

Psalms 127:1; John 1:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:8; 1
Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 5:1; 1 Corinthians
3:10; Hebrews 4:12-13; Matthew 25:21; Matthew
26:26

Sunday 8/23/2015

I. The Church's Anniversary and Growth

Again, I want to take this moment to welcome you to be here today as our guests and all of our folks too. As I've already said, today is a special day for our church family. It's our anniversary Sunday. Several years ago, my family and I started with 15 people. We met in our kitchen in our home. Pastor Whalen, who since went on to be with the Lord, was the pastor at Lighthouse Baptist Church at that particular point in time. He sponsored us and sent us out, and he preached our first message there in our kitchen, and some of you were there that day when we did that.

I love today because it gives us a chance to stop and to look and to thank God for what He has done for us and how far that we have come. We get to spend the whole day together from this morning to this afternoon and just have some great times. It's easy with all that we do and all that we're involved in, and all the different ministries and all the different things that we do, it's easy to forget all that God has done that has gotten us here. Last week when I talked out of Matthew 15 about prayer, I told you that prayer was one of the three infirmities that's listed in the Bible that we have to be careful of. One of the other infirmities is to forget what God has done for you.

The growth process of any church, most people, they don't even pay attention to it, probably because most churches don't grow. The growth process of any church is an incredible process to watch and to learn from. Some days some of you young men will be in the ministry, and it's invaluable right now that you watch and see not only what God does but how He does it. In my early years, when God was still forming up in my life what He wanted me to do, I had a church and I had a pastor who really became my example of how to build a New Testament local church. By watching and being involved in just about everything that I could, I realized how important that church was as a training ground for me. I learned to take the things that I saw them do that I knew that would work for me. I also knew that there were things that they did that, because of my personality, probably wouldn't work. I had the ability to get the best of both worlds, and I did the things that I could do, all the things that I could get involved in. I wanted to allow God the opportunity to take what I've learned and develop me and help me to get where God wanted me to be. Much like in the Bible you find Paul and Timothy, and much like you find here with you and I and many of the ones that we work with here.

We all know that in the Bible, the model church for us that we should pattern our church after is the church at Antioch. They're first called Christians at Antioch in Acts 11, and by the time you get to Acts 13, it's very clear that that church is really doing the work, and it sets for us the model for what we need to be as a church. Paul and Timothy are our model for being a pastor and

training young men. Paul not only taught and trained Timothy, but Philemon and Titus were also people that he won to Christ, young men that he trained. Based on that model, it's clear that churches will grow just like individual Christians do, and it's important to understand that.

Churches will grow in numerical growth. They'll grow in numbers, and as an individual Christian grows, he'll reproduce himself, he should, in other people, and his life will be connected with people and numbers. Yet also there's a spiritual maturity and inner growth that has to take place. We live in a day and age today with churches where pastors are just satisfied with growing to the numbers. The idea today of a successful church is a very large church with four, five, six, seven thousand people in it. I learned a long time ago that just because you get a crowd does not mean you're a New Testament local church. The key is to grow in spiritual maturity as an individual. When a person will do that in a church, it will produce a strong base of men and women who will give a depth to the church. As the base grows, then the numbers grow. That's really the philosophy that I've always followed, and I always believe that this church will only grow up this way as it grows out this way, and that is building men and women in the understanding of the Word of God.

Churches, just like Christians, and Christians live, it's always good to stop. This is what I want to do today. It's always good to stop and to step back and look at where we've come from, where we're at today, and where we want to go in the future. I think that is incredible. So let's take a moment and ask God's blessing on the service today and our time today, and let's ask Him to bless us.

Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We thank you for today. We thank you for our church. I personally thank you for the men and the women in this church that you have given me that are my co-laborers. Many of them come in with busted marriages, busted lives. Many have come in with problems that seemed insurmountable. Yet we know that the Word of God and the power of God and the job of a New Testament local church is to put broken things back together. Where the world breaks them, the church fixes them. Help us, Father, and we thank you for that and for the great host of men and women that you put into this church who today love you, love that book, that their marriages are back together, their families are back together. We give all that credit and honor and glory to you. So bless us today. Help us to stop, to remember, to look back at what you've done. We'll be always careful to give you the honor and the glory and the praise. In Jesus' name, for the sake we ask it, amen.

II. The Foundation of a Great Church

When it comes to building a New Testament church, my favorite verse is found in Psalms 127:1. It's a simple verse. It says:

Psalms 127:1

Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

To me, it makes the Christian life, being a pastor, building a church, real simple. When somebody starts to build a church, it's either the Lord is going to build it or the man's going to build it. It's just that simple. All my life I grew up understanding the concept of a difference between a work for God and a work of God. Many churches are a work for God, but there's not many churches today that are a work of God. That's so crucial.

Ask yourself today, as we examine everything, what really makes a great church? Is it a huge complex of buildings that get so large that in most cases today, they don't even call it a church anymore? Now it's a campus. How about a full facility church? Has a restaurant, coffee shop, McDonald's. It's hard for me to argue with that, so I'll move right on with that. But some of them have fitness centers in them now. I've even seen some that in their coffee shops during the evening service or even the Sunday morning service, you can go in there and kind of like a Christian nightclub atmosphere with a band playing and watch the service while you have your latte on a big screen TV.

Maybe it's the services now. Maybe that makes a great church. Now you can take your pick. You can go to most churches and at 9 o'clock they'll have a contemporary service. That means it's contemporary. You go back at 10 o'clock and they have a traditional service. That means it's like a throwback to the old days when you did some preaching. Then you can go at the next hour and you can go to the modern service, and that's where everything now is just like the world, that you feel comfortable. Maybe this makes a great church. If you don't want to get up on Sunday morning to go to church, now churches have church service on Saturday night so you can sleep in. I mean, how much better can it get? Praise the Lord. Now all your physical needs, your family needs are met in one place, kind of like a Christian community so to speak.

Let me just say this before I get going here. What your family needs, whether you know it or not, Dad, Mom, what your family needs is the Bible. That's what you need. You need Bible teaching. You need good solid preaching and teaching, good solid Bible doctrine. Going to a church like Worlds of Fun will not, even though it may be a good deal, it will never prepare you or your family for what's waiting for them in that world out there.

As far as I'm concerned, what makes a church a great church is simply one thing: it's the people. People who have dedicated themselves to the things of God. People who have caught the vision of why God really saved them. People who have overcome the things in this world that the devil has thrown into your life and my life to keep us from ever realizing what God saved us for. When you find a church that's filled with people like that, people who have banded together, the concept of their families ministering together, families working through the church, doing ministry together, now you've found a great church. Because a great church isn't great because of the pastor. It isn't great because of some great building. What makes it great is the people that are in it that fall in love with the Lord Jesus Christ through the Word of God.

But I've got to also say there's a process in people's lives to get there. It just doesn't happen. You just don't put up a church sign out front and say, "This is the church now," and suddenly all good people come to that. That would be a lot easier if it did, but it doesn't work that way. There has to be a process to get people there. That process is what I want to talk to you about many times.

I understand the way I am. I understand some of the things that I say. I get it many times because of what I say and how I say it. When it comes to the ministry, I don't know anything else in life. I really don't. When I'm driving my car and the car stops, I'm ready to sell it. I took my lawnmower one time and the guy said, "You had a short circuit." I said, "Well, how much to make it longer?" I have no idea about many things in life. There's only one thing I understand: preaching, churches, and preachers. I've been in it over 40 some years. Because that's what I know and I am, I pull no punches when it comes to churches or preachers. I think that we as preachers have a standard we need to hold to, and it's not one standard for me and another standard for another. It's the same standard for everybody.

People get the idea sometimes, the way I say things, and I get it. I understand that I think that our church is the only church that's really ever doing anything for the Lord. That's not true at all. It really isn't. There are some good churches out there, and there are men doing a great job for the Lord. But the problem is they're hard to find today. I'm not responsible for a child of God seeing in our church something that he may not see in another church. That's not my fault. I've told you many, many times, I'm old school. All this modern stuff doesn't fly with me. I was raised in Christianity when it still had some power and punch to it. I was raised in churches and heard the last of the great Philadelphian preachers that are all dead now, who when they preached a message on hell, they preached it so hot you could feel the heat. They didn't sit on a stool in a cardigan sweater and talk about things that don't matter. They got down in your face so much, your boots were stuck on the end of your lip.

But there are people still out there today that like that. It doesn't matter how bad this world gets liberalized and all the things that go on. There's always going to be a remnant of people who want it the way God says it's supposed to be. In Christianity, it doesn't matter how bad the churches get or how liberal the preachers get. What matters is that there's always going to be people out there who want the Bible and believe the Bible and understand that that's what they need. As I said, I can't take any credit for it whatsoever, but there's something special going on here. I mean, there just is.

I mean, I got Craig and his wife, they're up there in Oregon, the state of Oregon, couldn't find a church up there anywhere. After two or three, four years, got onto the website, moved his whole family from Oregon to come to our church. We got Rip over here. Was it Minneapolis that you came down from, hon? Got on the website, and I'm not sure Kevin didn't have a little bit to do with that, but God uses even Kevin. Their family, who was audibly against her getting into the Bible, came down here because she found a church that taught the Bible. We got Lauren and Barb back here. I don't know where they're at, my dear friends. Lived in Burlington, Iowa. Met them 20 some years ago when I preached up there. No church to find. The church they were in was dead. Nobody doing anything. Picked up his wife, left his kids and his grandkids all to come down here to join this church and now praying that God will bring the kids down here. Larry and Gail. Washington State can't get moved here or they would. So what did they do? They took a truck driving school, got a big rig, and now they drive a truck across the country picking up loads so they can come through Kansas City to come to church like one time out of the month or twice out of the month whenever they can get a load going this way.

I've known people that wouldn't drive 20 miles to come to a church. We got the Millers here from Lincoln, our dear friends. That's Lincoln, Nebraska. Three hours as the crow flies. Shoot the crow and it's four hours. We got the Heaton family today also from Lincoln. We got the Smiths from Wichita, four and a half hours. Lincoln and Windy are sitting in the back someplace every Sunday. They live in Clinton, Missouri. Every Sunday they drive an hour and a half one way to come to church. Now don't blame me because these people haven't got the good sense to find a watered down church where they're at and be satisfied. And don't blame them for wanting something more from a church and a pastor. I get a lot of flack a lot of times and so do you. I'm only going to say this once and I'm not boasting. If I am, I'm boasting in the Lord. I probably shouldn't say this, but I feel the spirit so I'm going to say it. Forgive me. Show me another church in this city where somebody's moving 1,800 miles across the country to go to. I'm done. Every head bound, every eye closed, we're going to give the invitation.

III. The Anatomy of a Church

There's an anatomy of a church, and most people don't ever see it or realize it. It's like the anatomy of the human body. We have a doctor here today, and you're going to have to forgive me. I'm probably not going to have this right, and you can correct me afterwards. But I think there's a nervous system. There's a skeleton system. There's a reproductive system, and there's a digestive system. When you study those individually and all by the other things that go along, you find out how the human body works. This anatomy concept is a really good way to measure a church on its worth. It's like a spiritual litmus test. In this anatomy, in this makeup, you'll find four things that will give you the spiritual level of any church. You might say these are quite invaluable. Every pastor worth his salt should have these four areas and be working on these four areas in his church. When 12 years ago, my family and I started this work and God began to bring people to us, it was these four goals that I had in mind from day one. I built this church on these four areas because these four things will either make or break a church. If you want a good church, then look for these four areas to be in the inner workings of this church, of a church. If these areas are working, these four areas, pretty much everything else takes care of itself.

Now, I need to say this. This is something that you don't get out of a book. This is something you don't get taught in Bible college. This is something that gets handed down from generation to generation of old school preachers who knew how to preach, who knew their Bible, and based on that, knew how to build a New Testament church. Paul made a reference to it in 2 Timothy 2:2 when he says, "The things that I've committed unto you, to Timothy, the same you take and commit to faithful men." It's a long unbroken line, a Bible truth about ministry, building churches, dealing with people that gets passed down from generation to generation of young preachers. When that line gets broke as it is today, this is where you have some problems.

Let's look at them. Let's get some of this stuff down. Let me just say this. I got to paraphrase a lot of things I'm saying with something else. Now let me say that there is no such thing as a perfect church. Get that out of your mind. There's no such thing as a perfect Christian. Get that out of your mind. You see, churches are made up of imperfect people, so you're never going to have a perfect church. I had a lady one time, she said, "Well, I've been to your church a couple of

times," and she says, "I like a lot of things, but a couple of things I don't like." And she says, "I'm on a quest to find the perfect church." I said, "Well, hon, I can appreciate that, but let me give you a little advice. When you find that perfect church, don't join it, because it won't be perfect anymore." There's no such thing as a perfect church, because we're imperfect people. So you can't have that. But I want to tell you, there's some things that you look for, these four areas. These four areas, honestly, will get you as close as you can get you to being what God wants you to be.

IV. Four Essential Areas of a Church

You probably already guessed this one. The first thing you might have guessed is make sure you got the right Bible. You believe the King James Bible is the absolute perfect word of God here, and make no apology for it. We don't beat anybody up for having something else. I don't care. I mean, I've had people come here that had another Bible, and they understood that. I said, "Hey, stay with what you got till God shows you." I don't have a problem with it. But we take a stand on that, and I believe that's the right Bible.

It's hard to believe today that you can have a church without a Bible. But you know, you go to Europe, and you have churches without God. In America, we say, "Well, what church do you go to?" "I go to this Baptist church or this Baptist church." I'll just pick on Baptist today. And you'll say, "Well, does your church teach the King James Bible?" And it's either yes or no. You go to Europe. You know what the question is? The question is not, "Do you believe the Bible?" The question is, "Does your pastor, is he an atheist, or does he believe in God?" Now, can you even grab the concept of having a church where the pastor is an atheist, and he does not believe in the existence of God? And yet he's a pastor in a church with people that teaches them something? That's the way it is in Europe. I need to say this. America tends to run about 20 years behind what goes on in Europe. And it's coming this way. As far as I'm concerned, Bible says in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God. I don't see any difference between a church over there that says there is no God, and you don't have a God, and a church over here that says you have no true Bible. That's just me. Part of my charm, though, but that's just me.

I've given you before the seven things that you lose when you lose your Bible. We're not going to go through them today. I just finished a series on 18 steps based on a Supreme Court decision that brought America down to where she's at today from the point where America was started when she believed the Bible. I mentioned last week in a message, no book, no God, no relationship. But I've got to say this, just having the right Bible is not any guarantee that the church will be a good one. I want to tell you something. There are some really weird churches out there and Christians out there that have the right Bible, yet they're about as screwed up and messed up as you could ever hope to be. I know some pastors and churches who believe every word of that King James Bible, and yet they're absolutely worthless when it comes to doing anything for God.

I'll tell you, there are churches that you go to today who believe what we believe in the Bible. If you show up with the wrong clothes on, they'll ask you to go home. I had a pastor friend that

won my time that got kids here, so I won't say what he said. But he's in a pulpit preaching of 5,000 people and called every woman in a place that was wearing slacks and not wearing a dress, a dirty legged, and I'm not going to tell you what the last word was. In public. I'd like to go to his church. You ever go down, come out of downtown Kansas City, coming up I-70? There's a big billboard there. You ever see it? It says, "If you've been married and divorced, and now you're remarried, you're living in sin, you're living in adultery, and you're going to burn in hell." How'd you like to go to that church? There's a church in Belton. I know the guy. He believes in predestination. You know what that is. Jesus loves me. Sorry about you. You know how that thing goes. He actually tells his people. He preached a baby's funeral a while back, a couple of years ago, of a baby that died. Now we know that the Bible says a baby's under the blood. If that baby dies, free ticket to heaven. But when you believe in predestination, you can't do that because that messes up Calvin's whole theology. So he told the parents that when a baby dies, that baby may be in hell if he's not part of the chosen ones. Now how'd you like to deal with a couple grieving with their baby with that theology? Weird man. He believes the King James Bible is the Word of God.

I've seen parents that struggle with their kids that get into drinking, they get into alcohol, and they struggle with that and get burdened over that. And yet the kids went to church and the church said, "It's okay to social drink as long as you're not overindulged." I'm telling you. So you see, just having the right Bible is not enough. You need to have to follow it in all that you do. You have to make sure you're building your church on the New Testament model, the book of Antioch.

This number two is the key to it all as far as I'm concerned. Number three and four when we get to them will be in direct relationship to this one. This one depends on what you do with number one, the Bible. Use it or abuse it. But the importance of balance. A while back when we were in the book of Proverbs 11:1, I gave you, we preached on it, "A false balance is an abomination in the sight of the Lord: but a just weight is his delight." When it comes to a church teaching the Bible, you have to have a balance. That Bible has a doctrinal application, an inspirational application, an historical application. Each one deals to something differently. When you lay it out and teach it, you got to balance it out. Everything I try to give you, I try to show you the balance in it no matter what it may be. A church needs a balance in dealing with real people and real situations in life.

In John 1:17, you find again in my estimation the key verse for dealing with people and dealing with a ministry. It says in John 1:17:

John 1:17

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

That's a great verse. When the Lord came down, we know from Colossians 2 and other places in the Bible, that he did away with the law. When he did away with the law, he entered the Old Testament, we entered into the New Testament, and he established a New Testament on these two biblical principles, grace and truth. Now truth will be the absolute principle of the Word of God.

It'll be the law of God's Word. But grace will be your ability and my ability once we have truth. Grace is the ability to use that truth in any given situation.

You're going to find that some churches have truth, but they have no grace. You're going to find some churches will have grace, but they have no truth. And then you're going to find some churches will have neither grace nor truth. But a real biblical church will have both in a biblical balance. You know in life and dealing with people when you have truth and you stand on that truth, you realize that sometimes you can be so right in something, but without grace you become wrong. Many of God's people can't get that. It's the difference between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law.

Last week in Matthew 15 we talked about the woman that tried to get her prayer answered. Jesus said the first time he refused her, "Hey, you're a Gentile, I am not coming to the Gentiles, I've come to Israel." Theologically he's correct. By the letter of the law he was absolutely right, but he gave her grace and he gave her what she needed. I understand sometimes I get criticized with people because I'll give somebody too many chances I guess. I understand that, it's called long suffering in the Bible. I understand it, but I understand the difference between grace and truth.

Let me give you an example. In Missouri the speed limit in most cases on the freeway, 70 miles an hour. Now that's the law. See, that's the truth. See them, 70 miles an hour as you go down the freeway. But you know what, a highway patrolman with his radar, when you go by, if you're doing 76, 77, 78, 79, he's going to let you go. You see, the law is 70. But the spirit of law he says, "Ah, he's only doing 78, let him go." See how it works? If you were driving down I-70 and you were going 79 miles an hour, had your cruise console set on, had your latte next to you there, I need to get one of them sometime and try. I usually take it all down even though what it is. But anyway, you're driving down there and next thing you know you got these red lights behind you and you pull over and you say, "Oh man." And he walks up beside you and he says, looks in the window and says, "Can I see your driver's license and registration?" And you say, "Yes sir," you give it to him. And he says, "You know what," he says, "I was just kind of going the other way and my radar clocked over here and you were doing 79 mile an hour and our speed limit is 70. But you know what, no traffic on the road, early in the morning, I'm just gonna give you a verbal warning because I'll give you eight or nine miles over but if you cross over that, I'm gonna have to give you a ticket. So watch your speed, have a nice day, see you later." You'd be thrilled. Now you would be telling everybody. You know if you're a wife, if you got a ticket, you wouldn't tell your husband, you'd work it out to a lawyer to get it fixed. He'd never know about it. But in a case like that, you're gonna tell him. You're gonna be so happy that the state highway patrol, the law said 70 but grace gave you nine miles over. Now you're happy about that but when a Christian and brother violates the law but we give them grace, why do you get upset at that? I've never understood things like that. I just never have.

I might not like what some people do but you have to give them time to change. I get it, somebody says, "Well how long?" I don't know. I guess, here's what I can tell you. It took me 19 years to change. How's that for you? Is there anybody here that when your first time you heard God, and maybe there is, praise the Lord, oh we don't have to raise your hand. But the first time you ever heard about God, you just sold it all, threw it all away and followed Him. Every one of

us almost without exception had to go through a process to get to that point. A church needs to take people where they find them. And we know what you do when you find them and they don't look pretty and they don't do this and they got some issues, they got some problems. And maybe they're really messed up. You give them the same chance that God gave you. You may screw up 20 times in your life, 30 times, 40 times. But the job of this church and my job as the pastor to always be there to help you when you want to do what's right. And the model is simply just doing for others what God has done for us.

Now I say that and as anything else there's always an exception to it. Joe the heater brought up a great thing in Bible study Thursday night and there are exceptions to that. There are some people that you just got to say, "Hey you know what, nothing here for you." I don't have to get into all that today but there's some things that people get to that are out there that just, you know, you got to, there's always an exception to it. But that's such a few people in the mass of people who are struggling today.

Now I know what you say. You say, "Well be it Bob, you're going to, you know, you do that and people are going to burn you, they're going to use you, they're going to take advantage of you." No, you're wrong. I've in 40 years plus of ministry, listen to me now, I have never gotten burned. You know why? They don't burn me. You burn the Lord. You forgot, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain and build it." This isn't my church, this is His church. I work for Him. I don't take it personal because He's the one that's in charge. Because whatever issue you have, it's between you and me, it's between you and Him. When you get yourself so in it and get your, and lose your perspective, then you start taking it personal. I never take it personal. You know why? Whatever your issue is today, it isn't with me, it's with Him. That leaves me free to be able to help you without any personal strings attached to it.

I'll tell you something else. If sometimes it happens, if you blame me, that's okay. You know why that's okay? Because at the cross of Calvary, He took all my blame on Him, on me. If He can do that for me there, we ought to be able to do it for Him here. Amen? I would think that would just work.

You know, I'll tell you, we get the wrong concept about being a pastor. I hear all the time, "Well, He's such a good shepherd." "Well, He, you know, a pastor, He shepherds this flock." I pay attention to things in the Bible. You know in the Bible, the pastor's never called a shepherd. I mean, it's only mentioned three times outside of the Gospels, in Hebrews 13:20, 1 Peter 2:25, and 1 Peter 5:4, and in every case, it's the Lord Jesus Christ. He's the shepherd. I'm not the shepherd. He's the shepherd. But I understand you like that. You like the idea, "Oh, I'm the shepherd. This is my flock." "Yes. What are you doing?" "Oh, I'm just looking at my flock. I'm the shepherd." It's kind of an elevated thing, you know. "Oh, He's the shepherd." "Oh, yes, I'm the shepherd." Mm-hmm. It's got the sandals on and the big crooks. Stick here to prove it. I'm the shepherd. You know what? A pastor is not a shepherd. I'm not a shepherd. You know what I am? I'm just an old Gentile dog, saved just like you. And being a Gentile dog, getting saved, if He's the shepherd, you know what that makes me? And you're the flock? That just makes me a sheepdog. That's all I am.

Have you ever seen a sheepdog work? I was out in Colorado one time at a ranch, I mean like 50 million acres. We had to drive, we had to take a horse two days to get to the other side of the property. It was incredible. And I'd ride along when they feed the sheep out there and they'd drop the food off. There was four sheepdogs on that cart back there with me, just sitting there like nice and he'd look back and he'd say, "Go now." Both four dogs were off that. They were circling those sheep, one here, one here, one here, one here. They were looking all around for the coyotes and the wolves or whoever what else out there. And those sheep, now when it's time to move those sheep back in, they started barking. And when the sheep would just naturally start moving to them and would kind of stay on the thing and bark, they'd move this direction. You get a couple sheep over here that wouldn't move and they'd bark. You know what he does then? He goes by and he starts nipping at their back legs and they start moving. It doesn't hurt them, he's just moving them along.

Last Thanksgiving, a little border collie adopted us, showed up on her front porch, been there ever since we adopted it and took it in. Her name is Izzy. She's a border collie. There are some unsaved people in this church that think she's part husky. That's not true. She is all border collie. We got this little dog named Otis. Otis is a Bajan. You know what a Bajan is? That's a rat with a genetic defect. Cutest little thing you ever saw in your life. Otis is white and about that big. Izzy thinks he's a sheep. When they go up, Izzy starts to herd her. Bark bite her back legs. The other day it came up and he had her picked up by the tail and was walking her someplace. You see, I'm not the shepherd. I'm just an old Gentile dog saved by grace, but God allowed me to be pastor. I'm not the shepherd. I'm just a sheep dog. When I see you start to stray, I bark. When I move you along a little bit and you don't come, yeah, I'll get up here and I'll nip at your heels. Well, I don't know where we get some of the concepts that we have today, but balance is the key.

The third thing you want to look for in a church, any church. A church can never have any politics in its nature. Politics will always set up a caste system. Some people on the top, everybody else on the bottom and it leads to corruption. People getting positioned because of who they are and not what they are. In the 1950s when the J. Frank Norris crowd split that started all the fundamental churches, down in Springfield, Missouri, they started in about the 1950s what was called the Baptist Bible Fellowship, lovingly known as the BBF. It was a fellowship of all of these pastors of all of these churches that wanted to stay true to the Bible. They wouldn't have a convention like the old Southern Baptist. They didn't want that. They wanted a loose fellowship of pastors who all believed the same thing to encourage each other. I get it. In 1970 it was a complete total mess. It was a political organization who had dumped the Bible. They now had a president, a vice president, a board of directors, all voted in, all run by pastors and it became a seat of power. And the pastor who wanted the most power wanted to be known as the president of the BBF. And so when election times come he would get all his buddies to vote for him and the other guy would get all his buddies to vote for him and he'd be behind the scenes saying, "Well, he's this and he's that, he couldn't do this and he's not good," just like the Democrats in the Republicans. Somebody wanted to be king of the hill.

In churches today, pastors will play politics. They'll appoint deacons as favors. They'll put yes men in powerful positions. They'll put men in that they know they can control because when they

want to pass something and get it through, they want the people there that'll vote for it, then it's always you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. It's always that good old boy's club. The deacons become power brokers. For 20, for 30 years they have a base of power in a church where they run everything. They run everybody. And they have absolutely no connection to the deacons in the book of Acts. The church becomes a political deal just like the republics and the democrats. Powerful on top and all the masses on the bottom. People of wealth, people of stature are catered to by the pastor because of their wealth, because of who they are. I've seen pastors greeting people coming in and you get Joe Blows, the hard blue collar workers coming in and he hardly even notices them. But all telling that the state federal judge or the appellate court had just come to church this morning, he will leave everything and everybody to go cater that guy to make him well welcome. You know why? What a great thing to say to all your pastor buddies. "Well, I have the Supreme Court appellate judge in our church." Wow. I got Bob Greg in mind. Wow. I'd take him over any day over that. And don't give me this stuff about a restaurant. You saw our restaurant out there, Gary runs it. I don't want to hear it. We have a big screen. It just, I think somebody stole it.

Just like in Washington and their politics, the whole system gets corrupted. I have no care one way or the other, but I just use them as illustrations. Look at the Clintons. I don't care what you think about them. Doesn't matter to me. They have been through so much bad stuff going through bad stuff right now. And you know what? Nothing will ever happen to them. If something like that happened to your life, you'd be in jail so fast, you wouldn't know what hit you. You know why they're not? Because they got connections politically. Somebody makes a phone call to somebody else and said back off and that's all it needs to be done. How about the Reverend Al Sharpton? Four and a half million dollars in back taxes. Four and a half million dollars in back taxes. You don't pay your taxes and they'd be on you so fast, you wouldn't know what hits you. They take your home. They take your car. They take your bank account. They would take everything. They will never do a thing for him. You know why? One phone call fixes it all. Politics. Politics.

Now, that doesn't happen around here, nor never will. The deacons here do what the deacons are supposed to do in the Bible. They don't have any power. They don't have any control. They just teach the Bible. That's what they're supposed to do. There's no position here of leadership that you get because you're my friend or you have money. You get it because you earned it. I mean, as simple as that. You earn the right based on the New Testament models in Christianity. Timothy, the model pastor. Titus, the model servant. Stewart, excuse me. And Philemon, the model servant. You start with that.

A couple of last year, in fact, it was about November, I preached the Bible Conference up at Monmouth, Illinois. I took the Old Path Boys with me. They're a group that we have here that sing and do a great job. And they played up there. People loved them. And they're here today so they know this is a true story. When I get up to preach before they ever sang, I told the crowd, I said, "I brought these guys up. They're really good. And I think they're going to get a blessing from it. But I want you to know this. Every one of these men believe the Word of God, preach the Word of God, teach the Word of God, and do everything in our church. Their Bible teachers

first, their musicians second," and the whole place broke into an applause. You know what? People want that. People want that. That's what they want.

I'll tell you this. A church should never go around labeling people. That happens all the time. And never let anybody define who you are. Some people go to church, you know, and maybe they've had some problems in their life or whatever and many times they start thinking and many times it's true. People start looking at them and what they've been through. People forget sometimes that your pastor's not the most stellar in the world, but they'll focus on somebody else and this and that and that person will forget trying to do what's right and they'll, you know, they'll go follow away and get discouraged. Let me tell you something. Don't let anybody ever define you. Nobody. A church should never label anybody or define anybody. A church should be free from all of that stuff. But you need to know this. When a church will just stay with the book and preach the Word of God straight, hot, and true by the Word of God, you got to read Hebrews 4:12-13 sometime. You know what it does? This church doesn't have to define you. I don't have to define you. When you preach the Bible, you will define yourself by what you do or what you don't do with it. And these four areas will define churches just like they define people. Of course, a real New Testament church lets the Bible do its work. Bible says in Hebrews 4:13 that all things are naked and open under the eyes of Him which we have to do.

Here's the fourth thing. A great church will have great leaders in it. You want to look for this. I call it my death chart. If a pastor doesn't have the ability to train men and women to lead, he will fail in his church. It may take 5, 10, 15, 20 years, but it'll sink sooner or later. I grew up in the 1970s and the 80s when the pastors took all of their key young men and ladies and instead of putting them to work and training them into ministry to build their own churches, you know what they did? They sent them out to somebody else's church and to Bible college for 4 years. They literally stripped the core future of their church and sent them out to somebody else's church. You know why? Because those pastors didn't have a clue about how to train anybody for anything. And those churches today are dead.

Leadership is everything. In churches and building churches, it's not only everything, it's the only thing for the lifeblood of the church. Listen, I don't care what level you're on. You may have got saved last week. You may have been saved for 2 years, 5 years. You may have been saved for 20 years and had struggles in your life and are having them right now. I want to tell you something. Don't count yourself out. Whatever level you're on, you can start to be a leader on that level. And then you work from there. The key to leadership in a person's life is one verse and one verse only, Matthew 25:21. If you're faithful over the little things, I'll make you ruler over the many things. You start out being faithful with the level you're on. Nobody's going to ask you to know all the books of the Bible or know this or know that. Whatever you're at, whatever spiritual level you are, if you've got the desire in your heart to be used of God, you start right there and be God's leader. He'll bring you up through the ranks just like he does everybody else.

A really good church demands strong leadership. A church will only be as strong as the leaders in it. Leadership will work from the top down like a chain of command in an army, except that chain is only as strong as its weakest link. I'll tell you this too. When it comes to being a good leader, you're not a good leader because you make just good choices. You're not a good leader

because you make everybody happy. What makes a good leader is somebody who just doesn't make good decisions. A good leader is somebody who has to make the hard decisions. That's what pastors can't do today. And that's crucial in being a leader. You're not going to make everybody happy. Your job is not to try to. Your job is to follow that book, preach the book, grace and truth. But when it's a hard decision that needs to be made, you have to make it. That's what makes a good leader. Somebody said, "You won't be very popular." I didn't know this was a popularity contest. I thought it was about truth.

See, my job as a pastor is to see in you what you don't see in yourself. Right now, I see some of you, know some of you, you've been coming for a while, and I see inside of you some tremendous things. My job is to see in you what you cannot see in yourself. And then my job is to develop that in you, to have the things that draws that out of you, that brings you to a point to build you with the things that will make you strong. I don't care what your struggles are. I don't care if you have bad marital problems, if you have bad experiences in churches. I'm telling you right now, there's more bad churches out there than there are good churches. I had a guy tell me one time, "Well, I don't go to church because I had a terrible experience at a church, and churches are just bad." I thought to myself, that is the dumbest thing I ever heard. I asked him, I said, "Do you ever eat in a bad restaurant?" He said, "Yes, I have." "So you don't eat out ever again." Sure, you got bad churches. Sure, you got bad restaurants. But if you go to a bad restaurant and you get ptomaine poisoning, does that mean you never eat out again? Wherever you're at this morning, whatever you're struggling with, if you have a desire, don't sell God out just because you got messed up with an idiot.

My job is to look across this room, this church, for any man, for any woman, for any high school kid, for any single who has a speck of leadership ability, and then help them develop it. This September and October, we're firing up our people ministry. That's exactly what it does. We're firing up our singles ministry again. We've been off for the summer, a lot of things going on. That's exactly what I do. Take those young minds, take those men and women, those couples that want to learn how to deal with people and teach them how to do it. And after 12 years, you can see how it's paid off. The base of this church is probably 175 plus of the strongest, toughest men and women you could ever find, and that number is growing all the time. Men who can preach, men, the opportunity that God has given us to preach, and those opportunities just keep on coming. The women of this church who are strong and know their Bible, who can work and disciple and teach the Word of God in an incredible way, whether it be discipleship, discipleship two, marriage classes, premarital, children training, one-on-one personal counting, the prayer group, whatever. I've had people in this church today that I could call their names out and won't do it. As I stand here, they have reproduced themselves in probably 15 or 20 other people who are now leaders, reproducing yourself as a leader. That's what it's all about, but it all starts at the top. Everything rises and falls on leadership, and the pastor's job is to get it done. That's nobody else's job.

If I'm not so excited about the Word of God, how am I going to expect you to be excited about the Word of God? If I don't have fire and passion for the things of God, how are you ever going to have it? If I got up here every Sunday morning like some limp noodle in hot water and just

went around the pan, what would it do for you? You need a sheep dog that can clip your heels when it needs to be clipped and bark when it needs to be barked. Now the job of any pastor is to get these four areas done. These four concepts will make a solid biblical New Testament church that will not only grow inwardly, but grows outwardly. I hear pastors say all the time, I've heard it all my years, "Boy, it's so hard today to build a church." Well, yes, if you don't know what you're doing and you're not doing it by the book, I guess it would be. But you've got to remember, "Except the Lord built the house, they labor in vain to build it." And it ain't no harder in building a church today in 2015 than it was in 1980.

V. The Church as a House of Power

You know, those that are go here, you know me, I have to make things real simple for me to understand. I'm not a very smart guy. Barb Christie always telling me I'm the smartest man in the world, but Barb don't get out much. I understand complicated things by breaking them down by simple association. One of the greatest verses I ever learned was Romans 1:19-20. It says:

Romans 1:19-20

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them; For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

I learned over the years that God shows you things about his word and about himself by the things that he made. Because everything that God made out there is some kind of manifestation of God in some form. Because he is before all things the Bible says and by him all things consist. And God shows you how things work by looking at the Bible and what God has done and what he's doing and then he shows you by that. It's called association or sometimes contrast depending on how he does it in the Bible.

Now I've given you those four things that a great church, good church has to have. But I want to tell you this, when I look at this church and I look at you dear people that are out there today, I look at you like a house. Just like a house. The Bible says that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, 1 Corinthians 6:19. Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:1 that if this earthly body is dissolved we have a house, a building, eternal in the heavens. At 1 Corinthians 3:10 it says that you're a house, you're a temple and you're on a daily process building that and you're to be a wise master builder.

You see I've looked at this thing. Most churches have the wrong building program. They want to build great buildings. I'm not interested in building great buildings. I'm interested in building great people. People who love the God, love the Bible. Doesn't look like much. But if a tornado comes you're all in the right spot. Don't even have to get out of your seat and run to the basement. We're already here. There ain't no spire or no big cross up on top, no big lights. That's okay. The brightest lights in the world are not on buildings. They're in the hearts of God. People that are on fire for the Lord. Guy said one time, "How do you build a church? You get a preacher on fire and the whole town will come and watch him burn."

Now a house has many things. But there's one house, one aspect to a house that is pretty, without it, a house is worthless. And that aspect is power. A house without power is going to be a worthless situation for life. I mean you may have a house that's worth \$200 million. It may be a Taj Mahal, but if there's no power in it to run anything, we've all been through power outages. You know when the ice gets on the deal or the last couple of months ago there was a storm that blew it out, somebody without power three or four days. You know your house is nice as it is. It's worthless at that point. You've got to now get candles, a generator, flashlight, batteries, nothing you can't cook nothing. All the power is off. And by the same illustration a child of God, God's house, without any power will be equally worthless.

As a Christian I look at this thing like, and I see Proverbs 1:19-20 come alive through association. You know for a while in my life I did electrical work. And a lot of what I did, I did in the houses where people lived. And I learned some things about power and electricity and houses and association with the Bible and building houses, people. And the example of a house without power and getting power as the fundamental importance is an exact illustration of what a church should do for you. And I might add this church has been doing for the last 12 years.

When you get power in your house, the first thing that comes, the lights come on. In a spiritual sense that's exactly what happened today. You got saved. Before you were saved you were powerless. The moment you trusted Christ you got the power of God and you know what came into your life? The lights came on. Now you have spiritual discernment out of the darkness and into the light. Jesus is the true light that lighteth every man that come in the world. The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. In 1 Thessalonians 5 it talks about the children of the night that are in darkness and the Christian children of the day that are in the light. Now you got power, the power of God. Now that's an incredible thing. When you get the power the lights came on. Now you have the ability to see spiritual things.

Let me ask you this. This is quite incredible. In a physical sense, do you ever stop and see where the power comes from that comes into your home? Well if you trace it back far enough to the end of the street, if you have an older home probably in your backyard, you know where the power for your house comes from? It comes off a cross, a telephone pole. Telephone pole is a pole with a cross on it that has the wires running on it. How about that? The power from the cross will give you light into your physical house and it's the power of the cross that will give you light in your spiritual house.

I need to say this. You know that power on the pole, the cross, it cannot come straight into your house. It's too hot, too much voltage or something. If you just took raw power off the pole and ran it into your house, your house would disintegrate. So what they got to do is they got to take the raw power off a pole and somewhere in your backyard or somewhere on a pole, they'll be what they call a transformer. That transformer takes the raw power off that cross, transforms it down to your house so the power is workable in your house. In your Christian life, the hot power off the pole is God. God can't put his power directly into you. It would blow you apart. And that's why in eternity you got to get a glorified body that can withstand the voltage. So you know what he does? He runs the power off the cross through a transformer by Jesus Christ and it into my

house. Now I have workable power. Now the lights are not only on but I got power, power from a cross. But it has to be run through a transformer. Jesus Christ is the visible parent of the invisible God. So the transformer transforms that power and now I can do something for God.

You know when you build a house, they wire, most of you don't see this because you're never around. But when they're building your house, they run all the wires through it. And those wires are what are going to carry electricity and those wires go to what they call a circuit panel or a box. And before it gets to that, it comes down there and it comes in in the back of your house, you got a little meter back there. You know what that meter does? That meter measures how much electricity you use, the power that's going into your house. And once a month, when you see that strange man in your backyard, he's a meter reader. Now my problem is I know too much about the Bible and it causes me a lot of grief. I hate meter readers. I have no respect for them whatsoever. Because all this reminds me of my Christian life. I realize there's power coming off the pole, the power goes through a transformer and then it comes into my house and my lights come on. And I realize that the power flow that's coming into my house here spiritually, you know, there's some day coming and it's true of you too. Some day is going to come and you stand before God, it's a judgment seat of Christ. You know what he's going to do? He's going to read your meter, baby. He's going to find out exactly how much power you let come into that house. I hate them meter readers. "Hi Mr. Alexander, how you doing?" "Get out of my yard." "Well, sir, I closed the gate." "I don't care. Get out of here." "Well, did I do something wrong?" "Yeah, you remind me of judgment seat of Christ. Beat it. You meter reader."

You know when they build older homes, they put in 60 amp service. That means everything that you turn on, your lights draw so many amps, your coffee pot draws too many amps, this amp, your hair dryer pulls some amps, your refrigerator's pulling amps, your everything that's electric pulls amps. When you add those amps up, turn on all the lights, turn on this, turn on that. When you got 60 amps, you know what happens? When you hit 61, blows the fuse. In time, that proved that that was not adequate enough. Back then, my main job was to upgrade houses. I'd tear out the old 60 amp panel, put in 100 amp or 200 amp. You run all the wires in it. It's got many more breakers. Now you could put in all you want and carry whatever load you needed to carry. The bigger the box, 100, 200, the more serviced, the more power you could hold. And it became real clear that with all the add-ons in a house, that 60 amps just wasn't going to hold the load. That's why some of you ladies, you're up there trying to get ready in the morning and you plug in your hair dryer, blows the circuit. Too much load on it. It flips the breaker. You add to it a dryer, a refrigerator, a washer, a dishwasher, air conditioner, and your furnace, man, you're broken. You're blowing fuses all the time.

Now look at your body in a spiritual sense as God's house, the same way. When you got saved, you got wired with 60 amps, just enough to get the lights on. You now understand the basics of Christianity. But as you grow and have to deal with some things, you find out that 60 amps won't carry the load of life anymore. So you start blowing fuses. Situations come into your life as you grow that require you to handle a greater load of Christianity. You have kids. You get married and you find out very quickly that the same power load that you got the day you got saved is not strong enough to carry the load of all the things that now come in your life.

Now this is where a good church comes in. This is where a pastor comes in with these four aspects. Every pastor should be a spiritual electrician. My job is when you get those 60 amps, today you get saved, my job is to upgrade you through the Bible from 60 amps to 100 amps or 200 amps service. My job is to get you wired to the place where you can hold a heavy load of whatever comes your way. The reason why some of God's people won't ever get the victory in life is simply because you will not let God upgrade you to handle more power that you only keep the lights on. And when you try to have some problem plugging in life or something goes wrong, you fall apart, your switch flips and the breaker's gone and the house goes dark.

In a 60 amp house you can buy a 50 inch TV, you can buy an air conditioner for every window, a dishwasher, a video game, a hair dryer, a VCR, a complete sounds around sing and you know what? You can spend \$10,000 and you can't ever use any of them because the power in your house is not strong enough to handle the load of the draw. All these things that you're never able to use them simply because you need an upgrade by a qualified electrician.

Now when it comes to electricity in your physical house or your spiritual house, you have to do the exact same thing. When you wire a house and put all the electricity in it, upgrade it, when I had upgrade from 60 to 100 to 200, when I was done an inspector came out and there's a code book that I have to go by. I can't just say, "Yep, that's a panel, I always wanted to work on a panel and just tear it out and put it in." There's a code that requires that everything you do has to be done this way in that physical house. And I want to tell you, when you get the upgrade spiritually, you got a code book and it's got to be done just like the code book says. And the Holy Spirit of God, the inspector, it's so simple. It's so easy.

Now this is what a good church does, any church. Now these four aspects of the anatomy of a church, they take you at 60 amps and build you and upgrade you to 100 and 200 amp service so you can handle any load of life that you get plugged into. And believe me in life, as you go through it, there will be some add-ons that will draw more power out of you. And the reason why you will keep having the problems and failing in life is because you failed to allow yourself to be upgraded to handle the extra load. You get overloaded, the more load than your 60 amps can handle, and down you go.

When you get into electricity and the power you need to run heavy duty items, you have 110 amp, you have 220, 440, you get into the technical stuff, two phase and three phase. But this is it. The higher the number, the more power you have, the more load you can handle. I would say, and I'm not an expert on this, but I would say that probably three phase is probably would just about handle any load that you could throw on it. And when I think of that, my goal in this church is simple. My goal is to build a church of men and women who are God's house, God's temple, and every one of them be a three-phased Christian. Being able to handle that book and remember that book comes in three phases, doctrinally, and historically, building three phase Christians that can handle any load. Now that's what a church should be.

VI. Communion and Remembrance

In a moment we're going to take communion together. That's a time when we remember what God has done for us. But today along with that anniversary, Sandy, we also want to stop and remember not only just what God has done for us, but we need to stop and look what God has done with us. Individuals here, once your life was a wreck, once your marriage was a disaster, once your kids were out in the world, once everything in your life was upside down. And you know what? You met a God and found a book and found a place where you could get everything you needed to be everything God wanted you to be. At the beginning I gave you my verse for starting a church, Psalms 127:1, "Except the Lord built the house, they labor and vain and build it."

In closing, let me give you my verse for ministry to you. 1 Thessalonians 2:8:

1 Thessalonians 2:8

So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

The key to ministry ultimately will be a pastor's heart. The key of any ministry will be him being willing to give what God has given to him to anybody else. And then his people will take that and break it down and give it to other people. That's the ministry. That's the ministry. Let's enjoy our day together. Let's stop and not only as we take communion here in a moment, thank God for what he did, died on the cross, but let's stop and look where you're at and thank God for what he's done with us.

Now we're going to take communion and let me talk to you about communion for just a moment here and I want you to understand some things here. There's some biblical principles that we follow here. First of all, before you take communion, and guys go ahead and get it ready and come on down here and start passing it out. Before you take communion, you need to make sure that everything is right between you and the Lord. People have a time here before each one that we pray that you can pray and get it right, but you don't have to wait till then. Go ahead and start passing it out guys. You don't have to go ahead and take it to them.

We practice open communion here. That means that many churches say that you can't take communion unless you're a member of this church. We don't teach that. We believe that the spiritual body of Christ is all believers and that we're all part of the true church, Jesus Christ. If you're saved this morning and you're baptized, you can take it. Go ahead John, you can take it and take communion. Now let me also say this. Some of you are going to get baptized this afternoon. And baptism is a good conscience toward God. There's nothing spiritual about it other than the fact that it represents what Christ has done for us, but it's not some work that we do. It's based on your attitude of heart. So I'm saying this. If you're planning on getting baptized today, your attitude of heart is already toward God that you are going to get baptized. You can go ahead and take communion this morning based on your attitude of heart because you are getting baptized this afternoon. God will understand that and that's fine and that's totally acceptable. The other thing is we pass out the bread and we pass out the grape juice and then we wait for each other and we take it together.

Now communion. Let me explain a minute. Communion means togetherness. Probably what we're about to do is the most intimate time that any Christian can have on this earth between him and God. It's a time where we're to get as close to God as we can. It's based on the last time that Christ was in the room with his disciples in Matthew 26:26. He told them that it was a time of remembrance. The bread represents the broken body of Christ on the cross. The grape juice or new wine as it's called in the Bible represents the blood of Christ that was shed for us. Paul says that a church is supposed to do it whenever the church decides to do it. There's no time element. God wanted to make sure that it didn't become a ritual that you just did, that you forgot its meaning. So he says whenever you want to do it, it's your own discretion. And so it's a time that some churches do it every other month. Some do it two times a year. Some do it four times a year. It's whatever. It's that church's discretion. But what you're doing today, and this is why the importance of getting clean with God, what you were doing today is that you are recognizing what Christ did for you, how his body hung on the cross, broken for you, and how his blood was shed for you.

The Bible says, Paul talking, he says to the church at Corinth:

1 Corinthians 11:23-24

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

So it represents the broken body. Right before we take the bread, I'd like to ask Zach to stand up and ask the blessing on the bread that represents the broken body of Christ for us.

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you so much for putting your body on that cross on Calvary, Lord, and ringing that bell, Heavenly Father, and making it possible for us to come into the Holy of Holies. I pray that right now that we would just reflect on that, Lord, understand the sacrifice that you pay for us, but also, Lord, the one that you told us is reasonable for us to give to you. And I pray that, Lord, that I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your body, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service, Father. So please help us to reflect on that right now and to do that. In Jesus Christ, say my prayer and ask it all, amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. And the Bible says that that night before they went out, the Lord went to be crucified, they sang a hymn. They sang the chorus to that great song when we see Christ. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus. Life trials will seem so small when we see Christ. Oh, on glimpse of His dear face, all sorrow will erase. So bravely run the race till we see Christ.

Let me say something to you. Make this year your year. Make this year different than all the other years of your life. If you're a family that you're struggling, if you're a couple that's struggling, or just a great guy or great gal that's struggling, make this year your year. Let us help you put it all together. Let us take these four things that we talked about today and the great illustration of getting the wiring into your body, your temple, and help you be everything that

God wants you to be. We love you. We're here for you. This church is not here for what you can do for us. We're here for what we can do for you. And then all of us are here for what we can do for the Lord. So we thank you for being here today. You're all welcome to come to the anniversary this afternoon. There's maps in the back. Remember to bring your own chair, bring your own drinks, and bring a side dish and a dessert. And we'll have a great time.

Let's pray and we'll be dismissed. Father, thank you for the Lord Jesus. Thank you for loving us. Thank you, Lord, for the great people in this church that makes this church, in my humble opinion, a great church. It isn't me. It's these dear people. It's the men and women who have decided that they're going to give everything they have to the Lord. Their families, their kids, their husbands, their wives. And they're the strength and the backbone and the steel and the girders that make this church strong. We thank you, Father, for that. And Lord, let us be found faithful in these last days. Let us help and care and reach out for everybody, whatever their need is. Let us give them the chance that you gave us. And Father, let us love them unconditionally. And we'll thank you and praise you in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. Amen.