

*Lord God,*

*I pray right now that You would help us put our eyes back on You because when we take our eyes off of You that is when things aren't well. I thank You for these few moments this morning just to sing out these praises to You and refocus in on You.*

*Lord Jesus, be welcome in this place. Lord Jesus, be pleased with our hearts. Lord Jesus, do a work in our hearts right now.*

*Lord God, I know that there are people in this room that are in a moment where they're just saying, "God, I need your help bad right now." And I pray that they'll just sense your presence and your love and your compassion in this hour and that when they leave here in a few moments that they'll just be able to say, "Yeah, it is well. It is well because even if everything else is raging outside, God, You are good, and You're walking with me and I can trust in You, to hold on to You." So Lord, I pray that You'll minister to each one of us in a way we need right now along those lines.*

*We ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.*

I hear a statement often from folks and that statement is: "I just can't trust anyone anymore." It's as if no one is trustworthy and I hear people saying to me, "I have trust problems," "I have trust issues," and we all have a story. Right? We all have stuff that's gone on and it has programmed how we think along these lines. I want to talk about trust this morning. I want us to think about that a little bit, but let me ask you this question. If you look at yourself for a moment, would you say people can trust you? Because it's interesting how a lot of us have trust issues because everyone around us is untrustworthy, but we look at ourselves and we go, "Yeah, I'm trustworthy."

And then I think about Jesus Himself when He chooses those who He would spend the most time with while He's here on this earth—His disciples. And in Luke chapter 6 we read of the ones Jesus picks and I want to read to you from Luke chapter 6 this morning because what happens in this scenario with Jesus I think begins to inform a little bit about our trust issues. So let me read to you from Luke chapter 6 starting at verse 12. It says this:

*<sup>12</sup> In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. <sup>13</sup> And when day came, he called his disciples*

— those who would follow Him, those who would walk beside Him on this earth, those who would carry out His mission once He was gone. So this is a big deal. This is a huge prayer that he has. *God, who do I choose, how do I choose them, which ones do I choose?* It is a reminder that, yeah, let's—before we step into a relationship—let's bathe that relationship in prayer. I keep on reading Luke chapter 6, verse 13:

*<sup>13</sup> And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: <sup>14</sup> Simon, whom he named Peter,*

— you may remember this guy would ultimately deny Him —

*and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, <sup>15</sup> and Matthew,*

— he was a tax collector; you may remember those guys were hated by all, no one trusted them —

~ LUKE 6:12-15a

*and Thomas,*

— that's a familiar one to us; he would doubt Jesus —

*and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot,*

— Zealots were a political party in that time and their whole focus was to somehow overtake Rome, overthrow Rome, so here Jesus is choosing a guy who's part of a political party that wants to overthrow Rome. Basically, he was the terrorist of that time. And then we read this:

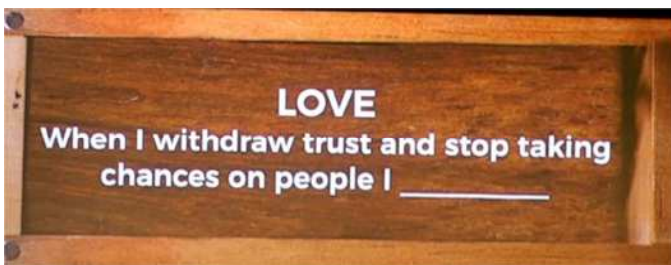
<sup>16</sup> *and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.*

~ LUKE 6:15b-16

You know that guy. He's the one who betrays Jesus, who isn't even a believer. It causes me to ask the question: How is it that this is the group of guys when He goes to choose the ones he's going to choose—the God of the universe—how these are the ones He chooses? Were they just poor picks? Were His prayers not answered? So He prays to God upfront. You would think if you prayed about something that it might turn out all right. Now you might think back, "Well, yeah, but I probably haven't prayed right or long enough in the right way." This is Jesus praying and you see the types of guys that end up coming out of that. Here's what I know; I know my God isn't going to make a bad choice so it's not a poor pick. And I'm convinced that when Jesus prays God hears and so this is not a matter of Him praying wrong and His prayers not being answered. As I read this I realized that Jesus purposely chooses flawed people that are very, very, very risky to invest His life into.

And here's the thought that I would like to plant into our minds this morning: That group of people that we've written off, that we're quick to say, "I have trust issues," "I don't trust," "I don't trust anyone"; that group of people that we've written off— isn't it interesting that Jesus would choose from that group betrayers? Even this group that Jesus chooses, He's in the Garden of Gethsemane praying and they fall asleep on Him even in that most desperate moment before He's about ready to be taken off to the cross and they fall asleep on Him. Later on, these same guys will be caught arguing over who's going to be the greatest in the Kingdom. And here's what I recognize—that's not a problem for Jesus. We're quick to write them off. Not Jesus. Jesus sees that people are going to be flawed and He loves them enough to choose them anyway.

I want you to think about this statement: When I withdraw and stop taking chances on people, what happens? In fact, I drew a line up here on the screen, fill in the blank should I say. When I would



withdraw and stop taking chances on people, I think I miss the opportunity to share the grace that Jesus showed me. I miss the opportunity to offer redemption that was offered to me. Isn't redemption the most beautiful thing? I get to give it as a gift to a person. Isn't grace received the most beautiful thing? I get the opportunity to give it to a person. Forgiveness, I get to give it to a

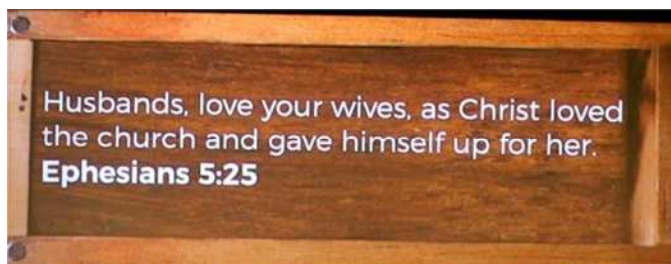
person. And when you look at Jesus this is what He's doing to these twelve. They're sinners like we are. Go around this room, we have our list of sins. We're sinners. We come up short. And Jesus comes and He loves us, loves us, loves us.

I wanted to bring that up first today because I think our thought process is that somehow I need to shut down on the people that I cannot trust. They are not worthy of me. I've got it all so together and I'm so trustworthy myself. I couldn't be around them. But the One who can be trusted, Jesus Himself, He

reaches out in love to those people. Here's what I'm convinced; the enemy wins when we fail to trust others because in that moment we can't show the love of Jesus to someone else. We can't show the love that Jesus has for us. We can't be a part of shedding that love to someone.

My wife and I were talking about someone who used to make a comment just constantly, he would say, "I never apologize for trusting someone." That's one you have to stop and let it sink in a little bit because most of us who have trusted someone who has failed us, we feel sort of frustrated ourselves, "I trusted them and look what happened." You know, in the midst of trusting that person I had the opportunity to be like Jesus, to show the love of Jesus to that person.

Think about Jesus for a moment. Ephesians chapter 5, verse 25, describes what Paul says to husbands; it is this: Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. He gave himself for her. How much are we to love our wives, men? So much that we're just like Jesus that we would die for her. What if she's not trustworthy? What if she doesn't please us? How much are we to love her? So much that we'd give our lives up for her just like Jesus did for the church. He becomes our model for how we treat others—even people that have breached our trust.



Keep those thoughts in your mind as we're moving forward. That's a huge mind shift from what is generally accepted principles in our time. We all think we're trustworthy; everyone else is untrustworthy. We need to protect ourselves from them. We harden ourselves and throw up a wall.

Here's what I know, I cannot fix other people's trustworthiness. I cannot make other people more trustworthy. But one thing I can do is I can work on my own trustworthy mess. So I'm going to throw out a number of words here to you this morning and these words lead to trust; three words that lead to trust. If you're taking notes, this is worth throwing them onto a piece of paper, take some notes on here.

So to get to trust we start with a foundation of commitment. So at the very bottom here is commitment.



What are the commitments that I make? When I make a commitment I'm making an agreement. So we make commitments all the time. They're a good thing; they help order our world. I make a commitment to you that we're going to start this service at 11 o'clock and if I start this service at 11 o'clock, I've kept my commitment. Have you ever been in one of those places where everyone's

looking around going, "Man, there's not many people here. Why don't we just sort of delay a little bit?" And those people that were here earlier, on time, they're sitting there waiting because other people didn't keep their commitment to be here on time and so we sit here and we wait. All of a sudden what's that make us when we say, "Hey, we won't start when we said we were going to start." We made a commitment that we were going to start at 11. What happens when we don't start at 11? We're uncommitted.

You say, "Well, that's sort of a little thing because we've all been in that situation." We've all been in that room where we're like, "Let's just wait a few more minutes," and people come running in late, "Sorry, there's a traffic jam out there." You know, "There weren't enough parking spots." "The alarm didn't go off," and they're full of excuses of why they didn't keep their commitment. And then everyone else responds back, "Hey, no problem, no problem." Why? Because we live in a world that wants no

commitments. We want to be free from our commitments so we don't hold each other to their commitments and so pretty soon what happens? No one has any commitments. No one's fulfilling any commitments. Thus, we're uncommitted which causes us all to have a trust problem. Next time the meeting is said it's going to start at 11 you don't show up at 11, you show up at 11:15 because you know the meeting really starts at 11:15. Is that making any sense? The fact of the matter—what's that mean? I mean you can't trust when they say it's going to start at 11 that it's going to start at 11 because, really, it's probably gonna start at 11:15.

And some of you are dealing with that in your work lives. Some of you are dealing with that in your home life. Some of you are dealing with that with your spouse. It's a relational issue that we struggle with in a world that refuses to be committed. In a world that says, "Well, that was a little commitment. It's not a big deal. You know, Pastor, if you started five minutes late I don't care. It's all good." That's just a little commitment. There are big commitments like marriage, that's a big commitment. Hopefully you'll keep that, but keeping this on time... and see what happens is we have this mistaken idea of little commitments and big commitments, but everyone is watching us and taking note of whether we're a person that keeps our commitments or bails on our commitments. And when people see that we keep our commitments consistently you just become fully predictable. "We know what he's gonna do next." "We know where this is going." "Here's how he does it every time." It ultimately leads to a place where you go, "I can trust what he's saying." Whether it's a little thing or a huge thing, you are a person that has the ability to create commitments, agreements, and keep those agreements.

One of those agreements I like to think about because I think it helps flush this out a little bit is driving. So a person at age 16 goes and gets their license. It's a real exciting moment and at that moment when the picture is taken they have you sign something that then puts your signature on the back of your license, and no one's really much thinking about much at that point because they're really happy that they passed the test and they're really happy that they're going to get this license. They're really happy they can now post this on Facebook that they're a licensed driver, and the mother's jumping up and down because she can post it on Facebook, and the father's breathing deeply because the insurance is going to skyrocket and all those kinds of things. No one's thinking about why you signed that at the moment but waiting you signed that at that moment what you're saying is you'll follow the rules of the road. And the thought process is, "Yeah, that's fine, that's all good." And so after a time of getting used to driving your vehicle pretty soon you start driving 10-15 miles over the speed limit. You think to yourself, "Hey, that's no big deal. I'm just keeping up with traffic. Right? Everyone else is doing it." But you said you made a commitment to follow the rules of the road—which is it?

Think of it this way. We drive on the right side of the road in America. You say, "Well, yeah, my family lineage came from another country so I don't do that. I drive on the left side of the road. I just know having studied road technology in school and all, I just think that's a whole better system than this driving on the right side of the road, so I'm just going to do it." It doesn't go real well. We laugh nervously because we all can picture that car coming down a freeway in the wrong lane and the chaos that ensues. You see what happens when someone doesn't keep their commitment—chaos ensues. When we all keep our commitment and drive in the right lane, there is safety in that. There's comfort in that.

And in fact, think about this for a moment: When you merge to get on the highway and you're merging and you're going into that right lane and all the cars are going the same speed and you're just sort of sliding into your spot there, you never think about it, you never think which side of the highway should I be getting onto? You just know that this is where you get on because you have consistently gotten into the right lane to drive in America and it's become quite predictable. And you know what those cars are

going to do and that's why the road system works so well. But it all is founded on a commitment that we have made to some very specific things that we are going to do.

And here's where this all falls apart in marriage. We stand up and we stand before a group of people on this wonderful wedding day spending lots and lots of money and we say these things called vows or promises or agreements or commitments, that foundation of the marriage. Here's what I'm going to do; I am gonna love you for the rest of my life.

By the way, that's why we talked last week about a covenant as opposed to a contract because when two imperfect people say, "I'm gonna love you for the rest of my life," that's basically an incredible promise to make unless you have God intervening into that. And that's what a covenant says. I'm coveting between me and this other person but also God in-between there that He's going to help us through this. But you make this vow, you make this promise, and you make this list of promises and you read them back and forth to each other. And really, all you're trying to do is get that done so that you can slide that ring on so that he can pronounce you husband and wife so you can get out there—you know, the whole program and there's not much thought given to these promises that we make the most huge foundational, bedrock commitment of our relationship. And then beyond that we make a vow till death do us part. That's one that's probably been in most of ours or all of ours—till death do us part—until that other person displeases us, says something that we don't like, does something that we don't like, and we go, "Whoa! Whoa! I didn't see that one coming! N-n-n-n-no, not with me! I'm out."



WHOA! WHOA!

Or they say, "If that happens again, I'm out. And what the question mark is and the inconsistency here is is that I made a vow, I made a promise, I made a commitment till death do us part and I said, "Yes, I want to do that with the help of God, till death do us part." But we break that commitment the moment we go, "No, I'm out." And when we break that commitment we are what I would call "uncommitted."

You say, "No, I'm a pretty committed person." No, you broke commitment; that makes you uncommitted. And every time we break commitment that makes us uncommitted. When we keep our commitments it makes us committed and it shows consistency which eventually means predictability. You can count on it.

I would throw this out to you: What commitments have you made in your marriage? I want to throw two out to you I think are interesting. First one is: Do you pray together or have you made a commitment to pray together? Most vows don't have that in it in a marriage ceremony so maybe it wasn't in your vows, but I hope that you have more commitments to each other than what was in your vows. But I mentioned to you last week about the facts and the figures about praying together and this is what the Barna research agency said that those who pray together every day the rate of divorce is one divorce for every 1,200 marriages.



I tried to look up what the divorce rate is in general population. There's a lot of discussion back and forth about that and a lot of argument as to what that really is because if you take into account first marriages and second marriages and is it per year or is it per lifetime and all that kind of stuff. I don't know that that matters but basically there seemed to be a general consensus that maybe if you hit down around 42% would be what the chance of divorce is in America today. So if you get married, the chances of divorce are 42%. What Barna is saying is that actually it's 1 in 1,200 if you pray together

every day. If I take that 42% and try to put it in a number like this it's actually 504 is what the divorce rate is of 1,200. So the average divorce rate in America today is 504 people out of 1,200 are going to get divorced. If you'll pray every day it reduces it to 1 in 1,200, if you pray every day together.

Now let me throw you another one. Barna also said in this study if you read your Bible together every day it is 1 in 1,100 is the chance of you getting divorced. If I did that 42% number again, it would equal 462 out of 1,100 that get divorced. So if you don't read your Bible together every day, you move from the chance of 1:1100 to 462:1100. When I look at these results—and I don't know that they've done any research where they put reading their Bible together AND praying together into the statistic—but I look at it and here's what I would throw out to all of us. A lot of us in here are struggling in their marriages. A lot of you come in here going, "Man, I'm about up to here. We're sinking. This is getting risky right now." What if you as a couple left here today and said, "Well, those two things we can do easily. We can pray together. We can read our Bible together everyday. That's the least we could do if these are the kinds of results."



And here's why it works: Because all of a sudden—remember we said we want to have a covenant relationship with God?—we're letting Him in. The contract just says if you don't please me, then this happens, and if you please me, this happens, and it goes back and forth. We said the covenant says if I let God into this relationship, I'm going to get different results. So probably I could say to you today if everything I say is worthless today but you solve these two results and you acted on them, it would rock. But I can guarantee you there will be people that'll slide into a counselor's office that have been through these messages and the question will be is: Do you pray together everyday? And it's like, "Yeah, no, we don't do that." You begin to really wonder how much am I really willing to go after this? We want to come in here and be taken apart. We want the counselor to say to the other spouse in this couple, "You're wrong. You didn't do this right." When we can just step back and do these two things and it would make a radical difference,

Hey, just let me ask you about a few other commitments that you may have made, might make to each other, because oftentimes it's how you talk to each other that makes a huge difference. Do you have a commitment about tone of voice? Do you have a commitment about openness and honesty? My wife and I have a commitment of no secrets in our marriage. We have one of those documents that we keep that has every password that we can think of on that document. Now most of the reason for that is because we can't remember them, but we maintain the same document together. I can look at anything of hers at any time that I want. She can look at anything of mine anytime she wants. She can open my mail; I can open her mail. I can look at her computer; she can look at my computer. There are no secrets.

I had a friend who was on his second marriage and he was talking to another friend and they were talking about how they struggle with trust because of their first marriage and they have this way of basically projecting some of the issues from the first marriage onto the second marriage. And the guy said, "You know, the way I figure out if my wife is telling me the truth is I grab her cellphone and I run into the bathroom with it and lock the door and if she doesn't freak out then I know that she's not hiding anything. You know a lot of our problems are because we're hiding things, because we're keeping secrets, and we don't have this openness to each other.

Do we have commitments regarding our kids? Do we have commitments regarding our money? Think about this: Do we have commitments on how we're going to serve each other? That was our take-away

from last week going, "Hey, would you go home—and you can't affect the other person, you can't make them do anything—but would you just serve that other person all week this week? Because when we take a physical step forward there's something about our heart comes along with it and others see that and it softens them tremendously and so we just said would you go home and serve the other people and we heard some cool stories. By the way, tell your stories back when they happen. We would love to hear those stories and to be able to have the opportunity to share their stories.

Well, anyhow, this week as I was thinking about this I came across a statistic. Evidently in business and in hiring there is a piece of the process of hiring, making a good hire, that really you can't test for, you can't interview for, you can't chase down references for, they called it the "soft science of hiring" and it has to do with serving. They said 26% of the possibility of whether that employee will turn out to be a good employee you can't test in advance because it has to do with whether they'll be a servant or not; whether they will serve others on the job. So even in a business magazine that I'm reading it says that's a key part of an employee being a healthy part of the team, that's going to be a successful employee, that's going to last—does that person want to serve and give of themselves, and you can't check that out ahead of time fully. It causes me to go, "Wait a minute, this comes back to our marriages."

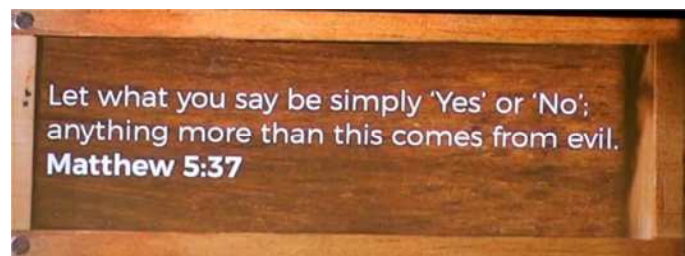
By the way, if we cannot be committed in our marriages, if we cannot maintain a commitment there, why would anyone trust us in any other environment that we could keep our commitment? Understand also that in our lives when we are not keeping our commitments we're showing to people around us that this doesn't work. Our kids are watching us, they are copying us, they are mimicking what we are doing.

You see the average person that I run across breaks commitments and they make excuses and they feel ok, but committed people keep their commitments. They're dogged about that. Keeping their commitments, doing what they say, and that becomes over time something that gets repeated over and over and over again until it becomes predictable and thus as a result that spouse begins to say, "I trust him."

It was fun this morning as I was standing out in the lobby had people say, "Hey, what are we talking about today in this marriage thing?" And I would say, "Trust," and they were like, "Good!" —because we're struggling with that. But the question is: What are we going to do with that? And here's what I would want for you today is that you would renew your commitments; that you would renew your commitments to your spouse.

By the way, if you're not married and you're planning on being married someday, begin now thinking as to what are those commitments I want to have with my future mate? What are those commitments and how would I commit to keeping those? And if you're dating, watch—is that other person someone that keeps their commitments? I mean, so many times we get blinded by all the stuff that comes in around love and dating and marriage and all this kind of stuff and we miss that. Dating is the time to ferret that out, to chase that down, to check that out. What I would love to see you do though, those of you who are married today, is renew your commitments.

There was a time, I don't know if it was just the group I was hanging out with, everyone was asking me to renew their vows. Here's what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5. He says let your yes be yes and your no be no. There it is on the screen:



That I would be able to know that when I say something and I say yes it's going to happen. We don't need to go renew that because it's been my commitment from the beginning. I *will* do what I say. But my heart for you today is that you would come to a place where you'd say, "Yeah, let me think through what those vows are. Let me think through what those promises are and let me renew those in that I will repeat to my spouse: Yes, I'm in. I'm going to do that. And you know what? I'm going to start doing it and doing it and doing it until I am predictable.

Now, let's back up for a minute because here's what I think happens so oftentimes. We start doing it and doing it and doing it. We're doing pretty good and we mess up, we fail. One, we beat ourselves up and say we can't do it. Two, very often when it's our spouse that messes up we go, "See, I knew I couldn't trust you. I'm done! I just can't go through this anymore. I can't take this anymore. I'm not doing this anymore." And then we back out of our commitments. You know one of the commitments I believe that we need to make to each other is that we are going to think the best of each other, that we *are* going to forgive each other, that we're going to love each other through the times when we fail. Something we need from each other as spouses is that we love each other enough to know that we *aren't* perfect people.

We've talked about that taking two imperfect people and putting them together and expecting something perfect to happen. When we are long-suffering to each other and we're helping each other, no one knows us as well as our spouse does. And if there ought to be someone in this world that accepts us for who we are—we don't have to stay there, we don't have to keep on being there—but that they can pick us up and help us in that moment. That's something we're all longing for and that's why I started out with this story about Jesus and the disciples that He's choosing. He knows that we're all sinners. It wasn't like He was going to pick any better ones. You pull 12 people out of a population you're going to get a group like that. You pull 12 people out of this room, this very room, you're going to get a group of people like that even though most of us would raise our hands and say we're trustworthy. We need someone to love us like Jesus loves us in our lives, and we need to be loving others like Jesus loves others. And, you know, it's hardest to love our own families; it's hardest to love those people right next to us. They get frustrating to us but that's why God's placed us in each other's life to be redemptive to those people and love them and pick them up.

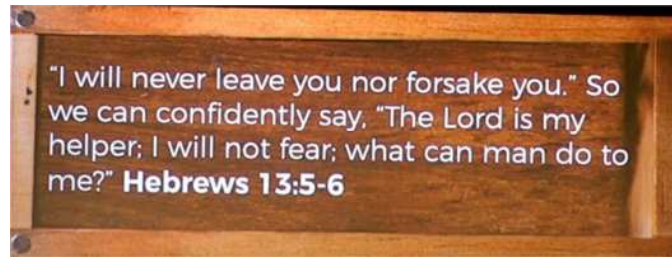
I say that because I think sometimes in a moment like this we go, "Yup, I'm in. I'll make those commitments. I know which commitments that she's been nagging me that I'm not keeping. I'm in. I am NOT a person that has low integrity. I want to live right. I want to do what I say. I say that I do that, but I haven't been so I'm in." But the first time you mess up, BAM! It's all over. I don't want you to be in that spot.

To wrap this up, let's remind ourselves what I was just talking about. People will fail you. That's why I think it's insane for us to come to this place, to lock down, build up the wall in saying, "I have trust problems and so I'm done trusting people." We all are smart enough, live long enough, mature enough to know that people will fail us.

But there's One who won't and I'm going to read to you from Hebrews chapter 13, verses 5-6, because, I don't know, I think sometimes we're putting, we're placing on other people something that we can't even perform on and so we're casting on other people this thing that you need to treat me with perfection when I know I can't treat you with perfection. I can't nail this a hundred percent of the time so we need one who we can go to that we know one hundred percent of the time that we can trust.

In the book of Hebrews we read these words where God says:





When we're depending on our spouse to be our Savior, our spouse is going to fail us. When we're depending on our spouse to bring our happiness, they're going to fail us. When we're depending on our spouse to be that perfect one that we hold onto, they're going to fail us. But when we hold on to Jesus, He says I will never leave you; I will never forsake you. And so you don't have to live in fear; you know you have The Rock to go to.

We've oftentimes described this idea of putting our trust in Him in the terms of ABC's. Admit that you're a sinner—"A"—admit that you're a sinner. We're so quick to point at our spouse and see their weaknesses and where they've come up short, but to step back and go, *I am a sinner. I have fallen short.* "B" – believe in Jesus. Put your faith and trust in Jesus as the One who will never leave you, never forsake you. He came to give His life for you. Even that ratty-tat group of guys that He put together, even though they messed up so miserably and they all but one took off after He was crucified, yet that group of guys—He used that group of guys to turn the world upside-down for His cause. It would be those guys that would go out completely convinced of Jesus and who He was; that He died for them and they would tell everyone about Him. It transformed them.

Jesus is in the business of transforming people and when we give up on our spouse we're saying they're beyond Jesus. We're saying because they treated us not quite right that they're done; they're a lost cause. When we believe in Jesus we do that because we admit that we are a sinner and we have come short and we commit to following Him for the rest of our lives. That's the "C", commit. It goes back to this commitment. Let me tell you, all these other commitments are shallow if you've never made a commitment to Jesus. None of the rest of these commitments matter and you won't get the help that you need from God Himself to even fulfill these commitments. At the foundation and bedrock of commitment is putting our faith and trust in Jesus alone. If you've never done that before, then put aside all this other marriage talk and go there first because when you have a relationship with Jesus Christ it's going to propel you. It's going to change your relationship with your spouse and that's why all of a sudden when you pray together and you read your Bible together it's going to transform things because it's gonna begin to hit you and apply in your life where you need to have it applied.

So let me say this and let's talk about some next steps. We talked about that next step of last week where we said, hey, let's serve each other for this week. Let's find a way no matter even if the other person doesn't serve us, serve each other. And, again, if you've seen some cool things happen as a result of that, would you shoot those at us? We would love to hear about those. This week here's what we'd like to ask you to do: Would you take time every day to pray with your spouse? By the way, this doesn't have to get complicated, it doesn't have to get weird, it doesn't need to be something that's awkward. Pick a time when you know you're together and just take a moment and pray for your spouse, and pray for your home, pray for your kids, pray for your needs. I invite you to say, "That's what I want to do this week,"—pray for your spouse.

I want to mention in this week's program there are a number of opportunities of things that you can do that'll make a difference in your marriage. One, this Thursday night up in the loft, and it's in the

program, Pastor Mike is going to be leading a prayer time just for families and marriages. Everything you can do to give this marriage a boost right now jump into it. I'm always telling people read a book, meet with a mentor, find someone that's a little bit further on in your marriage. Coming up in November, and again it's in your program, is something called *Weekend to Remember*. By the way, tomorrow's the last day where you get a buy-one-get-one free at it, it makes it half-price. Take a stand for your marriage and say, "We're gonna sign up for it." It's a conference that's held all over the country with the best speakers from all over the country. Because it's in King of Prussia in November you don't even need to get a hotel when you're up there. You can just go back and forth each day and just get that boost.

In two weeks, I think it's on the 27th of September, on Wednesday nights we're going to start a video series called *Oneness in Marriage*. I read a whole list of things—communication, sexual intimacy, money, conflict resolution, roles, responsibilities—6:30 to 8 p.m. for eight weeks starting September 27. There's childcare and all sorts of stuff going on on this campus on Wednesday nights. In fact, if you're not coming on Wednesday nights, come on Wednesday nights. There's stuff for your kids, there's stuff for women, men, youth, junior high'ers; just come and hang out. But on the 27th we're starting an 8-week class on this *Oneness in Marriage*. Let's start taking stand for your marriage. I can't say enough in this room to fix every situation and every outlier. There's many outliers. There's one-off, there's "yeah, but", questions being asked and I'm hoping this opens up conversations. I'm hoping you're in a small group.

If you want to be in a small group write on the back of your card that is in the chair in front of you, "I want to be in a small group." If you want more information about these marriage things, it's in there, again, it's in your program today. But here's what we'd like you to commit to for the next week: Would you just pray with your spouse everyday for this next week?

Let me pray for you.

*Jesus,*

*There's a lot of people in this room right that now need a boost in their marriage today, and some of them need CPR and Lord, I pray that you'll bring that. I pray that they'll take everything being offered to them, they'll grab on to it, but more than that, Jesus, You've promised never to leave us or forsake us. I pray they'll grab on to You hard today.*

*We ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.*

We'll give you an opportunity to give your gifts and your tithes and your offerings back to the Lord right now. At the end of each row starting over here [*points off to his right*], right here, right here is a bucket. If you're sitting on the end of the row reach under and see if there's a bucket under there. If you would, just pass that across. We give the first 10% of what God's given us back to Him, that's just what we believe here at Calvary and we just allow it to be used to continue to let this Gospel message go forward that's changing lives, so thank you so much for saying, "God, You're first in my life."

[Break]

*I pray that as we leave here today we'll hold on tight to You and that will impact every aspect of our lives.*

*We ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.*

Hey, if you walked in here today and you got one of these programs [*he holds it up*], just a comment about those. On the front you'll see a note about Harvey relief. One of the things that's been cool as we've been praying for those in Florida and those in Texas, a number of people in our own church have just jumped in and one of the things that someone in our church has jumped in with us is they're taking a tractor-trailer down to Texas and they're collecting formula, disposable diapers, and baby wipes. You'll see it here on the top black portion of your program, and we're only collecting them for a short amount of time because they're taking them in the truck down there. If you'd like to be a part of that there are barrels at the doors; you can bring those back during the week and put them here. I asked why is that needed. They said a lot of the families that were displaced down in Texas don't have the means to go back to where they were at and a lot of their apartments are locked up and closed up and so they're still in shelters and they need baby formula, food, and diapers. So this will be a big deal, us taking that down there, so if you'll be a part of that that'd be awesome.

Also, I want to mention to you. This summer we did a pilot program where we did sports for adults during the week, 15 and above, and it turned out to be a really fun time and people started inviting their neighbors and their friends. You know after you graduate from high school no one ever lets you play sports again and so we started doing it here. God's provided us with this wonderful gym so here's the deal. It's on the card here but Tuesdays 7-9 p.m. soccer, indoor soccer, right here in the gym; Wednesdays 8-10 p.m., basketball, here in the gym; and Thursdays, 7-9 p.m., volleyball, here in the gym. That starts this week. Invite a friend, invite a neighbor, invite a co-worker, and it's a great way for us to connect and just build relationships with people and just connect with people you wouldn't with otherwise and have a great time.

Hey, listen, I think there's still coffee and probably a few bagels out there left. Enjoy each other, connect with each other, encourage each other. Thank you for being here. Come back Wednesday night; there's a lot going on here. God bless you. Have a wonderful Sunday.

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/234304019>

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/7a3eYCF1eZg>

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