." I brought nothing. So my brother has got to take care of me the whole time while I am here. Shelley is making me all this good food. Everything is just wonderful while I am here, and I am taking advantage of it while I can.

John chapter number 14, I want to go to the Bible to share a few things. If you have a pen, take it with me, and let us underline a few different things that you might have underlined or that you might not. Note a couple things there in the margin of your Bible. A few different things that I think will be an encouragement to you, whether maybe not now, but in the future, whenever it may be. I hope it would.

John chapter number 14, let us start with verse number one. John chapter number 14, of course, you know the passage of Scripture. There are four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The fourth gospel, the last gospel, the book of John, was written by beloved John. John wrote the book of John, the First, Second, Third John, and then, of course, Revelation. As he comes to the book of John, it is one of the clearest gospels, in my opinion. It starts with creation, goes through, and it shows salvation so clear, and then it goes all the way through. It talks about the life and the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John chapter number 14 through John chapter number 16, the Lord Jesus Christ is confronting what the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost, is going to come. That is going to be the gift. Of course, you and I know it is so confused today. In my neck of the woods there in Argentina, people are so confused who the Holy Spirit really is.

Ephesians 1:13 and Ephesians 4:30 say that the moment that you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, the Holy Spirit enters in, and He dwells, He seals you until the day of redemption. You and I, listen to this, I have the same Holy Spirit, and you have the same Holy Spirit that I have, amen? We all have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As a Christian, we should look forward to growing more and to desiring more of Him to grow and go forward in our life.

John chapter number 14 through John chapter number 16, the Lord is speaking. He is saying, "Hey, fellas, I am getting ready to leave here, but I am going to leave the Holy Spirit with you." He is going to begin to talk about that. But let us go to John chapter number 14 in verse number one. Listen to what the Bible says.

*John 14:1*

*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

Of course, the red letters are talking about Jesus Christ.

*John 14:2*

*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

Imagine with me, if you would, very quickly, the setting here. Jesus Christ is talking to the disciples. Imagine they are sitting around here, and as they are sitting around, Jesus Christ is dealing with them. He is telling them, "Fellas, I am getting ready to leave here, but let me tell you, when I leave, I am going to prepare a place for you, and then I will come back again."

*John 14:3*

*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

Let us pray, and then let us jump into the message this morning.

Father, thank You so much for the opportunity to be here. Thank You for the preacher. Thank You for these wonderful people, Lord, that are growing in You and going forward, being examples in their workplace and their lives. Lord, I ask that something that is said this morning will be of encouragement. Lord, do the work that I cannot do, that is to move and to work in the lives and the hearts of people. Father, I ask that Your Holy Spirit will be present. Lord, I ask that it would convict and it would work and it would do something amazing in our lives, Lord. Begin something, God, so that we can go forward for You. Lord, thank You for saving me. Thank You, God, for beginning a good work in my life. Lord, may I go forward for You, may I love You, and God, may all of us look forward to what You have in store for us. Lord, thank You, and Lord, give me the clear words, and Lord, give us the clear understanding. May we all be awake, may we all understand, and thank You, Lord, for Your goodness. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Let me say just a few things about my family before I dwell here in the Scripture. My wife, as I shared with you, is in Indiana. We arrived on Wednesday. I have my wife and then we have four daughters. My wife is expecting our fifth. Let us see if it is a boy or a girl. Amen. If it is another

girl, I am going for a volleyball team. Amen. If it is a boy, we will not know what to do. My wife is there, and Wednesday she goes, she is a little over four months, and she will go and find out. She is asking the doctor to write it on a piece of paper. She is going to fold it, and when I get back on Thursday, Lord willing, we will open up a piece of paper and we will find out if we are going to have a boy or a girl. At least we know it is a boy or a girl. It is not a cat or a dog. Amen. We are looking forward to that. My wife sends many greetings. We always enjoy coming here. We have been here a few times, and it has been such a blessing and encouragement to us, and we thank the Lord for that.

Now, we will go back to the Scripture here in John chapter number 14. This morning what I want to talk about is very clear. It is very basic. It is something that all of us know. But to be very honest with you, the basic things are the things that many times we need to hear once again. This morning I want to talk to you about the coming of our Savior. The coming of our Savior.

The Bible says a lot of different things, but let us stop for a moment, and let us look around the world that we are at. Of course, you have heard about the earthquake and the tsunami and all these different things that have happened here in the States and all over the world lately. You have heard about the wars and everybody turning their back on Israel and going against them, even the United States getting close. You have heard of all these different things. A lot of prophecy is pointing and showing us one thing.

As we jump into the Scripture here, the Bible divides it up, and I would like to divide it up into three small points, something that you can remember that we can think about. I hope you can write it down, whether on a paper, whether in your Bible, in the margin. But let us talk about the coming of our Savior.

## I. The Truth of His Coming

The first thing that we see here is the truth of His coming. The Bible says in John 14:3, "And if I go and prepare a place, I will come again." We see the promise here, and it is so wonderful, the truth of His coming. The Lord Jesus Christ has promised. He left this world, and one day He has promised He will come again for you and for me.

You remember back in the book of Acts in chapter number 1, of course, chronologically, you would see it a little bit farther, but in Acts chapter number 1, we see that the Lord Jesus Christ, He has risen from the dead. He is now with the disciples. He showed Himself to 500 men, and He showed Himself to different people, to the disciples, and now He is getting ready to prepare, and He is getting ready to leave this world.

In Acts 1:11, as He is standing there with the disciples, the Bible says that He begins to ascend up to heaven, and He is caught with a cloud, and the men, the disciples, begin to look, and I imagine their jaws fall open, they are just looking. As they look there, the Bible says there are two men in white clothing, and they look at them and they say, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." The Bible gives us the truth of His coming. He will come again without a doubt.

Can I tell you there are a lot of theories out there today? There are a lot of thoughts, but it does not matter. It really does matter, but whether you believe which way or which way, the Bible does say that He is coming again. Know that very well.

In Matthew chapter number 24, the Bible speaks to us that as in the days of Noah, one day when nobody is ready, He will come again. If we go on a little bit further in James 5:8, the Bible says:

*James 5:8*

*Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

We see a lot of different things here, but the truth of the matter is, people, listen, listen, listen, listen, something really basic and something that sets the foundation here because we need it as we go farther in the message. But look here, the truth is the Lord Jesus Christ, one day will come back. Can I tell you, when you do realize that, and when we live in that way, it will change the way our habits, our lifestyle, how we live and how we talk and what we do, it should change us. The truth of the matter is, He is coming soon.

I remember when I was a younger man, that I was learning all these different things, and I remember that the moment it hit me, it was like, "The Lord is coming back." I heard that the Lord was coming back, and I began to believe that the Lord was coming back, and I began to try to live in a certain way that the Lord is going to come back anytime.

The Bible goes on to say in the book of 2 Thessalonians, and if I speak in Spanish, if I begin to speak in Spanish, you just grin at me. This is the first time I have spoken in English, I have preached in English for over a year, well I guess it is the last time I was here, a little over a year. So if I say, my wife wrote me a text message this morning, she said, "Praying for you, speaking in English." "Yeah, thanks, I need it, baby." A lot of times I speak in English at the house, and my wife says, "You do not say it like that." I said, "I spoke perfect English." And she said, "Yeah, but you spoke like an Argentine." I said, "I do not care what I spoke like, you understood me." So if I say something really weird, just look at me, give me the benefit of the doubt.

The Bible says that the Lord, His coming draws nigh. It is at hand. 2 Thessalonians 2:2 says that the Bible says He is coming at any moment. He will come, that is the truth, that is something very foundational, that is something very clear.

We know, listen to this, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, the Bible begins to share with us that He is coming back, and then it says that the trumpet will sound, that we will be caught up in the air, and then the Bible says that we will forever be with Him. Listen to this, verse number 18 says:

*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*

*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

*For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

*For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.*

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

*Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

*Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

Knowing that our Lord is coming back, we should encourage one another, we should talk about it, we should think about it, that our Lord is coming back. That is the truth of His coming.

## II. The Time Before His Coming

I want to go a little bit further this morning, and I want to tell you something that, of course, we all know, He is coming back, but let me tell you about the time before He comes back.

Now, how many of you all have a Bible? If you have a Bible, raise your Bible up. Let me see the Bibles. If you do not have Bibles, hit your... no, no, hold your Bibles up. Okay, now point to your Bible one second. This is the truth of His coming. Point to your Bible, this is the truth. Hey, look, if you do not point to your Bible, I will keep standing up here talking like a weirdo. Point to your Bible for crying out loud. There you go. The truth of His coming. Now you can put your Bible down. That is the truth of His coming.

Now we will talk about the time before He comes. Now, if you have a watch on, point to your watch. Do not look at it, just point to it. Amen? Point to your watch, or point to where you should have a watch, or your cell phone, who knows, your mind, I do not know. Point to your watch. That is the time before He comes.

Listen, the truth before He comes, the Bible tells us, the prophets have told us of old, we know the preaching, we know the teaching, that is the truth that He is coming back. We know it, very basic. But the time before He comes back, listen, the time before He comes back is very important.

In Psalms 90:12, the Bible says:

*Psalms 90:12*

*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

You and I should realize that our life, in James 4:14, the Bible says that our life is like a vapor. It appears for a little while, and then it vanishes away. Have you ever blown out a candle, and the smoke rises up, and then it disappears? The Bible says the truth is, that is how your life is. You and I think, "Man, I am Mr. Macho, I can do it all, and I will live forever, and I have got good health, and everything else." I have seen some of the people, man, they are stuck on all the vitamins, and they die before the old junky dies. The truth of the matter is, that we do not know

what is going to come tomorrow, but we can know the Lord of tomorrow, amen? The truth of the matter is, He is coming.

But the time before He comes, the Bible says, in Ephesians 5:16, He says, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." I do not have to tell you, but we live in an evil world. We live in a society that rejects God and goes away, and the Muslims are coming in, and our own president is going backwards, and other things are happening that are rejecting our Lord, who gave us this country. Can I tell you, the time before He comes, listen, it is very short.

The truth is, we all know the foundation here, the truth that He is coming, everybody knows it. In fact, if I asked you, "How many believe Jesus Christ is coming soon?" most of you would say, "Well, I believe it, I have heard it, pastors talked about it, I have read it, of course, we know it." But the time before He comes, it is right around the corner, buddy. You better wake up.

Romans 13:11 says that we, let me read it. Romans 13:11 says that it is now high time that we wake out of our sleep. It is high time that we wake out of, it is not just time, buddy, it is high time. It is time that you and I, there are a lot of Christians sleeping in sin. They are sleeping in apathy of not caring for those that are in your workplace or those that are in your job area, or those that are in the place you study or the place you live or your neighbors, that are not even caring that they are without Christ.

We live in a day of apathy, of people falling asleep in sin, people falling asleep in comfort. We have so much comfort that we almost forget about going to, can I stop for a second? Where I live in Argentina, a lot of people come hours to get on the bus just to come to church. A lot of times we complain and get here late. Okay, I just hit something. Anyway, the point is, a lot of times we are so comfortable that we really do not realize what is going on. And preacher says, "Why do not you come out midweek, sir?" "Come on, man. Two times, are you kidding me?" We are so comfortable, we do not want to go any further.

Listen, but the Bible says, it is time. The truth of His coming, we know He is coming. It is told in the Bible. But the time before He comes, it is right around the corner. We all know it.

The Bible says in Matthew chapter number 24, and if you believe that is the time of the tribulation, then you can go over to 2 Peter. The Bible speaks about as He comes as a thief in the night. You know when the thief comes? When you are not expecting it.

A while back, and many of you prayed for us, and I sure appreciate it. A while back, our family was robbed. Two guys came in the house with guns. In fact, my parents were visiting. Welcome to Argentina, amen? These guys came in with guns, and they held us to the floor, and we gave them everything we had. Anyway, we were all scared. My wife is still getting over different things, and we were all real scared. It happened just a little over a month ago. These guys came in, scared us to death. Of course, my dad was wanting to beat the slop out. My dad is like, "Son, tell me now." And these guys are like, "What did he say?" And I am translating Spanish. I am like, "I am not going to tell you. Shoot me now." I am like, "No, he said he is getting comfortable." He is like, "Oh, okay. Yeah, sure, I will tell you right now."

But these guys came in, they left. Listen to this. We never expected it. They left. The next day, my dad helped me. We put up all these locks. I mean, we have got Fort Knox at my house, buddy. I mean, you are not coming in. I do not care if you are a centipede. You are not getting through that crack of my door. I mean, we put all these locks up. We put lights up, and the other pastor at our church, he came over, and he helped me with the electricity. We put all these lights. It looks like the Chiefs' stadium, man. I mean, you have got a little bird in the middle of the night going, "Tweet, tweet," all the lights come on, boom, boom, boom. I mean, he is dead. We prepared all these different things. I have got the laser gun sitting there. I have got everything ready. "Come in, big boy. I have got a stick, and I am waiting for you."

But can I tell you something? They never came back. Go figure. Years ago, we came home from church, and when we came home from church, our neighbor came across the street, and another came from the side, and he said, "Jeff, we need to talk to you." So I looked at my wife, and I said, "Go on in the house." My wife, of course, is a good, obedient wife. She said, "I am staying here." I said, "Go in the house." She said, "I am not moving." I said, "Stay here with me, honey." Yeah, I know how to get in. She stayed right there, and they said, "Look, Jeff, right before you, right after you left, about 30 minutes after you left, two guys jumped your fence. My daughter was up in the up window, and she saw them, and she yelled, and all they got away with, they got away with a bike and a big bag. We do not know what was in it, but they did not get in your house. They took stuff on the outside of your house."

Man, I was paranoid, scared to death. We walked in that house. I am looking around. James Bond, 007, boom, boom, boom. I am looking around, thinking, "Baby, if they attack me, run." I am looking all around. Man, I am scared to death. Finally, I tell, "Yeah, everything is clear. Come on in, baby, and why do not you go rest?" So she went and laid down, and she got the kids, and I stayed out there. Our couch at that time was right by the door, and I stayed sitting on the couch, and I had a, I do not know, I do not know what it was. I think it was a big old stick, and I stayed sitting there, and I wanted to leave the door open. My wife said, "Come on, go to bed," and I am thinking, "No, no, no, no, I want them to come back. I want to give them a little of my love that I got inside of me, right? Boom, take that, big boy." I wanted these guys to come back, but you know that a thief does not come when you are ready.

Listen, we know the truth that He is coming back, but the time is when you are not expecting it. The time is at any moment, Christians. That is why you and I should be serving the Lord Jesus Christ with our hearts and with our lives now. That is why we should be going forward for God. That is why we should be doing everything that we can now. Why do we always want to make decisions? "I will become faithful later on," or "I will begin to tithe later," or "I will begin to serve God later," or "I will begin to witness to my friends later on," or "I will begin to..." We always want to wait until later, and the devil is the señor, the mister of all the procrastinators. He wants you to wait until tomorrow. But listen, listen. The time before He is coming, it is right now.

Listen, the truth before He is coming, point at your Bible with me, help me. The what? The truth before His coming? Truth. But listen, now what? The time before His coming? Time. There is a

truth that He is coming back. Believe it or not, whether you believe it or not, it does not make any difference. He is still coming.

In Romans 3:3-4, the Bible says:

*Romans 3:3-4*

*For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?*

*God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*

In other words, if you read the context of the scripture like we are supposed to do, if you read the context there, they are saying, "Although the Jews do not believe and although the people say that He is not, it does not matter what they believe. God is still true." They can call Him Allah and they can call Him this and that. They can believe whatever they want, but the truth of the matter is, He is coming back. It does not change the truth just because you say, "Ah, that stuff is for people who just go to church." No, that is the truth. But the time before His coming back, it is right around the corner.

### III. The Task Before His Coming

Let me take you to one more thing. There is a task before His coming back. Now, if you have any hand, right or left, raise one of your hands. Everybody raise your hand. Look, hey, I am stubborn. Raise your stinking hand. Amen? Okay, now move your fingers. These fingers, this hand is to work with. Okay, put your hand out. That is the task. You and I are supposed to be working, using our hands, using our body, using our eyes, using our ears, using our mouth, using everything that we have for the Lord.

In Matthew 16:16-18, the Bible says, Jesus Christ says, "I will build my church." He does not say, "You will build my church." He does not say, "I will build your church." He says, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And then He says, that He will give them the keys, the kingdom of heaven. What in the world am I talking about?

Now, if you go over to 2 Corinthians chapter number 5, the Bible says that He has given us the ministry of reconciliation. Big, long, sophisticated word just for making new. He has given us the ministry. Listen, in 2 Corinthians 5:17, He says that we are a new creature. The moment we accept Jesus Christ, we are a new creature. Old things pass away; behold, all things are become new. He makes us new.

Now, how do I have the ministry of reconciliation? Listen, that means that I must go and talk to somebody, and when I go talk to somebody, the Holy Spirit does the convicting. The Holy Spirit does the work, and that person can be made new because I took him the gospel, the Holy Spirit did the work, and now he accepts Jesus as a savior.

Christian, listen, the task before He comes, listen, the truth, we already know it. The time, it is very soon, He is coming back at any moment. Whether you are ready or not, He is coming back. But listen, the task before He comes, it is time for you and I to get moving. It is time for you and

I to put some things off and to put the list of priorities in our life and say, "God, You should be number one, and here comes my family, and here comes my friends, and here comes my job, and here comes all these things. But God, You must be number one." The task before He comes. You and I must be at work. You and I must be going for the Lord. We must be busy about our Father's business.

When the Lord Jesus Christ began to do miracles and works, they asked Him all kinds of different things that even when He was going to eat, they said, He said, "I have another meat that you know not of." They said, "What?" He said, "My meat is to do the work of Him that sent me." You and I must have that hunger and thirst for the Lord Jesus Christ. Our task is to serve our Savior now, today, not tomorrow, today.

Truly, the Lord wants to use us. Listen, your pastor said a great, very strong statement if you paid attention. I am a missionary. I live in Argentina. I minister in Argentina. But that does not mean that I am any different from you. You are a missionary, but you are a missionary here. Some of us are sent abroad, and some of us are staying here, but we are all missionaries. No, no, no, just Brother Alexander. No, no, no, no, no. You are a missionary. Listen, you are a missionary, but the sad truth is many times we do not all do our job.

The Bible says, "Ye are the salt of the earth." The Bible says, "Ye are the light of the world." The Bible says that we are soldiers, 2 Timothy 2:3-4, that we are soldiers of Jesus Christ. The Bible says in Acts 1:8 that we are His witnesses. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:20 that we are His ambassadors. The Bible says that we are instruments of our Savior.

If He wanted to, He could write in the sky. If He wanted to, He could scream from heaven. He could do the work without you, but He chose to use you, and He chose to use me. Listen, the truth that He is coming, we all know. The time before He is coming, it is very soon. Listen, there is a task. He is coming back soon. Your job and my job, listen, your job and my job is to be busy about our Father's work.

Can I ask you, are you really being an example in your job place? Are we just faking the Christianity there? Christianity is not something we do on Sundays and midweek. It is something we live 24 hours a day. Are we faking what we are doing? Are we just talking the talk, or are we walking the walk? Because we have a task to do.

The story goes that on December 7, 1941, there were two men arming the radar system. As the men armed the radar system, they began to watch, and they saw two little dots there, and they thought, "Oh, well, they are just carriers." The story goes that they just kind of neglected it and said, "It does not matter." You know the story just as well as I do, because of neglecting the responsibility that they had. Japanese came, bombed Pearl Harbor, and a great disaster happened in the United States. Two men. They had a task.

Can I tell you, for every missionary that is sent across the seas, they say there are four or five professionals, and there are many more that help them get there. Can I tell you, everybody has got a part? Can I tell you that there are people here in Missouri? Can I tell you, there are people here in our state? There are people here in our county, in our city that still need the Lord Jesus

Christ. Although pastor knows the Bible, and whoever knows the Bible, God wants to use you to talk to them, because you are the only one with influence in their lives. God wants to use you. The great task.

Look here, Christians. Look, the truth that He is coming. How many of you would say, "Preacher, I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon?" Raise your hand. That is the truth. But listen, listen. There is a time before He comes. And the Bible says, "Redeem time." Days are evil. The Bible says, "Count your days. Number them." The Bible says, "Your life is like a vapor." You better pay attention. Your life is going to go away.

Kids, look. Your age right now, you are going to get bigger, and then you are going to become adolescents, and you are going to become the teenagers, and then you are going to become bigger and bigger, and your family is going to grow, your kids are going to leave your house. Take advantage of time now. The time before He comes. But the task, listen, the task, you and I need to be at work now.

Let me ask you, do not raise your hand. Are you really doing what the Lord wants you to do? The task is that you and I must be at work.

We just came from Argentina on Wednesday. The Lord has blessed in the different guys there. If you are one of the men here, one of the young men or the men that went out and preached the other day, I encourage you, go forward for the Lord. To be real honest, I have been in a lot of different churches. Most pastors will not teach their young people how to preach and do the work of God. Listen, you do not know what you have. Pastor has been a great blessing. You better take advantage. Listen, you better take advantage or you have "dummy" written on your forehead. Let me say it in Spanish, or you are called "estúpido."

Guys, the honest truth is, your pastor is giving his heart and his life and his lungs and his blood, everything he has got to teach people who want to go forward. Anybody, girls, boys, young men, older men, he wants to teach them the word of God so that you can live as a Christian.

I found out a long time ago, it does not matter what the preacher says. It matters what you know and have the conviction in your heart. Because one day you are going to be there on your work site. "Well, pastor said..." "Well, where is your pastor, big boy?" "Uh, let me call him." That does not work.

But listen, the Lord has blessed our ministry in Argentina, and when we left, there is a great group of guys who are now pastoring the different churches and the Bible Institute, the Bible College that are working. You know why? Listen, I remember the first time that I talked to the guy who is the pastor of the main church right now, of Lighthouse, I remember talking to him. I remember going to his house visiting him. His wife visited our church on Kids Day in Argentina, and she said, "You should go visit my husband." I went there. He had all kinds of liquor on his shelves. He talked his way. He lived his life. He said, "Yeah, yeah, you know. I heard about the gospel when I was a kid, but we came to here, and you know, we are doing whatever we want to do." I remember sitting down talking to him. He left the back seat, and he got to the middle, and from the middle, he got a little bit closer and a little bit closer, and he started really desiring.

Pretty soon, he started studying. God began to move in his life. Listen, now he is the pastor, and there are many others that are pastors and that are serving God.

Can I tell you why? Because all of them realize the truth that He is coming. They began to realize that very soon He is coming. So they said there is a task to do. It is not only a preacher's job, and they put their hands to the plow, not looking back. Our desire is to shake the whole country of Argentina with young men who will put their hands to the plow and go forward for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Can I tell you, this city still needs... Hey, man, wouldn't it be great to bust these walls out because we have so many people? Wouldn't it be great that we have to have two... Wouldn't it be great that we have to look for a giant building? Wouldn't it be great that nobody else can come in and pastors are shoved against the wall talking like that, because there is no room? Oh, some of you might want to shove them up anyway. That is not nice. Pray to you, you heard them. I mean, they are laughing. Listen, wouldn't it be great that we had so many people? There are so many people getting saved. There are so many people growing. Wouldn't it be great? Listen, that can happen. That is not a figure of imagination. But it will happen when the Christians realize there is a task to do before His coming. Get busy, Christians. It is time to work.

Father, I pray and I ask. Do Your work and do Your will. Do Your way. Lord, I pray and I beg with all my heart that You would bless this church as You already have, that You continue. God, I pray that these people will go forward for You. May they be used by You. May they go forward for You. A great, simple truth that You are coming back can revolutionize our lives if we allow it. Lord, I pray that it will wake up our desires to serve You.

God, for those that may be here, if there may be somebody here that is not saved, I pray that they would realize soon You are coming back and it is time to really accept You before You do come back. May it be a warning sign for them knowing that You are coming back. For us Christians, Father, may it be a wake-up sign. Saying, "Get up. It is time to work. Get up. It is time to move. Get up. It is time to be faithful. Get up. It is time to start serving. Get up. What are you waiting for?"

Father, I pray and I ask that You bless. God, I ask that You would stir in hearts, God. Lord, the only work that is worth living for, the only life that is worth living for is the life totally and completely given out and sold out to You. God, I pray that would be my story. I pray that would be our story. May we love You. May we serve You. Thank You, Father. Teach us and use us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Pastor: Thank you, Jeff, and I will tell you, that was a great message that he preached today and it is a true message. Years ago there was a song that came out that, it is kind of a cute little song and I am not going to say it for you, but it basically said, "God said it and I believe it and that settled it for me." That was popular with a lot of Christians and a lot of churches. Years ago I heard an old preacher left over from the Philadelphia Church age, take that and he said, "You know what," he talked about the song and he said, "the truth of the matter is God said it, that settled it, it does not make any difference, you believe it or not." And that is so true with the message today that the Lord is coming back.

The devil is going to put every opportunity in your life, he is going to put circumstances in your life to keep you from doing what God wants you to do. You have heard me say it many, many times. You are saved here today, God has something that He wants you to do with your life. If you do not do that then you are not fulfilling what God saved you for. The devil will put everything in your life, the devil will put people in your life. It always amazes me that God's people put so much stock in what people say that do not ever go to church anywhere. It just blows my mind that you think somebody who cares nothing about God, trashes God's people all the time, trashes God and the Word of God and churches all the time and yet you are so stupid that you do not see that that is an implant in your world to keep you from doing what God wants you to do. It blows my mind. The devil will put every circumstance in the world in your life to try to keep you from doing what God wants you to do.

That message is good for me today and for all of us simply because of the next thing I want to talk to you about here. I am always, I am someone who whenever a problem may, or something that looks to me is a problem, something that kind of takes us out of our normal routine, in ministry. I learned over the years that, I never always look at that as a negative thing.

I learned a great lesson studying the Bible one time with Paul after his first missionary trip. On his first missionary trip, he took, they took John Mark with them. John Mark later wrote the Gospel of Mark. John Mark did not work out very well. He got out there and I do not know what happened. He got homesick, but he ran home to mama. Paul was the kind of guy, much like many guys that I know today, that he, he took what he did very seriously. So the next time they want to get a missionary trip together, Barnabas wants to take John Mark again. Give him a second chance. Paul says, "There is no way. He bailed on me last time and left me in a lurch and he is not getting another chance." I understand where Paul is coming from and I also understood where Barnabas was coming from. The Bible says, if you read that passage, that the contention became so, so much between them, that they split and they went their separate ways and Paul took his missionary trip and he took his.

I have looked at that over the years and I thought to myself, there is a situation when sometimes when God wants to do something different, He wants you to change course, He will put something that looks like an adversity, but in reality, if you look past the adversity of it, you see for what it is, really is. When I look, I have heard guys talk about all the time about who was right, who was wrong. I never looked at it that way. I looked at it. God got two missionary trips instead of one. Sometimes God changes things, puts things in our world that disrupt what we are doing a little bit. I really appreciate that.

I wish you would have broken out into Spanish. We had a charismatic last yesterday. We would have had a Baptist speaking in tongues today. I think that would have been wonderful. At least you would have been speaking in the right tongues in the right process and that would have been a thing on it. So that is great. But I did learn a new Spanish word. And I will use that along with Nacho Belgrande. The truth of the matter is when you go to talk about most of them do not speak English anyhow, so I fit right in. I hope I do not use that word he gave me today because I would be afraid what would be on my taco when it came out.

## IV. New Ministry Initiatives: Homeless Outreach

We have been going down to the mission for, I have been associated with a mission since 1970. It opened up for us as an opportunity to really take some guys down there and preach. It has been a good thing. The mission is its own world and we do not even have a clue, most of you do not, of what their problems are with these guys that they work with. They have changed some policies down there and we had a meeting with them last week, John and I. Based on some of the issues they are having with a man down there, they have changed some policies.

At first I thought to myself, and then, I preached a message a couple of weeks ago. Remember the message I preached on charity? God always gets me on my own messages sometimes. I got thinking about that and I thought, this is exactly what Paul was experiencing. God has got something else He wants us to do. I thought to myself, we take 60, 70 people down there and one guy, maybe two or three, get to really do something. Everybody else just stands around. So it forced me into a situation that God got me to kind of look at some things. Because one of the things they are going to do is they are cutting down the volunteers to only 15 people who can go in. Now, they gave us 30 simply because of the fact that, what we have done in the past and they appreciate what we have done. So everybody else gets cut to 15, we get cut to 30, which is half of what we normally take down there.

They said a whole new set of guidelines for us. The only ones that really affect us, really, I will talk about more about them later. We get closer to it. But it is for the ladies. There are no more shorts allowed and no tight clothing and everything has got to be kind of, you know, for the guys that are down there, which is no problem at all.

When I looked at that and I thought about the situation, I thought to myself, I just preached on charity. Charity is the epitome of love, of giving without anything back. And here we are. We are sitting down in the middle of homeless country, 70 of us going down every Sunday and then going out to Culver's afterward, which I am all for and kind of, and we all enjoy it. I enjoy hearing the guys preaching. I thought to myself, God now, with where we are at and what we are trying to do and his message tied right into it today. About being a missionary.

To make a long story short, what I want to do is this. We have a guy in our church, a police officer, Q, and Q and I and Dagle and John kind of took a little exploratory thing last week. Q used to work down there. That was his beat when he was on the street. What I want to do is I want to take the third Sunday is when we go to the mission and I want to designate that as our outreach. We have got hundreds and hundreds of people down there that, and we talked to a lot of them, hundreds and hundreds of people down there that do not have anything. They are living under bridges. They are living on the street.

I want to put together that third Sunday where we kind of split the team into, you will have to have a sign up list for a mission now so we do not get more down there. That is no problem. We will change that out every week. But I want to take the other half of the people and I want to, here is what I want to do on that third Sunday. I want many of you ladies to go buy a loaf of bread. I want you to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and put them back in that loaf for

the weekend. You have got some places that will donate some potato chips or whatever. And then we are going to go buy three or four hundred bottles of water. I already ordered a thousand of those Chick tracts that they use, that are very, very incredible because these people do not have anything. They love to read.

What I want to do, and I used to think that you heard a lot about the homeless camp where there were hundreds of people down there. That is really not true. We found where the places are. In fact, when we were down there that night, we drove down to the bridge and there were six guys sitting on the deal. So I went out and sat down the road and was talking with him, telling him what we wanted to do and telling him where we were from and everything, and we just kind of talked with him and kind of felt out where they were at and they helped us. They said, "Well, here is where most of the people congregate and this is what you want to do." And I said, "What are you guys sitting on the bridge for?" And they said, "Well, we are just hoping that Salvation Army comes down, and maybe bring something to eat. Sometimes they come down here and we just kind of wait and see if they come."

I said, "Okay, I will tell you what. We are going to go check out these places and I really appreciate you helping. We are going to go kind of get it mapped out for so we see where the situations are. And I will tell you what I will do. I will come back here when I am done and if Salvation Army has not, you guys have really helped me. I appreciate this. We just spent all night trying to figure it out. You really helped us." I came back. I said, "If you have not come yet, we will run down to McDonald's and we will get you something to eat. We will bring it back." And they said, "That is really great." So we went out and checked all our areas and we found all of the places where they are at. So we came back and they were still there. In fact, we picked up a few more during that point. So we went up and we got to McDonald's and came back and we talked to him.

What I want to do is basically this. This is not something where you get out of your mind that you are going to, we are going to have to pay our dues down here and learn by what we do right and what we do wrong. There is no question about that. Get it out of your mind. We are going to go out here and we are going to win half of them to Christ the first night we are out there. That is not what this is about. If all we do is just give them some food. If all we do is just earn the right. If we go long term down here and we stay with this, we will build a reputation with these people just like the Salvation Army. Now, the Salvation Army gives them food, but they do not give them the gospel.

If we build, if we do the same thing down here we did with the mission that we build the longevity into this and that we are there, they can count on us on that month. We may have to adjust our hours a little bit, but we take people down there and we split up into three or four groups. I have already got guys that understand Q and Brian Dagle. We can get him to keep bringing his Bible and we get all those things down through there. We just go down and we just, we just have a place where it is a place where your kids can pass out the sandwiches. I am glad your kids are here today. It is something that everybody can do. There is no danger to it. We are not going down and you go into the jungle, the bush under the railroad by induction to beat them out with a bush with shotguns and bird dogs. It is a thing where they are just right there.

I talked to, we met three homeless women that are all down. I cannot even imagine being a woman and being in that scenario. And yet there are things that even you women could talk with them in time. But all I want to do right now is two things.

- 1.) I want to give them something to eat and some water.
- 2.) I want them to know that they can count on us every third Sunday of the month.

Then I want to, I ordered a thousand in two hundred increments of different stories. They love to read. They will pick up anything they can. I want to right now I want to blitz that place with the first time we are down one story. Second time a second story. I just want to get that out to them. All I want to do with us right now is build the relationship that in time. We can come down and we can. There are a couple of facilities down there that we are looking at right now that they are, their budgets have been slashed. They do not have any volunteer chaplains. They do not have anybody to do anything.

You see, we have been so locked into the City Union Mission for so long that we have kind of become just like a little box. We have never even looked outside. We go from there to our car to Culver's. We have never really seen that within a 10 block area. There are other places that do not have anybody. It could develop into a situation where the one guy said, "I would love to have some chaplains come down and be part of this." It may be something that if we just start with what we have and take that third Sunday, we are down there anyhow. I just do not see the point at this. This is what God showed me. Why should 70 of us go down? Three guys do something and the rest of us just stand around along the wall. When all around us there is something to be done.

It is not like a loaf of bread is going to kill anybody. It makes up some peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. You guys have got the contacts wherever you go. You know you can pick up bags of potato chips someplace, a little bag somebody will give them to you and tell you what you are doing. Just we start to build that reservoir and then go down and just try to minister to those people without anybody trying to come on strong or everything and just tell them that who we are, why we are here, earn our right to be down there. Let them understand that we are coming, but it is something that everybody can do. You may not be able to go down, but you can make sandwiches. Bring them in on Sunday morning. We will put them all together. We will divide up into two or three or four teams. When we go down there, each will have a section. We will kind of move around. I will show you how we are going to do it. It is going to be something that we are going to have to work to find to make it work, but it is right there.

I want to designate that third Sunday that we are going down to the mission anyhow that we just, we make that an outreach to the homeless people. Those of us went down to Joplin yesterday after we were done preaching. We drove up and went through the devastation in that town. It has been what, four months that they had that? It looks like the moon. It just absolutely looks like, reminded me of pictures of Hiroshima is what it reminded me of. One road going down the middle and 300 yards on both sides, just absolute carnage all the way through the city.

I thought to myself, you know what? It does not take much for God to take back everything that He has given us. It does not take much for God just to blink His eye. I do not understand why God does what He does. I do not understand all of that. God has a purpose and a reason in it

farther beyond than God just coming down and judging a wicked world. Charlie lost three people in his church. Charlie lost his church and all of those things that go along with it that God has. I am sure, like we learned from the book of Job, we know the three great concepts of Job.

- 1.) God is enough to get you through it.
- 2.) God will always make you better when you go through the thing after you are through it than when before you went in.
- 3.) The devil always tries to break you with the very thing that God will make you with.

That is exactly what we have got to look at. We have got to see now what we have had. The abundance that God has given us. Let us just get out of our stereotype mode a little bit. Recognize when God throws us a curve ball showing us that maybe this is what I want you to move into. Just take our time. Let us develop this. Let us see where it goes. In time, I think we could have an absolute ministry that would take up that whole Sunday afternoon that we could just give charity to others. I think that is a good thing.

I will keep you posted on that. This is the first Sunday in the month. We have got this week and next week and then the following week is when we will go. We will have it pretty much put together by then. We will talk to you how we are going to do it. It is not one of those things that really I want to take 300 people down to do. That would probably defeat our purpose of not telling you this. So if you have not cared about the mission or cared about anything that now you suddenly start caring, I am talking to the people who have already been faithful. It is a thing where if you want to get into it, that is fine. But we are going to be limited in what we do with the mission. So we are going to begin to develop this and take it from there. So I will keep you posted on that. I want you to pray about that. But that is where we are going to go. We might as well. We have already taken that Sunday. We might as well go ahead and do something with it that will benefit it. We will make that our outreach Sunday for the homeless folks.

## V. New Ministry Initiatives: Children's Outreach

Then the second thing I want to talk about, and we have been talking about this. This is something that you do know. We have been talking about the new ministry we are going to start with families of shocking kids to Christ and the drawing and all of that. I had you sign up. I have now put you into three different teams. You should know today what team you are on. Pam Busquette is sick today. So you may not know, all of you may not know what team you are on with that. But that will take care of itself pretty quickly here. We will get everything going with that. But you already will be contacted. We will have to save everybody's time. We will have a lot of, we will have some meetings to get that going.

The only thing that I want you to do is when you are contacted by your team captain, we are going to get t-shirts for everybody, your children. This is something that the job here is going to be. It is a ministry to children and their parents where we have as many as, 30, 40 parents and their kids. Mike did his chalk talk here so you could see what it is all about. They are going to be working with all of the home school families. They are always looking for things. I think it is something that is going to really, really, really, really go from just the feedback. We have kind of

kept the brakes on it so it did not get out of the gate before we were ready. But there are going to be a lot, a lot of people that want to have this.

I look at it for your children to be able to go sit in with the other children, help Mike pass out the coloring books and be part of that, answer his questions and be part of the ministry. For you as adults, not only to help with the kids and help them what they need, but to intermingle with the parents. A lot of these parents do not have a church. A lot of these parents are dissatisfied with their church. When somebody sees that you are reaching out to their kids and you get to talk about what God has done here and what He is doing here, it will be a great outreach. So those teams are pretty well set right now. We can develop and add that, whatever we have got to do. But those are the two things I wanted to tell you.

I go back to what Jeff said. And that is because we are missionaries. When Jeff went to Argentina, he had a plan. He knew what he wanted to do. I am sure if he would stand up here and tell us, he realized that probably when he got there, a lot of the things he wanted to do, he had to change to get done because it was not going to work. You see, that is what God does. Do not ever confuse the burden that God puts in your heart with the way that God is going to get it done. When I first got into the ministry, I had grandioso ideas, how this thing was going to work. None of those things worked out. But it was the desire and the burden and the fire that God put in my heart. When that is there, it does not matter how God changes the scenario. You learn to roll with the punches and you learn to see what God is doing and God will thread His way through whatever circumstances are to get the job done. That is what He has had to do.

He has got a great work down there starting churches. I have known guys that were in the mission field. I have been in this business 40 years. I know guys been in the mission field 10 times longer than him. It has not got a 10th done when he has gotten done and started building churches. So this is why I want to be part of his work. This is why I want him to be here. This is why we want to help him whenever we can. And we do on a regular basis every time he is here. It is something that I want him to know that our church is behind him in ministry. But that is the way it works when God does things. That is why you always have got to be flexible and adaptable. You have got to be compatible with what God tries to do. That is where we are at. I think that is probably the greatest single asset of our church is that, nobody gets uptight about much. We just, we just have learned that when God does something, we have got to follow how He does it.

So pray about those things. I want to keep you posted on that on the outreach Sunday. We will be talking about it more. If we can just get some folks to bring some food in that day and bring it in that morning or bring it that afternoon when you come. We will hook up and we will, we will have a meeting together. We will find out what we are going to do and how we are going to do it. I will have it all worked out at that point. Then we will go down and see what we have got. Our other team will go down to the mission and you can change off every other month if you want. It does not matter. But we will just continue to do what God has done. We are just going to try to expand it that we can get out there and do what we need to do. So we will leave it at that. Again, Jeff, thank you. I want to take your family out and all your friends out to you. You are not always friends. Okay. Thank you.