

[Applause] And you all were sounding awesome. Thank you for just being ready just to lift up your voices in praise to God this morning.

It's hot, hot, hot outside. Anyone give agreement to that? And it's nice and cool in here and I thought it would just be great this morning to tell you a story. Anyone wanna hear a story? Okay, so we're going to do that.

Before I do so, I want to tell you about something that I read this week that I believe is newsworthy. I don't know that it has hit the news, but it's very relevant in a time of terrorism and the concerns that many of us would have in the midst of that time. This news article that I read and I've seen now in two or three different locations speaks of what is going on in Russia and some of the laws that they are putting into place to deal with terrorism and how they affect religious belief. I just have it in front of me here; a Forum 18 news service report¹ says:

President Putin has signed amendments imposing harsh restrictions on sharing beliefs, including where and who may share them, and increased "extremism" punishments, introduced with alleged "anti-terrorism" changes.

This law comes into force on July 20th, which was this week. Listen to this:

"The amendments also bar even informal sharing of beliefs, for example responding to questions or comments, by individuals acting on their own behalf."

They [the amendments] also:

"explicitly bans any beliefs from being shared in residential buildings, or on another association's property without permission. An allegedly "anti-terrorist" part of the amendments bars the conversion of residential property to religious use."

So you couldn't have a small group in your home any longer.

"Heavy financial penalties of up to 50,000 Roubles for individuals" — they say that's "about six weeks' average wages for those" in the country.

It was "noted that now the Law has been adopted and until any amendments can be made or any appeal lodged to the Constitutional Court, this person says, "we have to live by it". One gentleman who speaks:

Deputy Bishop Bendas noted harassment of a community in a town near Moscow before the Law was adopted. "The local police officer came to a home where a group of Pentecostels meet each Sunday," he noted. "With a contented expression he told them: 'Now they're adopting the Law I'll drive you all out of here.' "

Bendas said the Pentecostal Union is preparing instructions and recommendations for its congregations on the provisions of the new Law. "I reckon there will also be a section 'demands of the Law which a good Christian cannot fulfill'," he added.

The question that we have before us this morning is what do I do when I am asked to do something against God and His Word? And we recognize that that could be within your own family structure where you are asked to do something against God and His Word. It could be at your school; they're not too far from now unfortunately. It could be at work. It could be something that comes as a result of a

¹ Source: Victoria Arnold, Forum 18, (8 July 2016). *RUSSIA: Putin signs sharing beliefs, "extremism", punishments*. Retrieved from http://forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2197

law that is put into place like what we have just read in another country based on really relevant things happening in our world today where certain people find a way to use this as an opportunity to shut down the sharing of your faith. What do I do when I am asked to do something against God and His Word?

We're in the middle of this series called AGAINST THE FLOW because when we're put into that situation where we are realizing that this has to do with God and His clear word, the easiest thing to do is blend in and go with it, flow with it. So a couple weeks ago we started a series and we went to the book of Daniel and you may remember in the book of Daniel a Babylonian king came into Israel and attacked Israel, attacked Jerusalem, took a whole bunch of the religious items out of the Temple and took with him some of their finest young men and placed them into the king's service which included training there. They trained them in, if you'll remember, the occult. They also changed their names and on top of that they wanted to change their dietary - the way they ate - because you'll remember God had given His people a very specific instruction on what to eat and what not to eat.

You may remember that the majority of those young men that came over just went with the flow and just did what they were asked. After all, if you're going to be taken as slaves to another country, if you're going to be slaves in the service of the king living in the shadow of the palace, that's a whole lot better than what some of the other options are and maybe what some of the other people from the country were finding as they were exiles from their country. And so many of these young men would have just gone with the flow and done exactly what they were asked, but there was a couple young men who said no. And rather than just flipping out and losing their mind and being rude and mean and unkind, Daniel went and spoke to the person that was in charge of it and basically negotiated with him and as a result of that negotiation and what I consider to just be a winsome way of speaking to the person who was over him, they actually allowed him to do this experiment where he ate the foods that God had provided for him and it turns out that these young men looked better after having eating those foods than all the rest of them who were eating the king's food. So then they assigned everyone to eat God's foods and so it allowed these young men to follow God's rules and God's laws.

So you'll remember that the king that was from Babylon, and remember Babylon is this one place and this one city that is even metaphorically used all the way through the Bible even into end times of the greatest of great of sinful places. When you speak of a bad city, of a sinful city, the word Babylon comes to your mind, and so that's where these young men were taken to and there in this place called Babylon. And King Nebuchadnezzar who was the king who had originally taken them there was no longer in power. Now in power was a man by the name of Belshazzar and as you come into chapter 5 of Daniel there's a story of King Belshazzar throwing this huge party and this party that has a thousand people there and they're enjoying whatever you do with that kind of a party when all of a sudden Belshazzar, I guess, just starts to feel sort of pumped up about who he is and what he's doing that he says, "Hey, go down there to the museum," because you'll remember when they would go to conquer another country they would grab some of the relics of that country, bring them back, put them on display so that you could walk around and see all these places that your country had taken over and some of the stuff they had brought back.

Well, the things they had brought back, you'll remember, were from the Temple and you just don't mess with the precious things of God. But this night King Belshazzar having a big party with a thousand people at it decides to go and get some of these things that were brought back from the Temple of God that are in their museum that they're celebrating their victories with and to drink wine out of the goblets from the Temple. And on that night as he's there partying having the time of his life feeling safe, feeling like everything is good, you'll remember the story was that there was handwriting on the wall. You know that phrase, that's a phrase that's very familiar in our culture, "You see the handwriting on the wall." And evidently that hand started writing across the wall. You know, that's before 3-D imaging

could take place, before some of the crazy stuff that we can do now. Probably if we had enough time and money and smart people we could have had a hand write something across the wall there today and we all would have said, "Wow, that's cool." In that time they knew something was going on. It's fun to read in the Scripture in this story. It says, "Then the king's color changed."² I mean, you can just see this guy's countenance change as something's being written on the wall and he has no idea what it is and what it means.

So he calls in as the Scripture talks about all of his magicians and his enchanters and these are the people that had originally schooled Daniel because this is what they were trained in—remember we said in the occult?—so he calls them in and he says, listen, you need to translate that and the guy who translates it he's going to be put in a purple robe and he's going to have a gold chain put around his neck and he's going to be made #3 in the kingdom. And so he calls all of them in, "I want to know what that says," and so they try and they try and they can't figure it out. And the king's beside himself. He knows something's going on, he knows something's wrong, and so finally they go, "There's this guy by the name of Daniel and this guy, I mean, this guy's above, I mean, anything you can imagine. He's just phenomenal. Bring him in and let's see what he has to say." And so they bring Daniel in and Daniel begins to speak to this king. Now remember, Daniel is this young man who has come as a slave, he's one of God's people, and he's a God follower, he loves God, but on the other hand, remember this is a guy who has, again, been placed in a fairly protected situation. I mean, he's at the top of the heap of slaves, if you would say, and yet when he's brought in he begins to speak to this king in a very firm way. Listen to some of these words he says here, chapter 5 of Daniel, verse 18, he says:

¹⁸ O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty.

Do you hear that? By the way, remember who King Nebuchadnezzar was? King Nebuchadnezzar was the one who went and attacked Jerusalem, who brought these items from the Temple back. This is a bad king and yet when Daniel begins to speak he says God gave this position to King Nebuchadnezzar. You'll remember when we first started talking a couple weeks ago we made it very clear that God is in charge and God puts people in charge, and so here we see here it says, "*the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar the kingdom.*"

By the way, capture this, remember this over the next three months, we're not going to talk a lot about it here but it's going to overshadow everything that's going on in our world: **GOD'S IN CONTROL OF WHO'S IN CONTROL.** I want that to settle us all down because everyone's wound up. Our city is going to be wound up this week. Right? Okay, God's in control of who's in control. Let me read the verse again because it's more important than my little saying. The verse says:

¹⁸ O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty.

But then this guy who is in this kingdom, who is in this high place, he looks back at this king who's trying to figure out what the writing on the wall says and he says:

²⁰ But when his heart [Nebuchadnezzar's heart] was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down

— and then he looks at Belshazzar, the king who's sitting there partying and he points at him and he says —

² Then the king's color changed, and his thoughts alarmed him; his limbs gave way, and his knees knocked together. – Daniel 5:6

²² *And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this,*

— you saw all this, you saw all this, you saw what had happened and you saw why Nebuchadnezzar fell; even though you saw, you knew all this —

²³ *but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven.*

— DANIEL 5:18, 20, 22-23

And you and I know people that have lifted themselves up against God, who hate God, who hate everything there is about God, and yet they look like they're getting away with it. And Daniel's going to say to Belshazzar here today, yeah, that only looks like that for a little while and then it changes. And so he goes at this point to begin to translate the writing on the wall. And in chapter 5, verse 25, it tells us what the words were that were on the wall.

²⁵ *And this is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN.*

— and he says this —

²⁶ *This is the interpretation of the matter: MENE, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; ²⁷ TEKEL, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting; ²⁸ PERES, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”*

²⁹ *Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.*

And the very next phrase says this:

³⁰ *That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. ³¹ And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.*

— DANIEL 5:25-31

Here's what happened. You have this city of Babylon, you have this Babylonian empire that's been so strong and so powerful and they're sitting there celebrating having the time of their life partying and feasting in security and peace when all of a sudden that hand begins writing on the wall and God sees to it that only His servant is able to tell what's about to happen. Here's what was happening. Babylon itself was an insanely well-fortified city. The walls around this city that went all the way around them were 350 feet high, that just seems unbelievable, and 86 feet wide. But if that's not enough, the Euphrates River circled the city and it also went under the walls and through the city. But that's not enough, there was a secondary wall outside of the river with 250 guard towers on top of those walls. From what we are told in history, that night the Medes and Persians had been camping out around the city.

I wouldn't be surprised if that's why King Belshazzar was having a party inside and it was like, "Come on in. Try us. Come up against those walls. I mean, you even just start to even try to penetrate we will cast down stones from those guard towers. Nothing's going to happen." So they were probably sitting in there mocking and partying going, "You know, we ARE the world dominating power right now. No one's ever going to break in here."

They even had inside the walls of the city a 20-year supply of Y2K food all in buckets sealed up [laughter]. So even if they created such a force of people around the city that they couldn't get out, they were protected inside; they would be fine for at least twenty years with their supplies and provisions.

Well, evidently what happened that night the Medes and the Persians went about a mile and a half north on the river and diverted the flow of the river. Stopped the river from flowing, which would have flowed around the city, and when it stopped flowing they were able to go in under the walls where the river had once flowed. They were able to go right through under the second set of walls, these 86-foot wide walls, they went in through and opened the gates of the city and they came and attacked the city and overthrew it that night. And that sets up all of a sudden they're no longer under the control of Babylon but all of a sudden Babylon is under the control of the Medes and the Persians and there is a new king. And as you enter into chapter 6 of Daniel we begin to read of Babylon with this new king, Darius, ruling over it and we read in verse 3 of chapter 6:

³ Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

— DANIEL 6:3

An excellent spirit was found in him. The picture that we keep on hearing about Daniel, and by the way, he's writing this about himself so [*pauses and shrugs*]—we all have a bit of an inflated view of ourselves— but I think it's important for us to recognize that evidently when people looked on him they saw a guy that had it dialed in; a guy who was doing right, a guy that whatever he did he tried to do right by whoever was around. He had an excellent spirit around him.

Have you ever noticed that when you do things right that really ticks people off? Have you ever noticed that the other people just hate you because you're doing the right things because you have a great spirit about you? Because you're happy? Because you're positive? Because you're loving and you're kind? And you think, "How in the world can they hate my guts because I'm trying to be nice?" And that's exactly what happens here. We read these words:

⁴ Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him.

Isn't that cool? You know, it's just like even those who hate you because you do the right thing, how great is it that when they look at you they can't even find anything against you? By the way, Satan would not oppose you if God didn't have a plan for you—put that in the back of your mind.

There is going to be a battle that comes up now where this man is going to be placed face to face with Satan himself wanting to shut down the progression of him doing right things. The head of the kingdom, the new king, wants to raise up Daniel and the enemy says, "No way." And I'm going to tell you this right now as I tell you the end of this story, and some of you know the end of this story, this is going to feel like everything is going wrong and sideways. It keeps on getting worse and worse and worse. Understand that when things get worse and worse and worse that does not mean that God has disappeared. It does not mean that God is not still working out His plan. You remember the last time things seemed like they were getting worse and he was being asked to eat food he wasn't allowed to eat, he was able to negotiate. He's about ready to be put in a situation where there's no negotiation.

So we read these words, it says this:

⁵ Then these men said, "We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God."

— DANIEL 6:4-5

Wouldn't it be cool if the only way people could bring a complaint against us is if it had something to do with something we were standing on firmly that was specific about what was right and wrong based on what God said? That if there was something that we were crossing someone on it was only because of biblical standards and beliefs that we were standing firm on? And they realized this. They go, "You know, we're not going to bust this guy on anything legitimate. This guy's doing everything right. He's showing up to work on time. He's staying extra time. He never speaks bad about the king. He never steals any money. He never takes anything from us. He's spot on. He works with integrity. We can't find anything. BUT if we could somehow set him up to force him to do something against his God, we'd get him there." They knew that that's the level of integrity that he worked at.

And what you're going to find from Daniel is Daniel's going to work and maneuver with anything he can to try to work within the system and to live in an evil and wicked regime, BUT when they ask him to do something that is against his God that's when the brakes are going to screech on and everyone around him knew that that's how he was. So they come up with this plan and this plan is this:

¹² . . . that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?"

— DANIEL 6: 12

They come to the king and they say, you know, you can always build someone's ego up by saying, "Hey, everyone needs to worship you so if anyone in this kingdom worships anyone but you king, they'll be thrown in to the den of lions. King, will you sign here?" The king goes, "Yeah. Sounds good to me." Signs there, signs there, stamps it as a part of the law of the Medes and the Persians which cannot be changed once he signs it. It is done, done, done. There's nothing else that's going to happen. And now it is full speed ahead. These guys now have exactly what they wanted to come up against Daniel. And I want you to look at verse 10 of Daniel 6:

¹⁰ When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

— DANIEL 6:10

I think that those words, "*as he had done previously*," are incredibly telling. This one is something new. You know, when all of a sudden the world comes apart and we're being asked to do some things that are wrong, all of sudden you go, "Oh, we gotta scramble together and figure out how to deal with the spiritual side of our life." This guy's been doing this. You know, here's what I know. What we love most is revealed in the habits that we keep.

By the way, thank you for being here this morning. I'm serious about that. You woke up this morning and said, "It is a priority to be at church." You didn't come here because you knew it was going to be nice and cool in here. You've got air conditioning in your house. I know you. You're fine. You came here today because you knew that to be with the people of God this morning is important. What if you were all of a sudden told yeah, gathering together is hate speech and it is terrorism and this is a terroristic group now and it's now considered that. Would we still gather? Would you at the cafeteria at your workplace bow your head and pray if that somehow praying before lunch was seen as impressing your beliefs on your coworkers and would be considered hate speech? Or would you just say at that point, "Yeah, my religious and spiritual beliefs are my private thing that's between me and God, so that's fine"? Would anyone even know if they were trying to set you up that you would stand firm on what you believe about God? Would they even know you're a Christian? Would they even know you're a Christ follower? Would they even know that's going to be an issue or a problem with you?

It says, listen to this, it says when he "*knew that the document had been signed*" he goes to his house where his windows in his upper chamber open towards Jerusalem and he gets down on his knees and he prays. I asked myself this question all week: Would I have at least shut the windows? He never used to. It was okay to do that. He went up there three times a day. But now all of a sudden there's a law and is it worth stepping over that line? Is it worth anyone seeing him? And he says no, this is what I do and I'm going to keep on doing it. This is what I've been doing for a long time.

I've got to read to you these words from Psalm 55, verse 16:

¹⁶ But I call to God, and the LORD will save me. ¹⁷ Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice.

—PSALM 55:16-17

But I call to my God and the Lord will save me. You know, we believe that here this morning when we go, "Yeah, God is going to protect me. God's going to get me through tough times." Well, what happens when that tough time is before us? What happens when our life is being demanded of us? What happens when there's a lion's den? You don't come out of a lion's den alive. You get thrown in there and you're done. And you know that if I step into that room and pray, I'm done. Daniel, who had up until this time done previously as he says, got on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God. The words of Scripture say but I called to the Lord who will save me. But in this moment we have to come to the question: Do I believe that? Do I believe that I can go before God and He will save me? That He will protect me? When I am set up, when I end up in a place that my standing up for God is going to cause me to lose a relationship or a job or a promotion or a position or an opportunity, do I believe in it strong enough to say, "No. My God is first. He will save me"?

Listen to these words: What I am willing to walk away from greatly determines what I'm going to walk into. Here Daniel's going to walk away from gold robe, gold chain, power and position, third in the country, Darius saying I want to make you #1, and he's now been put into an incredibly precarious position. What he's willing to walk away from determines what he's going to walk into—what's he about ready to walk into? You'll get it right—tell me. [*Response inaudible.*] Yeah.

You see, that's counterintuitive in our time. We've been taught somehow that if you do what you're supposed to do, everything's going to be all right. You're going to get rich. You're going to be healthy. You're going to have all sorts of good stuff. There are people all over this world today who because they are standing up for Jesus are at great risk. Are we even willing to that in our home this afternoon? Are we even willing to do that at work tomorrow morning? Are we willing to do that with our best friend when they make a statement that we know is against God himself? So what we walk away from we're about ready to walk into something else, but when we walk into that thing if we're walking into the thing God is there in that midst.

Keep on looking at this story because it's a powerful story. Verse 11:

¹¹ Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. ¹² Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, "O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." ¹³ Then they answered and said before the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

¹⁴ Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. ¹⁵ Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed."

— DANIEL 6:11-15

I'm blown away. The guy who has signed this law is now the one seeking to defend Daniel. There's something going on here and there's so much going on in the world around us. People are watching us. Obviously, these guys that hated Daniel they're watching him. They're waiting to see if he's the real deal. They're waiting to see if his God is the real God. King Darius is looking on, he's come to really appreciate this guy and understand this guy and yet now he's in this spot. Daniel, from everything we can tell, is not pushing back. There's something inside every one of us that wants to scream, "Time out! Hey, I have rights here. This is who I am. This is what I've done. This is where I've been. Don't you know what I just did here a few months ago?" He's not doing any of that. The only thing he does is the same disciplines and the same habits that he has always done, and he knows at this point he's in the hands of his God. And even the one who signed the laws trying to get him out of it at this point and can't. You keep on reading, verse 16:

¹⁶ Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel,

— I love these words —

"May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!"

A godless king who has signed a decree to be worshipped himself realizes that there's one true God and he turns to Daniel and he waits and watches to see what will happen next. Verse 17:

¹⁷ And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish.

— he's concerned —

The king declared to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually,

— you see, there's a testimony. I want to hear your testimony. I want to hear your stories. But what are the stories of those who are watching you from a distance? What's the story of your boss about you? What's the story of your parents about you? Is the word about you when someone's watching in who isn't part of this [church] community, someone watching in says, "Now, that's someone who worships God continuously"? That's what the king says. That's what the king sees in this guy and all of a sudden the king sees something different going on.

been able to deliver you from the lions?" ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! ²² My God sent his angel

— Jesus, a messenger —

and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.”²³ Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him,

He was unharmed, and then it says this at the end of verse 23:

because he had trusted in his God.

— DANIEL 6:16-23

And I read those words and I want to be that person. So as I come up against the flow, as I say I'm going to, I'm going to, I want to be that righteousness person, I want to do what is right and I'm going to follow this, there is a place at which I must trust in my God. And that's what Daniel did. And the response is phenomenal.

The rest of the chapter here Darius writes to the people and he tells them to tremble in fear before the God of Daniel. I mean, because an individual is willing to go against the flow and do what's right, a whole kingdom is impacted. Sometimes I feel like I'm just one guy. I get in a place like Times Square and I see that sea of people I go, "Oh, my goodness. Where are all these people coming from? There's so many!" How can I say or do anything that will matter?

Because Daniel goes against the flow at incredible risk because his God is more important to him than power and position in the kingdom, Darius writes these words:

²⁶ . . . for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. ²⁷ He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”

— DANIEL 6:26-27

You know, we come here and worship like we did this morning, part of our worship is responding to God in the way Darius did there. Where you come out of a week where there's a lot going on in your world and you've had to make some decisions but at the end of the week we come here and we just take this little pause right now and we go, "You know what? He is God. He is powerful." And I just want to commit my life again. Yes, I want to move forward with Him. I want to go against the flow this week and I want to grab onto Him. I want to trust my God. I hope just hearing this that when you are faced this week with doing something that would not please God, you just grab onto Him and say, "I want to trust my God."

So we want to use just the rest of this time again here this morning just to encourage each other just by hearing the sound of each other's voices being lifted up in worship to just trust our God together so that we can make it through this week. We want to link arms together as a church so we can encourage each other and strengthen each other because as many people in here we have that many different stories of where we're having to come up against that flow this morning and we want together as a church to trust our God.

I'm going to pray for you right now.

Lord God,

I pray for each person in this room as they each hear this story that actually happened and try to figure out how, how in the world they can trust You in the midst of the thing that is weighing so heavy on them this morning. And I ask that You would inspire each of us in a fresh, new way by

your Spirit to trust You, our God. The things that we're fearful of right now, the things that feel like they're coming against us, Lord, that You would develop within us habits and decisions and behaviors that would continue to draw us back to You and trust You as You carry us through this life and into the next. We love You, God, and we put our trust completely in You.

Just tell Him whatever that thing is that you're struggling trusting Him with right now, just in your heart just speak it out to Him. "God, I'm struggling in trusting You with _____," and just tell Him what You're struggling trusting Him with. Ask Him for His help. Say, "Help me, God. Help me. I just give in every time when it comes to that point. I'm falling down every time. Help me, God." Don't feel condemned over these things right now. Ask for His help. He is God and He is to be praised.

We trust, You. I ask for each person in this room that You would just strengthen them right now in this area. We love You. It's in Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

One of the areas we trust God is with our giving, with our tithes, with our offerings. If you're sitting on the end of the row reach under that chair there, there's a bucket under there, if you'll pass that across and give your gifts back to the Lord. Thank you for giving. It's allowing things to happen like what's happening in Coatesville where there's a lot of cool stuff happening there for the gospel. God bless you as you give.

[Break]

But even though you're in a room with a lot of people, there's some in this room right now that would honestly say I feel very alone in this room and I'm sorry. I don't want you to feel alone. I want to do everything in my power to bring us together as a community where you couldn't feel alone when you walk in here. We want you to feel the power of God, we want you to feel the power of His Holy Spirit when you walk in this room, but we want you to feel like you're loved and cared for. We want you to have someone that you can turn to and pray with and be encouraged by and so we keep on trying to figure that out. So one of the things I can just tell you this morning is this church is open and there's a reason why we're serving bagels out there and coffee, we want you to just spend time together and encourage each other. We need each other more than ever. We need to share our hurts and our concerns and our needs with each other. We need to pray for each other. Nothing thrills my heart more than to see just people sitting and praying with each other because as you get to talking to someone they tell you something that's going on say, "Can I pray for you?" and you just put your hand on their shoulder and pray for them. We can encourage each other. That's what we've been called here to do.

Honest, again, thank you for being here this morning. Those of you who are going to go teach our children right now, are going to work with our students, thank you for doing that. Those of you who have been making coffee in the back and directing traffic out in the parking lot, thanks for doing that because all of us together we're just part of something that God is doing here in Downingtown and I just sense it and I feel it and I thank you for being here. These are important times and we need each other a lot in these times, so go live for Jesus this week. Grab onto Him. Trust Him big time.

So Lord God,

I pray for each of my brothers and sisters in this room right now. Strengthen them, draw them close to you, let your Holy Spirit flow through them. Lord, I pray that they'll feel closer with each other. Lord, I pray that You would allow those who feel alone in this room, that feel disenfranchised in this room, who feel like no one understands them in this room today, it feels like they don't know what to do next or where to turn next. I pray that they wouldn't get out those glass doors out there without someone just smiling at them and sharing love and Lord, I can't

control that, so Lord I'm just going to put that in your hands and I pray that You would do a work in each of our hearts and lives.

It's in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Now you can do your part. Don't you dare leave here without encouraging someone. All right? God bless you. You're dismissed.

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/176045839>

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