

# Celebration Sunday - The Church

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Well, I am so blessed and honored to serve with the greatest guys in the world. Brother Warren Frick is our seniors pastor, and a man I highly love and respect. And I'm just excited about everything that he has done and is doing.

And Brother Frick, you come on. You can bring out Mike beside you if you want a handheld. And he doesn't want a handheld. You want a handheld? But I want you to welcome Brother Frick with a good, strong amen. And he's going to preach to us for a minute.

Thank you. I have 60 seconds for a minute. Did you say he's going to speak to us for a minute? Not 60 seconds.

Okay. I am delighted to have the opportunity to share some things with you on Anniversary Sunday. And certainly we know what our name is. We are Vision Baptist Church.

[ 1 : 1 4 ] And you can do a lot to describe what the significance of the word vision is. You can describe what the word Baptist means. My topic that was given to me is the primacy of the local church.

And the primacy of the church. 115 or so times the word church appears in our New Testaments. How would you, if you were to tell somebody what does the word church mean, how would you define it?

Where would you go to find a definition for the word church? Well, if you look in a dictionary, you're going to find one of the definitions is that it's a building.

Does your, is your building, is your church made out of brick? Or is your church made out of wood? The word church is today understood somewhat as the church building. Sometimes it is understood as the services that are in the church.

We invite people, would you go to church with me today? What do we mean, would you go with me to church? Well, we mean, would you attend services with me? We use the word church to refer to denominations.

[ 2 : 2 9 ] Recently, the Catholic Church just selected a new pope. We have the Baptist Church, the Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church, the Episcopalian Church, the Church of the Latter-day Saints, Mormons, the Seventh-day Adventists.

The word church can sometimes refer to denominations. How would you define what is church? I think we have to go for the short time we have to the first time that the word church is used in the New Testament.

And it's in Matthew 16, verse 18. And it's the words of Jesus. Jesus said, Thou art Peter, which is the word petros, which is the word pebble, a small stone.

You are a small stone, Peter. But upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

You are a small pebble on this rock, on this mountain, on this vast stone I will build my church. He was referring to himself.

- [ 3 : 53 ]     There are those that would say that the church is built on Peter. We understand that Peter is a pebble. He is a small stone. And Jesus said, on this rock, he was referring to himself. We do not have a video of Jesus as he's talking and sharing, I will build my church. And upon this rock, I think there would be a significance there that you are Peter, small pebble, small stone, upon this rock. And it would be very clear that he's emphasizing himself. Upon this rock, I will build my church. Covenant promise, I will. I will. Whether men are involved or not, or whatever, I will. I will build my church, Jesus said. As good a promise as you'll have anywhere. I will build. How do you build? If you're going to build a building, you build one brick at a time. The church of believers is built one believer at a time.
- [ 5 : 01 ]     The angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner who repents. Every time a sinner comes to Christ, the angels in heaven rejoice. The church is built one person at a time. I will build my church. It's his church. It's not man's church. Men try to make things their church. But it is the Lord's church. We need to remember that. And then, I want us to, for the few moments that we have, emphasize the significance of what Jesus said, I will build. He said, I will build. The word is ekklesia, and we have all become aware of what that means. It's, we have to be careful lest that word dies. It's very, very important to us. The word ekklesia is made of two words, ek, which is a preposition out, and kaleo, which is a verb to call.
- [ 6 : 03 ]     Together, ekklesia means ones called out, called out ones, or an assembly of called out ones. One at a time, God calls his people to be saved. We have to understand that called out has two sides. One, what are we called out from? Two, what are we called out to? To be called out from, number one, we're called out from our sinfulness. In Isaiah 118, the prophet said, as the Lord would speak, Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Come, and let me deal with your sins for you. The invitation is, come out of your sinfulness, your stains that are upon your life, and let me clean you up. Number two, we're saved out of our lostness.
- [ 7 : 10 ]     Luke 19.10, the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. Like a sheep that's lost, and the shepherd has to find it, so our Savior has come to seek and save that which is lost. We are called out from our sinfulness. We are called out from our lostness. Number three, we are called out from darkness. 1 Peter 1.9, that he might show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. The ecclesia are the called out ones. Missionaries that we have, we call them missionaries, but they are church planters. Their whole burden and desire is to go somewhere, reach souls for Christ, establish the church as Jesus has bore it to be. What are we saved from? Now that's just a scattering of thoughts of sinfulness, lostness, darkness. What are we saved to? We are called out, number one, to restfulness.
- [ 8 : 21 ]     Rest. Rest. Matthew 28 verses 30, 28 to 30. Matthew 11 verses 28 to 30. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

We are called out to find rest. Number two, we are called out to holiness. 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 15 and 16.

1 Peter 1 verse 15.

But as ye know, he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy.

[ 9 : 32 ] We are called out to holiness. We are called out to fellowship. 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 9.

God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his son, Jesus Christ our Lord. I think it's wonderful. We had fellowship with the world at one time, but by the ecclesia, by the called out, we are called out to fellowship with Jesus.

Number four, we are called to liberty. Galatians chapter 5 verse 13. For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty.

Only use not your liberty as an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For brethren, you have been called unto liberty.

Now, I'm not exhaustive on all the things we're called to. I'm just giving you a little idea that we are the ecclesia. We are the called out. We are called from something, and we are called to something.

[ 10 : 49 ] Lastly, the last one that I'll give you is we are called to the kingdom and glory. 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 verses 11 and 12. 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 verses 11 and 12.

As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Who has called you unto his kingdom and glory. One day that will be fulfilled for us. The kingdom will come and we will share in his glory.

I think it's marvelous. Jesus said, I will build my ecclesia, my called out ones. The called out ones are called out from sin, darkness.

We are called to rest, holiness, fellowship, liberty, kingdom, and glory. I'm not exhaustive. I'm not hitting everything that he has called us to.

[ 12 : 01 ] The last thing that I want to emphasize to you is that this word, ecclesia, is feminine in gender. It is not neuter.

It is not masculine. The word ecclesia is feminine. Why is that significant? Because the church is the bride of Christ.

The bride. Ephesians chapter 5. Verse 23.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the called out ones. And he is the savior of the body.

Therefore, as the called out ones are subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as also Christ loved the called out ones and gave himself for her.

[ 13 : 14 ] That he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word. That he might present her to himself a glorious assembly of called out ones.

Not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.

He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the called out ones.

For ye are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they too shall be one flesh.

This is a great mystery. But I speak concerning Christ and the assembly of the called out ones. As a bride is called out to leave her mother and father and to be joined to her husband.

[ 14 : 21 ] So we have been called out from the world to be joined unto Christ. In 2 Corinthians chapter 12.

Did I have to try to hurry here to save a little bit of time for the other guys? 1 Corinthians chapter 12. 2 Corinthians chapter 11. I'm sorry, verse 2.

Get my things going here. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy. For I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

And then in Revelation 19.7, it speaks of the marriage supper of the Lamb. And in Revelation 22, verse 17, one of the last words of our New Testament.

The invitation is from the bride and the spirit. It says that the spirit and the bride say come. And let him that heareth say come.

[ 15 : 22 ] And let him that is a thirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. The invitation is to come out from your sinfulness.

Come to Christ. And the spirit and the bride say come. We are the bride. And we are to fulfill that call of inviting to come.

The spirit and the bride say come. I want to say to you, this word dare not die. The word called out has to go forth.

Missionaries, when you go and you establish a body of believers, you have to emphasize to them that they have been called out. Called out to something.

Called out from something. It's critical for us. If we are going to fulfill what Jesus has left us as the ecclesia, the church.

[ 16 : 26 ] All right. I mean, if you enjoyed that message, say amen. All right. We have another speaker. And Miguel, come on up. Miguel Sanabria. As far as I know, is the first fruits of Vision Baptist Church.

Before I ever got here, the guys were already meeting together. And I think the Shanes maybe are the ones that led him to Christ. But Mike, Miguel Sanabria accepted Jesus as his savior. He's preparing for the ministry.

And I'm excited to let him speak today. He was here, saved, before I ever arrived here, before we ever had our first meeting. And I thank the Lord for Miguel. If you could all turn with me to Ephesians chapter 5.

Ephesians chapter 5. This pulpit is big. It's probably bigger than I am. So thank you, brother Kevin. Let me tell you a little bit about myself.

And as Pastor was saying, thank you. Thanks to God, I was saved. God used Mike Shane to lead me through the Lord.

[ 17 : 27 ] And ever since, I mean, I've just experienced so many things that are so amazing in my life. Let me just start by telling you a little bit about myself.

I was born in Colombia, in Bogota, Colombia. In 1989, I lived there for about 12 years. And then I came here at the age of 13.

And I started living here. I went to Stanford, Connecticut. And all my life in Colombia, and when I got here, I've been a Catholic my whole life. I didn't really know much about God.

I didn't really know who Jesus Christ really was. I just knew that God was there. I knew that Jesus was there. And that's pretty much all I knew. I went to church because my parents sometimes made me go to church.

And sometimes because I just thought we just had to go to church. When I got here, I started studying. I started learning the language. It took me a while.

[ 18 : 27 ] Not very smart here. And I started learning the language. And I started going to Catholic church again. And I just kept going and going. And for a long time, I didn't really know what I was doing.

I was just here on earth. That's it. That's all I knew. And there came a time when we started doing a Spanish class in Starbucks, a meetup group to teach Spanish to people.

And that's when I met Mark Tolson, when I met David Garner, Michael Shane. I'm sorry if I'm leaving somebody out. Tyler Masters. And then Jacob Tauby.

And they all came here because they all knew Spanish from Peru. And as Pastor was saying, they all just wanted to practice it and learn more about this. And when they were here, they were in the meetup group.

They saw me. And this is what they were surprised by, that I spoke so well Spanish. And they were like, how did you learn it so well? I mean, you're white.

[ 19 : 34 ] You seem like you were born here. And you speak it so well, even just without an accent. And I told them, no, no, no, I'm not from here. I'm from Colombia. And they're like, oh, okay, now we know.

So going back to my testimony, Michael Shane, we stopped in the car. I remember it today as if it was yesterday.

We stopped in the car. He told me, okay, do you want to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? Before this, we had already gone through them telling me about God, them telling me about Jesus Christ. And I told them, yes, let's do it.

And we prayed there. And I accepted my Lord Jesus Christ. I started coming to church faithfully for about a year. And the things of this world, it started to get in my head about money, how I really wanted more money to buy things, to do more things in my life.

And my family saw me as the one that was going to become an engineer, was going to do a lot of great things, get a big house, do all these different things, and be someone that's important in life, have an important thing in life, have a good family, do all these great things.

[ 20 : 48 ] And I started getting led by the world to work and to leave my God behind and to put myself first. And for about two years, I left the church, and I pretty much just worked the whole time, went to school, and did as just any other good kid would do.

And my mom, thanks to God, that he put a burden in my mom's heart. And every time she would wake up, come to church, she would ask me, hey, do you want to go to church?

And I said, ah, no, not today. And then day by day, she would never quit. And every time God would convict me and say, you know who you are, and you know where you belong, and you know where you're supposed to go.

And one time I told her, okay, yes, mom, after probably like a year and a half, two years. And I came back, and I started growing, and I started understanding more and more about my God, and I started learning more and more about my God and who he is.

And I started falling in love with him more and more. And I'm here. Now I'm here. I've been here for a while now. I think about two years, a little bit more than two years, if I'm not mistaken.

- [ 21 : 58 ] And I've been working in the ministry, and God has shown me so many things. Throughout this whole time, and he, it's just, it's crazy what I would have missed out on if he hadn't put that burden in my mom's heart to invite me to church every day.
- And so I thank God for the privilege of being up here, being able to preach his word. And I'm nowhere near any level of any of the people that are in front of me right now.
- And so if you could come with me to the book of Ephesians chapter 5. And if you could go to the following verse, verse number 8.
- But before we go there, I want to just give a little bit of introduction of what I'm going to be talking about. And Pastor Brother Frick, he almost took my message, and I was like, junk, I didn't know what to do.
- But in the book of Ephesians, Paul is writing the letter to the church in Ephesus. Whenever he writes a letter, it's to address certain problems, certain things that the church is going through.
- [ 23 : 08 ] And here, he emphasizes towards the chapter 4 and chapter 5, he emphasizes more on how us Christians should live our Christian life.
- And he starts reminding us about different things. If we go in chapter 4 towards verse 17, he starts talking about the old man. And I started reading this, and I was like, okay, what does this really mean?
- And he says, okay, you got to put off the old man that you have. Take that off. Put it off. And then put on the new you, the new creature. And I was like, what is that? And then he says, put away the old things.
- Put away the things, the old you that you used to be. And it made me realize, okay, what does this really mean? And so I remember now.
- I remember who I was. I remember what I used to do. I remember how lost I was before I came to know Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. And so he's telling me, okay, put off that old person.
- [ 24 : 07 ] And put off that old person. Thank you, Robert. And put on this new you, this new life that Christ has given you. And put away those things that you used to do before that no longer belong to you.
- If we keep going to chapter number 5, Paul keeps telling us how to live our Christian life. And he tells us in verse 1 and 2, he tells us, follow God because you are his children.
- You are children of God. It says, walk in his love. And it reminds us of what the significance of love is. It gave us the greatest example, which is Jesus Christ, whom he gave to die for us.
- And it's the greatest, biggest example that we have of love. There's no greater way to show love than that. And now we come to chapter number 5, verse number 3 to 7.
- It talks about us being saints and how we're called to be set apart from others. How Brother Frick explained that. That we're free, no longer slaves to sin. No longer slaves to sin.
- [ 25 : 13 ] And then we keep going. He took my verse there. 1 Peter 2, 9. Which says, we've been called out of darkness into his marvelous light. His marvelous light.
- And he explained it very well. I couldn't have done it. I could never do it how he did it. Verses 4 through 7. He keeps going. And he says, that us who believe in Christ, we must follow Christ.
- That we're not part takers of this world and what this world does. Let me explain this. Because a lot of us say, we're not part takers. And we just reject everyone else.

That's not what we do. That's not what we do. That's what I thought. And pretty much at the beginning, I rejected all my friends. And I just said, you know what? Forget about my old friends. I made a mistake there.

We've got to remember we're not better than other people. We are not better. You've got to remember where you came from. If you remember that, you'll maintain yourself humble.

[ 26 : 12 ] And you'll realize that we're not better. We're all the same. And we've got to remember once the position that we were. And who we once were.

And that we live in this world. But as verse number 7 says, we are not partakers. And then we get to verse number 8, which is my message. And it's a very short message.

And it says, for ye were sometimes darkness. But now are ye light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. Let's go part by part here.

It says, we were sometimes darkness. We were darkness. It doesn't say we were in the darkness. We were darkness. We were part of the darkness.

We used to be slaves to sin. We used to do the things that any other person that doesn't know God would do. And we were just slaves.

[ 27 : 07 ] And really, we thought we had a happy life. We thought we were the best doing the, being the good person. And that was going to get us through. And we didn't really realize who we really were.

And we were ignoring God and being idolaters. Idolaters. But that I don't mean. I mean your family sometimes.

Your money. Your job. Anything that takes you away from putting God first. But more important, yourself. Trent gave me a really good picture.

One time he put himself as an Indian God. That was really good. And so we keep going. And it talks about, now we are in light.

But now are ye light in the Lord. We are now light. And not just any light. Not just any light. Let me point that out. Not just any light. We are light in Christ.

[ 28 : 05 ] Our new identity is Christ. We are just before our God. Not because of what I did. Not because of what I've done in my life. But because of what Christ has done.

Because of the sins that he's paid for me. And if we just keep going. And we see that he took our sins. And we got to understand this.

When Christ died, he took our sins. And he put it upon himself. And he gave us his righteousness. I'm not worthy of being here. I'm not worthy of being the person I got.

The new creature that he's given me. I'm not worthy of doing the things that he's put upon me. Walk. And then I end with this. At the last part it says. We must walk as children of light. Children of God.

People need to see Christ in us. What we do, what we say is very important. We need to shine as bright as we can shine. Yesterday I went visiting. And I was by myself.

[ 29 : 03 ] And I went into the trailer park. And I was walking out. I said I'm going to go visit today. And as soon as I walk out, I see 40, 50 other groups of people.

And these were all Jehovah's Witnesses. And I was like, oh my goodness. What am I going to do now? There's 40 against one. I got nothing here. And I asked God. And I prayed. I said, God, please help me.

Because I cannot do it by myself. I cannot do it on my own. And so I went. And I even invited 20 people. And these people listened to me. I thought they weren't going to open the doors to me.

Because they had already talked to all these other people. But God gave me strength. And my light shined yesterday. And my light, who is not just any light. But a light that God gave me.

Shined yesterday. And I finish with this. We are the only true light in this world. With a message. A gift of salvation. Not from men. Not from anybody.

[ 30 : 00 ] But a message. And a gift of salvation. From God. To the world. Amen. How many of you enjoyed Miguel's message? Say amen. Amen. Sometimes you don't know what you're doing.

When you are alone. And no one sees what you're doing. And you're witnessing to somebody. Or you are. Y'all getting tired of sitting there and being looked at. Y'all can leave. Don't get mad. Just leave.

Okay. But I don't blame you. I'd be wanting to move too. But Mike Shane.

Mike Shane. Taking the time to witness a young man. But the story you may not know is that Miguel didn't mention. Is that John Pearson met with him every Sunday morning.

For about an hour before church. And they together worked on translating the foundations lessons into Spanish. And before those lessons were finished. John using Miguel to help him.

[ 30 : 54 ] God grew a man. And I just thank the Lord for the privilege. I mean. You don't know what you're doing. When you're alone. And you're discipling somebody. And spending time with them. And the investment you're making is a mighty big investment for the kingdom.

And the cause of our God. Amen. All right. The next preacher this morning is Robert Canfield. He's been a blessing since he got here. Robert came. My son David met Robert on the road.

As he was preaching. And told Robert. You need to do something for God with your life. He went to Peru. He's been here now a long time. And he's like a right hand to me. And I thank God for him. Brother Robert. Well.

It's going to be a little bit redundant. What you hear today. It's going to be more about the church. And. But that's awesome though. Because that's why we're here. It's because we love Jesus. It's because we know who Jesus is.

And today I get to speak on. The promise given to the church. And Matthew. If you have your Bibles. Turn with me to Matthew chapter 16. Verses 18. And just before we get there.

[ 31 : 53 ] I just want to. Talk to you today about promises. You know. I give a lot of promises. And as you. Some people know here. Not all the time. I keep my promises.

Like I promised this week. I would have a video up for our hearts. Our desire. All the pictures. And. I didn't do good on my promise. So I just confess that right now. It was me. It's my fault pastor. You can hate me.

Thank you for saying those nice words though. I didn't know. Yeah. Yeah. I know. That's why I said it after you said it. Anyways. Just so you know.

Back in Genesis chapter 3. Verses 15. The Bible says. You know. God gave a promise. To the. To Adam and Eve. That he would provide a seed. That would crush the head of the serpent. And bruise the head of his.

Or bruise the heel of his foot. And he made good on that promise. Then in Genesis chapter 9. He says. I'm never going to flood this. I'm never going to flood this world again.

[ 32 : 48 ] And I'm going to put a rainbow up there. Just so you know. I'm going to keep my word. And I don't know. I don't know about you. But I've never seen a worldwide flood since. I've only been here for 21 years.



But I haven't seen one of those past 21 years. 27 years. I'm sorry. I said. 21. Good night. I'm a liar too. See. I told you. I don't keep good on my promises. Then he tells Abraham.

In Genesis chapter 12. He says. Of you. 75 year old man. I'm going to make a great nation. 3,000 years later. There's a nation.

About 8 million people. That's heard around all the world. And everyone knows who Israel is. Our God makes good. On his promises. When he says something. He does it.

In Matthew chapter 16. The Lord says this. He was actually asking. His disciples a question. Earlier on. He says. Who do people say that I am? And they said. Well some say that you're a prophet. Some say you're John the Baptist.

[ 33 : 45 ] Some say you're this. You're that. And Jesus says. But I want to know. Who do you say that I am? And Peter. Not of his own accord. He says this. Not of his own will.

He didn't come up with this. In his own imagination. God birthed this in his heart. He says. Thou art the Christ. Thou art the Messiah. The chosen one. The son of God.

You are Savior. And you are Lord. And Jesus says this. In verse 18. And I say unto thee also. Thou art Peter. And upon this rock.

This profession. That I am the Christ. That I am the Messiah. That I am the chosen one. That I am Lord. I will build my church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

I've only got a few minutes. But I just want to. Two points real quick. Just two points. And I'll be done. The first point that we see in this verse. Is that Christ will build his church.

[ 34 : 46 ] This is his church. Brother Frick completely showed that from us. He is the foundation actually. In Matthew chapter 21 verses 42. Jesus is explaining scripture to his disciples.

And he's saying. You know what? I will be rejected by Israel. The builders. But I am the chief cornerstone. And let me tell you something. Those of you who fall on this rock.

In verse 44. Those of you who fall on this rock. I will save. But you know what? One day I'm coming again. And this rock. This stone. Is going to be rolling. And I will crush. And ground you into powder. If you don't believe on me.

Jesus is the foundation. When Peter stands before the Sadducees. And the priest. He says this. He says. You guys are the ones that killed him. You killed Jesus. That chief cornerstone.

Whereby every person has to be saved. By that name. Jesus Christ. Given unto heaven. No man can be saved. Except for Jesus Christ. He's the foundation. Paul understood it. In 1 Corinthians chapter 3 verses 11.

[ 35 : 43 ] He says. No man can build on the foundation. Outside of Christ. No man. You can't build. On anything outside of Christ. In Ephesians. Chapter 2 verses 20.

If you want to go there real quick. In Ephesians chapter 2 verses 20. The Bible says this. Ephesians. Colossians. Okay. We got. Ephesians 2.

20. The Bible says this. Talking to the church. The saints. And you are built upon the foundations of the apostles and the prophets. Jesus Christ himself. Being the chief cornerstone.

Peter. Goes back to it. In 1 Peter chapter 2 verses 6. He reiterates the fact that. Jesus is the chief cornerstone. He is that foundation. He is the foundation.

Not only is he the foundation. But in Colossians 1.18. The Bible says. He is the head of the church. He is the head. In Ephesians 14. Actually 15. In verse 16. Jesus says.

[ 36 : 38 ] Even Christ. Even Christ. Even Christ. The head. Even Christ. And he says that. He jointly compacts us together. He supplies our needs. And Jesus is the head of the church. He is the one that purchased the church.

And he is the one that builds the church. In Acts chapter 2 verses 47. The Bible speaks. And he shows us. Praising God. After Peter on the day of Pentecost.

After he preached that. And having favor. Praising God. And having favor with all men. The Lord. Added. To the church. Daily. It's Christ.

That builds his church. In Acts chapter 5. You guys remember the story. Of Ananias and Sapphira. The people that wanted the praise. The preeminence. For the offering they gave. After Christ.

Or after God. Struck them dead. After the Holy Spirit. Killed them. You know who added more. To that church. It was the Lord. It was the Lord.

[ 37 : 36 ] That added to the church. And we've been here now. Seven years. And we've commissioned. Ten families. And we've sent out. Seven people. Seven families. To the mission field. We've started.

The Lord has used this church. To start seven churches. Lord willing. By the end of next year. We'll have eleven churches. Started from this one church. In eight years. Isn't that incredible? And we can look.

And we can pat ourselves. On the back. And say. Look what we did. But can I remind you. It was Christ. That built the church. It's Christ. That builds the church. The reason why.

We can get so excited. About a story. Like Miguel. How he preached his testimony. We can get so excited. It's not by what. What we did. It's what God was doing. And so we celebrate.

These seven years. And we. What are we celebrating? We celebrate. And all the. What we can cop it in our own mind. And all of our strength. No. We're celebrating. What Jesus Christ did here. In Alpharetta, Georgia. He built a church.

[ 38 : 32 ] And the second promise he gives. He says this. He says this. In Matthew chapter 16 verses 18. He says. I will build my church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Nothing is going to stop Christ work. Death couldn't stop Christ. And death's not going to stop us. Death didn't stop Christ.

He was resurrected after three days. it doesn't stop us. 1 Corinthians 15 verse 57 says we have victory now over death. Jesus tells his disciples in John 11, 25 and 26 he says, okay I want you guys I let Lazarus die for a reason to show you that I am the life.

I am the life and if you believe in me you shall never die. You have victory over death. Nothing is going to stop his plan. Not death, not Satan. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

We are more than conquerors. Nothing is going to stop God's plan. If you were to read the book of Acts you would see that the church was persecuted. Satan tried to stop it and he tried to persecute the church but yet it flourished.

[ 39 : 45 ] And in the book of Acts their leaders were martyred. They were killed. But yet somehow they continued on. At the end of the book of Acts Paul says beware church and defeat in Ephesus beware because wolves are going to come in and they are going to tell lies and they are going to distort the truth.

But yet somehow 2,000 years ago 2,000 years later we are sitting here and we got the truth in our hands. Nothing will stop this church. God's church. His church.

So God is making good on his promises. What's the application? Celebration Sunday. We should celebrate what God has done and what God is doing and give him all the praise and all the glory.

Thank you Jesus. How we can look back and see things that God has done in this church and done through us and we can tend to pat ourselves on the back and think that it was something of our doing. But he said let's look at what God has done.

This is all God. God built his church and this is let's focus on our God. Not ourselves. Not anything that we've done in our own strength. But this is all from God. Who has held the oceans in his hands?

[ 41 : 07 ] Who has numbered every grade of sand? Kings and nations tremble at his voice.

All creation rises to rejoice. Behold Our God Seated on his throne Come let us adore him Behold our King Nothing can compare Come let us adore him You have given counsel To the Lord You can question Any of his words You can teach

The one who knows all things You can tather all his wondrous deeds Behold our God Seated on his throne Come let us adore him Behold our King Behold our King Nothing can compare Come let us adore him Who has felt the nails The one who knows all the guilt He will show us Behold our King Behold our King Behold our King The one who knows all the guilt

Ready and■ The Lord He will Whose are the children Be cose those who are Angie Behold our King Behold the Lord Behold our King Behold our God, seated on His throne, come let us adore Him.

Behold our King, nothing can compare, come let us adore Him.

[ 44 : 15 ] You will reign for your glory, fill me up.

Behold our God, seated on His throne, come let us adore Him. Behold our King, nothing can compare, come let us adore Him.

Behold our God, seated on His throne, come let us adore Him.

Behold our King, nothing can compare, come let us adore Him.

Amen. Amen. That's right. Well, this morning before church, I was praying through the list of all of your names and asking God to work in your lives as I try to do on a daily basis.

[ 45 : 58 ] And I started thinking about seven years and I had some friends sending me texts and saying, it's got to be an exciting day for you. And so I started thinking of things I am thankful for.

And I just like to share with you a little list of some things that I'm thankful for as God has given us seven years as a church. I thank God for giving a dream to some people to start a church.

It would have a great missionary impact, be a faithful Bible preaching church, love people unconditionally and be a church that showed the love and grace of God at all.

I thank God for those that have sacrificially done so much for the Lord Jesus in the ministry since the very beginning. There are some who have suffered the spoiling of their goods.

In other words, they have given sacrificially a way above and beyond to the cause of Christ through the vision Baptist church. There are some who have given countless hours preparing music for the services here.

[ 46 : 55 ] They have practiced, prayed, served, been here faithfully and played and sang for the Lord Jesus. There are those that have cleaned and repaired the meeting place faithfully with no recognition for many years.

There are those that have operated the cameras, sound booth, etc. Without complaining and without getting much thanks for all these years. There are those that have set up and torn down our meeting place for years for the different events.

There are those that have prayed and prayed for God's blessings and power over this place. There are those that have missed so few services here that we all know they'll just be here.

There are those that have visited, invited, witnessed, tagged doors, used social media, etc. to get the word out about vision. There are those that have built web pages, design tracks and brochures.

There are those that have been involved in foundations, counseled, prayed, loved and taught others the gospel. Thank God for those that are on their own school campuses or discipling every week, though you do not hear about it.

[ 48 : 00 ] Thank God for those that minister every week in nursing homes. There are those that have taught Sunday school, worked with children, kept the nursery, been greeters, done maintenance, cut the grass, taken care of vehicles and a thousand other things.

There are those that have filled, emptied, cleaned and worked with the baptistry. I could never think of all that so many of you have done. I'm sure I'm missing a lot of people, but I want to thank all of you. God has allowed Vision to have 19 missionary families sent out of the church.

Thank God for how our missionaries have been willing to leave their homes in comfort to go around the world and carry the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thank God that 13 missionary families that are either members of our church or trained and supported by our church have left or are leaving for the field this very year.

God has allowed us to give around \$750,000 to world missions in just seven years. God has allowed us to see dozens of people get saved, baptized and be faithful serving him.

Thank God for the way you have given \$90,000 for the purchase of land or a building for our church. God has allowed us as a church to host dozens of events that have blessed pastors and missionaries around the world.

[ 49 : 11 ] God has allowed us to see the formation of Vision Baptist Missions and to serve 18 different families. God has allowed us to have a Spanish ministry that he is using to touch the hearts of Spanish people and see many of them saved and serving.

God has allowed Pastor Ronald and several of our people to go to Trinity Hill to serve and see great results of people getting saved and serving God. God has allowed us to start Vision Baptist Mableton and see them working there in great ways.

God has allowed us to have our generation training center and see dozens of young men and women get training. God has allowed us as a church to preach through 15 different books of the Bible. We're currently working on three more.

God has given you grace to endure my preaching so long. Then between me and others, you have heard now over 1,600 hours of teaching and preaching here at Vision Baptist Church.

God has given us strong lay leadership in our church, in our discipleship workers, Sunday school teachers, deacons, world evangelism committee, music ministry, sound booth, etc.

[ 50 : 17 ] God has blessed us with people that are willing to be pioneers, not have the best meeting location, not the best, most comfortable conveniences, but you've been faithful.

I do not have words to tell you how good I believe that God has been to us. If it all ended today, we would have to say that God has been super good to us and given us more than we deserved.

How many of you can say amen right there? I thank God for you. I get to serve with the best church staff, the best deacons, the best Sunday school teachers and workers, the best music ministry, great sound booth team, and all of you that make this possible.

I thank God for his goodness to me today, and I thank all of you. I thank God for those that have done so much to get our services broadcast around the world in podcasts, online, streaming, standing behind a camera, working the night shift editing and uploading material.

I'm surprised you to know this, but I got a letter this week from a man in Great Britain who watches two services a week and listens to every podcast and is blessed.

[ 51 : 21 ] I thank God for how you have stood by Betty and me. You have loved us through all of this when I wasn't the wisest or the kindest. You've been there when I was sick. You've met every one of our needs for all these years.

You've prayed for us. You've served with us. I am blessed beyond measure. All praise for everything on this list goes to God, his grace, his mercy. I know that we couldn't have done it, and only he could be so good, so I thank him.

And here I raise my Ebenezer stone to say, thank you for having brought us this far. I look forward to where he's going to take us from here. Let's bow our heads for a word of prayer and thank our God.

Father, I love you. I thank you so very much for your kindness. God, I thank you for these wonderful people. I pray, God, that you would help me to be a better pastor to them.

I pray, God, that you would bring more glory and honor to your name. And I thank you, Lord, for how they've served and how they've worked and kept nursery and just everything I've tried to mention this morning as I thought about them and prayed for them.

[ 52 : 27 ] And I just thank you, Lord Jesus, for Vision Baptist Church. I thank you for seven wonderful years. I thank you for mercy and grace. I thank you for souls saved.

And God, I just pray that today you would know that we have a heart of thankfulness to you. That we magnify you. We glorify you. We praise you. We recognize you.

And you are all in everything. And we give you great glory and great praise and great thanks for all that you've done. I love you. And I praise you for the chance to serve you. In Jesus' precious name, amen.

How many of you would be in agreement and say God has been good to us? Amen. All right. Well, right now we're going to have Trent Cornwell come and preach. And he's been a blessing to me.

Trent was here, I think, right before I got here. And God has just used him greatly. And the fact is, much of everything that goes around here, the real work is done by Trent and Robert. I just kind of get to stand in front of everybody.

[ 53 : 24 ] So you listen as Brother Trent preaches. Ed, would you like to help me? All right. If you'd like to turn to Ephesians chapter number three. The pastor mentioned many things there.

And he'd be the first to tell you that there's no set of human eyes that could tell you all that's been done at the church over the last seven years. Nobody from their vantage point could see all that takes place during any given week except God can.

He sees everything that's done and that will be done here inside of the church. And so Pastor Frank spoke of the primacy of the church. And Brother Robert showed us the promise. And I'll speak briefly about the purpose and the magnitude of the church.

Simply the purpose of the church is to glorify God. And the magnitude of the church is that when we realize that. But as I, it was such a treat to hear Miguel this morning preach.

That all of you, if you've been in this church any time at all, you should know that you're part of that. That God allowed you to be in that. But it's at moments like that we realize the magnitude of what we're doing. That we're part of something much bigger than any of us.

[ 54 : 25 ] When you saw Miguel with Tyler and Gretchen go to his house for Bible studies. Or I saw him sitting here with John in discipleship. Or I saw him around the church or up in Spanish. And I just caught those moments.

I didn't realize what all was happening. But in that moment when he was preaching, I realized that God had been doing a big work in his life all those times. And I catch a glimpse that God's doing something much bigger than any of us could ever imagine.

And in Ephesians chapter number 3, we'll look at verses 8, 9, and 10. Some of my favorite verses when it speaks about the church. But I want to show you a couple pictures here real quick. If Jacob will help me.

Some of these are funny. And some of these will help illustrate my point of not realizing the magnitude. So this was in our very first year of the church. I didn't realize behind that naked face was such a beautiful beard just waiting to get out.

But next picture, if you think I looked younger, there's our pastor. That was just on the first services. His hair was a little darker. And you can blame some of you and the prayers that he spent late nights for the hair not being as dark as it once was.

[ 55 : 25 ] Also, the bad ideas. Next picture that maybe Mark and I and Brother Tony had has probably made his hair a little bit lighter. This is us singing. You know, in that last picture we just saw him. Speaking of magnitude in those early services, met Ryan Murphy.

The Gibbies kept trying to throw away an invitation. We sent them to the church. And after throwing it away about three times and it's sticking to the top of the trash can, they gave in and came over here. You know, in those early services you meet somebody you didn't realize they're going to be lifelong friends.

And that seven years later you would be celebrating with them. That you would know of their son Brandon and look forward to the day that you get a chance to meet him. You don't know that in those moments of time. But we know that God's doing something.

What do we got next here? Here we have Brother Charles. We didn't know that founding members, that pastor's dad, that in that moment that only God was going to give us just a few more years with him and then take him on the heaven that God had given us that.

And they never know who God was going to send and be part of. Next picture here is little Thatcher. When we were starting the church, I didn't think about the fact that this church that we will be part of is a church that my son's going to be raised in.

[ 56 : 32 ] And I had no idea how big a deal that was going to be to me. That he would be in a Sunday school class where the teacher would send him a letter. That he would come to me one day and say, Dad, I'm not going to be a wizard anymore.

I'm going to be a Christian scientist because Miss Elizabeth told me wizards are bad. I'm like, I said that too. He just doesn't listen to me as well. But that helped me a lot, you know. And I didn't realize that.

Next picture here, we have the youth events and the teenagers that we would meet. And that some of them would go off and go off the boot camp. And Alex is getting back from that.

That somebody like Miguel would be standing here. They were just teenagers and it was just another youth event. Had no idea the magnitude of what God was doing in their lives. And how the Bible makes the picture there.

Didn't realize how much the preaching would change my life. That I knew we would have services and we'd set up for it. The pastor would get me to wear a dress in front of all of you. And we'd go through the book of Leviticus.

[ 57 : 27 ] And Zach and Whitney, this was in their first month at the church. And Whitney said, if they kill an animal, I'm out of here. I'm so glad we didn't kill an animal and they're still around here. But I didn't realize that the preaching would change my life.

That those 1600 hours he spoke about, that I'd been here for that. That it wasn't just be something that we were going to give to the community. But God was going to show himself strong and I was going to grow closer to him.

I don't know what we have. Just a couple more pictures here. Jacob, next one. The friends that I would make. Didn't think about moving to a new city that I would need new friends. With so many missionaries coming and going. That's something my wife and I think about.

Would God ever replace the friends that were coming and going? He's given us far more than we could ever imagine. And then one more picture of the fun that we would have here. That's Robert back in the day.

And when he came, I had no idea that I would work with him day in and day out. When we first met him and he pulled up in that clunker of a truck that he had. And then last picture here.

[ 58 : 24 ] Just the future. How much I would love going to a church that wasn't just for the cool kids. That is a church for the little kids. All the way to the oldest people inside of our church. And that my daughter would love to see a lady like Miss Sadie.

And I just love the church so much. When pastor called me, you can take that picture down. But when pastor called me over seven years ago. And I knew they were talking about a church. And he asked me if I would be part of it.

I was so excited to be part. Because I wanted to work with him. But I had no idea how much I'd enjoy working with everybody in this room. And how wonderful it's been. Apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter number three.

He takes a moment and he celebrates the magnitude. Of the church. And what God is doing. Most of us live our lives far too little. With little awareness and incredible realities around us.

We don't realize the moment that we are in. In chapter two, Paul had finished describing. How Christ came and broke down the wall between Jews and Gentiles. And he made them one people through his death on the cross.

[ 59 : 25 ] He explained the church there. And then in the end of Ephesians. He begins to pray and he thanks God. And for showing him the depth of God's love.

And that through glory in the church by Jesus Christ. Through all the ages. But it's in verses 9, 10, 11. I'd like to look at it real quickly. It says, And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery.

Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God. Who created all things by Jesus Christ. To intent now unto the principalities and powers and heavenly places. Might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.

According to the eternal purpose which you purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. After an apostle Paul inspired by God wrote this. After he said this. Put this down. He said, I bow my knee.

And he thanked God for it. Because when we stop for a moment. And realize through this church. The local church. Through this. That we bring glory to God. We must stop for a moment.

[ 60 : 22 ] And just be simply humbled by the magnitude. Of what we're part of. And that no thing goes unnoticed by him. And no small thing does not bring glory unto God.

Because when we look about and we say, What was the importance of me doing this? Or coming early and filling the coffee machine? It's of the greatest importance. It brought glory to God. Why should I invite my friends to that event?

And they never came? Because it brought glory to God. And there's nothing better that any one of us could ever do with our lives. Than to do something that would bring glory to God.

And that he allowed us through the church to do this. Everybody likes to know a good secret. And I'll let you know a secret. It says the fellowship of the mystery. And verse number 9.

Verse 4 he told us the mystery of Christ. And verse number 5. We were told that it was hid from the ages. And now revealed that it was in God from the beginning. And that when marriage was created. Later on he didn't make the church to reflect the relationship.

[ 61 : 18 ] Between the man and woman in marriage. But in creation in the marriage. He made it to reflect what he would do. Inside of the church. And him from eternity past. It was hid in him.

This mystery. That's now revealed to all of us. We know the greatest secret. In all of history. That Jesus Christ died upon the cross. To bring us together. Miss Preston here.

Born from a Jewish family. Gentiles in here. But if you take many other divisions. God has broken down. So we could be in here. I see it so many times.

There's no other reason. That ought to bring this group of people together. On a Sunday morning. But the gospel. And that was a mystery there. So the mystery of Christ. That is his death on the cross.

He purchased not just an eternal life. For individuals who trust him. But he purchased and formed a new people. A church composed of Jews and Gentiles. Who are both heirs of God's promises. And beneficiaries of God's grace.

[ 62 : 15 ] Never forget going through it. As pastors spoke about the Holy of Holies. And he showed that. Not all the Jewish people got to go into the Holy of Holies. That only one man. The Levite.

Would get to go in there. One time of year. And then the veil was torn. When Jesus and the resurrection. Now all of us get to go in there. And this was a mystery. And then it says that it was to the principalities.

And powers and heavenly places. Can I tell you that we have a much bigger audience watching us. Than you will ever imagine. As we try to get the word out. And we're working on a new project. You can read about it in your bulletin.

Let people in the community know about our church. We said we want to let them know about the most important person. And events in this community. Which is Jesus. And what he's doing through his church. But you know that we're being watched by more than that.

And what are they learning of? They're learning of the manifold wisdom of God. And it's by the church. It says the principalities and powers. And heavenly places. That those that are fallen and created.

[ 63 : 14 ] The demons and the angels and heavenly places. They watch this. And they don't understand what's going on. But it brings glory to God. Aren't you amazed too? As we look at it.

And Brother Robert mentioned some things. And he said this amount of missionaries went out. And this many hours. And I think how in the world did that happen? I've been here the last seven years. And I don't remember all of that happening.

But it's a little bit at a time. That God has allowed something big to happen. And he has seen every bit of it. And not only him. But the angels in heaven has looked upon the church with wonder. And said God's wisdom is amazing.

He would take a kid born in Columbia. He would bring him here. And that he would save him. And then he would allow him to preach the gospel. So that his life would shine over here at a trailer park.

What incredible wisdom our God has. And we worship him for. And that there's a larger purpose in this. Yes, it's for Christian fellowship. Yes, it's for evangelism. Yes, it meets on Sundays.



[ 64 : 11 ] So we celebrate the resurrection. Voltaire says if you want to kill Christianity. You'd have to take away Sundays. Because as long as there's Sundays. There's going to be Christians getting together and celebrating.

Not just for all those things. But primarily to bring glory to God. And can I encourage you. That you are mentioned vaguely. And maybe mentioned in person. But everything that you did.

From the smile that you put on your face. As somebody coming to this church. You are part of the most important thing in the world. Which is his church bringing glory to him. And so what are they seeing? They're seeing that the gospel works.

They're seeing that the promise that he gave. Is still true. And it will always be true. They see that the death of Christ. Was not in vain. And that people will worship him.

And as alluded to in Genesis chapter number 3. They will see that Satan when man fell. Did not take a people for himself. That he will keep for all eternity. But that Jesus came back and reclaimed them.

[ 65 : 06 ] And said these are my people. I died for them. And they will worship me. Not only in eternity. But they will do that in their community. And they will send people all around the world. And that's why Paul after he says these things.

Says I bow my knee. Because he saw the magnitude of what we were doing. It's been so good to serve. Because this wasn't his plan. As I look at that picture. And I think about me and my wife.

And how young I was. And I was excited about being married. And I love my wife. But I was so excited. Because I knew that it was God's plan. And there's so many things we can be excited about.

The future of our church. And one of the things we should be excited about. Is that this is God's plan. We're living in obedience to him. Bring glory to the father. Heavenly father. I thank you for the opportunity.

Lord. To bow my knee. Lord. To bow my heart unto you. And see the magnitude of this moment. Lord. The magnitude of the church. Lord. I thank you so much. To allow us to be a part.

[ 66 : 01 ] We see the manifold wisdom in this. And we're very much aware of the fact. That this community. Those in heaven Lord. Are watching upon this. And they're learning about you.

And your greatness. And reflecting unto this world. And to this universe. That you are good. And you are great. And you are wise. As the best. And only things that we desire to do with our lives.

We thank you for this. And just. Thank you Bibles. If you would. And open them to Romans chapter 5. Romans chapter 5. We've still got a whole day of good things. We're going to take Romans chapter 5.

And look at it. And then after that. We're going to have a little lunch together. And after that. You're going to get to hear from missionaries. From our church. And just a lot of things this afternoon. As we celebrate seven years. As a church.

God has been good to us. And I thank him for that. Thank you for every one of you. Go with me if you would. To Romans chapter 5. And we're only going to read two verses. Romans chapter 5.

[ 66 : 54 ] And we'll talk to you about. The fact that we have. Peace with God. We have peace with God. Look at the Bible. Romans chapter 5. Verse 1. Now let me just. I meant to say.

Those of us who are born again. Have peace with God. Some of you may still be at war. This morning. Some of you still may be at war. This morning. You're not born again. You don't know that you'd go to heaven.

If you were to die. And so I hope that you will listen. And let God do a work in your life. Romans chapter 5. Verse 1. The Bible says. Therefore being justified by faith. We have peace with God.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith. Into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice. In hope of the glory of God.

Father I pray that you would help us to rejoice. In the peace that you have given us. I pray that you would give us a desire to tell more people about you. So that they could have peace with you.

[ 67 : 50 ] And then I pray dear God. For those who are here today. That may not know you. They may not have been forgiven of their sins. As of yet. They may not know for sure that you have died for them.

They may not have believed on you. And God I know that you can do a work. I pray you would. I pray you convict them. And save somebody today. And we'll give you great glory and honor for what you do. In Jesus precious name.

Amen. We're going to talk about having peace with God. If you got your Bible open to Romans 5. 1. Underline in that phrase. We have peace with God. We have peace with God.

The war is over. And we are reconciled to him. These verses are eternal security verses. Some of you have great difficulty believing.

That God saved you once and for all completely. But maybe these verses will help you. Now the peace talked about here is different than the peace of God.

[ 68 : 46 ] In Philippians chapter 4 and verse 4 and following. The Bible says rejoice in the Lord always. Verse 7 it says the peace of God. Which passes all understanding.

Shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. In other words there is a peace with God. And a peace of God. And some of you this morning may know the peace of God.

A peace with God. But you haven't got the peace of God. That means you know you could be a born again Christian and still be all worried and scared. Torn up and have turmoil. But you are born again. But the peace with God is what this passage is about.

And that's referring to the fact that at one time we were enemies of God. We were at war with God. But by the grace of God that's not true anymore. Look if you would at Romans chapter 5 and verse 1.

Look at the first word. It says therefore. Therefore being justified by faith. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It starts with therefore for a reason.

[ 69 : 46 ] Somebody said every time there's a therefore. Therefore is therefore a reason. And what it's saying is hey you know what. Building on all the chapters we've read through. We've been in Romans 1, 2, 3 and 4.

We get to chapter 5 verse 1. He says hey let me make it clear. Therefore being justified by faith. Since it's by faith. Since it's by work that God did.

We have peace. Because I know God did it. Notice there's a progression. In the first two chapters we see how sinful all of mankind is. Well you remember those two dark chapters.

You came for several weeks. And all you heard about was wicked, wicked, wicked. We're sinners. And you was wondering when would that ever change. And then we got to chapter 3. We found out that Jesus was a propitiation.

Or the sin offering for our sins. And in chapter 4 we found out that he was raised for our justification. And now we're in chapter 5. And we find out that we can have peace through God.

[ 70 : 44 ] Peace with God through Jesus Christ. So if you would write some things down. The first thing you might write down is this. The condition of the sinner. Write down the condition of the sinner. We can't forget where we were.

Why do we need peace with God? To peace with God is based on the fact that God did a work in us. So write this down if you don't have it. Romans 5.10 the Bible says. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God.

We were enemies. We were reconciled to God by the death of his son. Much more being reconciled we shall be saved. So write it down. Your condition before you got saved. You were an enemy.

This morning if you're not a born again believer. If you've not received Christ as your savior. Then you are an enemy. Sin is rebellion against God. Sin is doing things our way instead of his way.

Sin is thinking that God doesn't have what's best in mind for me. Sin is rejecting the lordship of Jesus Christ. And it makes us his enemy.

[ 71 : 43 ] In Romans chapter 8 and verse 7 the Bible says. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God. Neither indeed can be.

Sin is telling God that you are smart enough to know right from wrong. And you do not agree with him. Sin is when you think you are smart enough. And you can tell God you know what's right.

And he doesn't. That's sin. I want you to know the condition. The condition is that you're an enemy of God. The condition is you have no peace. The Bible says in Isaiah 48 22.

There is no peace saith the Lord unto the wicked. Did you know that God declared men to be sinners? God declared men to be sinners. God declared that sinners would die an eternal death.

And they'd go to a place called hell. The lake of fire. God declared that to be true. Did you know that the condition of the sinner is that he's condemned? A sinner is condemned. In John chapter 3 verse 16.

[ 72 : 43 ] All of us know by heart. God so loved the world he gave his only begotten son. But if you skip down to verse 17. It says but God didn't send his son into the world to condemn the world. Verse 18.

Why not? Because he that believeth on him is not condemned. But he that believeth not is condemned already. So the condition of a man is he's condemned. Men don't want to come to God.

Men don't want to know God. They don't want to come to the light because they love darkness. Because their deeds are evil. There is no Bible idea that you are all right until you mess up.

Would you look up here a second? There's never an idea in the Bible that you are okay until you mess up. No. You were messed up when you got here. You were messed up when you got here.

If you want the Bible explanation. You were messed up when you got here. You were messed up to begin with. There's no waiting to see if your good outweighs your bad. It already does.

[ 73 : 36 ] Your bad outweighs your good. The decision's made. You've sinned. God has declared us all to be sinners. The Bible says in John 3.36 that the wrath of God is over the sinner.

The wrath of God is over the sinner. The Bible says in John 3.36. He that believeth on the Son has everlasting life. He that believeth not the Son shall not see life.

But the wrath of God abideth on him. What a horrible thing to imagine. If you are not a born-again believer, God's angry. And his wrath is over you right now.

It abideth over you if you are not saved. The Bible says in Romans chapter 4 and verse 15. Because the law worketh wrath. The law worketh wrath.

Man, those Ten Commandments. Those Old Testament rules. All of that, it works wrath. For where no law is, there's no transgression. You see, the law shows me that I'm wicked. That makes me mad.

[ 74 : 34 ] When it shows me what I really look like, it makes me mad. I told the story this week of the guys about how when I was young, I had a boss. And he told me, he said, in the morning, you need to look in the mirror.

And you say, man, you're a one good-looking guy. And you're going to have victory today. You're going to win. You're going to win. And things are going to be great for you. Nobody like you. Look at you. And I told them the story about that. And I said, they said, well, did you do it?

I said, I looked in the mirror and I thought, ain't true about me. I looked at it. I said, mirror, mirror on the wall. Who's the ugliest of them all? Amen. And you know what? You look in the Bible and you find out who you are. You look in the Bible and you find out you're not in good shape.

You look in the Bible and it shows you how wicked you are. The law shows me that God knows I have failed and I have rebelled. I look in the Bible and I know that.

But look what the Bible says in this verse. That's what we've seen up until now. And can I just stop here and say this? If you've never been born again this morning, you need to recognize who you are.

[ 75 : 31 ] If you, if you, hey, listen to me. If you are still saying, I do things my way. If you're still saying, hey, it's my life, my way. And, and the way I believe. And I think I'm okay. And I really don't care what the Bible says.

You're an enemy of God. Can I tell you, if you think, you know, right from wrong on your own, you're an enemy of God. Can I tell you, if you in any way think you're good enough, you're an enemy of God. That's what the Bible says.

That's what the Bible says. And many of us have never gotten to the place we would admit we're enemies. We're condemned. We don't deserve to go to heaven. And that's why we don't understand the peace that God gives and having peace with God.

You see, man's at war. Man's at war. And unless you'll admit you're at war, you probably won't ever get saved because you'll always say, hey, I'm okay with God. But you're not okay with God.

Check out your condition. Check out your condition. The second thing I want you to do, look at Romans 5, 1 with me again. The Bible says, therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 76 : 32 ] Now, if you're a born again believer, listen to this. This is something that has happened. It is a finished act. Justified is in the past tense.

It is in the past tense. In Romans chapter 4 and verse 8, Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Now, there's a difference between justification and sanctification.

That's a whole other lesson. But for today, we're looking at justified. Could I ask you, how many of you in this room are married? Raise your hand. See, that's a done thing. It happened on August the 18th, 1973.

We got married. I've been married ever since then. I've been married when I didn't feel like it. I've been married when I did feel like it. I've been married when I was a good husband. I've been married when I wasn't a good husband. I've been married for nearly 40 years.

And it's a done thing. It happened once and for all. Justified once and for all. One day I realized I was a sinner. I turned to Jesus. I have seen my sinfulness.

[ 77 : 29 ] I have realized my weakness. I have trusted the work of Jesus on the cross. God has fully judged our sin upon Christ, our substitute. God is completely satisfied with Christ's sacrifice.

That he will eternally and he will always be that. We eternally remain so. Never taking judgment on our sin again. God is satisfied. Therefore, we can be at rest forever.

It doesn't matter if you understand it as well as you ought to. It doesn't matter if you don't. It doesn't matter how weak your faith is. God's looking at the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross. And that is not looking at my sin.

He's looking at that. We have peace with God. We were justified by faith. You know, I got married. I was 18 years old three days before I turned 19. Can I just go ahead and tell you that I certainly didn't know much about marriage.

At 18, three days before you turn. When I see an 18 year old nowadays, I wonder how in the world did my mother and my daddy let that happen. When I see an 18 year old, I wonder how did my father and I not kill me.

[ 78 : 28 ] Amen. I wonder how, I wonder why they didn't call the police 18 years old. I didn't know what I was doing. But I got married and I've been married all these years. Somebody said, how do you like marriage?

Do you feel like you should have waited? Well, if I'd have known how good it was, I'd have got married quicker. Amen. I'd have got married at 12. Amen. But, but, but, uh, I just want you, I just want you to understand that it's justified by faith.

You need to underline the word justified. It doesn't say getting justified, being justified. You are justified by faith. If you're born again, the next thing you need to notice in the verse is that we have peace with God.

Look at Romans chapter five and verse one. We have peace with God. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The war is over. This is, this is not the peace of God, but the peace we've got. I told you that. This is our past. God declared us righteous. There's nothing between us that would hinder our relationship.

[ 79 : 30 ] Jesus fully paid our sin debt. The last thing I'm going to show you that about that, why don't you look at this? Look at what it says in Romans five one. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.

If I was justified by my good works, I wouldn't have a lot of peace. If I were justified by the fact that I attended church, treated my wife, right? Paid my bills. Didn't think any bad thoughts.

I wouldn't have a lot of peace because I have really good days. I mean, I can have some really good. How many of y'all have just really good days where you get through the whole day? You say, man, I did pretty good today. I didn't get ugly with my wife.

I didn't get in a bad mood. Didn't fight with anybody. Didn't cuss one time. Didn't cut anybody off in traffic. I didn't leave the house, but I mean, I did good. Amen. Anybody ever been there? Amen. How many of you ever got up in the morning and said, boy, today I'm going to just serve God and do right.

And it's about eight o'clock in the morning. You're looking and say, oh boy, I have already messed up. Anybody ever been there? Yeah. See, you wouldn't be, you wouldn't have peace. If it was justified on how good you was doing.

[ 80 : 28 ] If it was justified on how good you were doing, you'd be like, oh boy, I hope I can make it through today. And if you got through today, you still wouldn't be peace. When you went to bed, you'd be like, man, I did really good today. I hope I can do it again tomorrow.

And then if you had gone a week, it'd be, you know, it'd be just, it just, you never get through with it. You understand? We are justified by faith. We're justified by faith.

Not by what we do, but by what Jesus did. We're justified by faith. We believe God. It's not a matter of, I saved myself or I did anything. Or if it was, I wouldn't have any peace.

I wouldn't have the peace with God. I would still be wondering, is he happy enough? How many of you have ever worked a job and wondered, is the boss happy? Could you say, man, have you ever worked there?

You know, you're just like, man, when is he ever going to be happy? I'm a first child. Number one children, they usually have a problem. The first child, usually they like to please their parents so much. And their whole life is revolved around, I need to please people.

[ 81 : 26 ] My daddy was never pleased. And they showed a picture of him a while ago and he's in heaven. Maybe he's pleased with me now. But my daddy never looked at me and said, this is my child and I am well pleased. My dad always looked at me and said, he's a pretty good kid, but he could do better.

I'd come home with a, I'd come home with an A and daddy'd say, well, that's good. Why don't you do that every time? I come home with a B and he'd say, you could have got an A. I would run as fast as I could. He was just never satisfied.

I mean, it was like, give up, man. This guy ain't never going to be happy. And that's the way God is with us. I mean, honestly, that's how we'd end up feeling. That's why some of you experienced frustration in Christianity.

You have tried to please God. You have tried to be the good guy. You have tried to do enough. But what you don't realize is God's not like that. God's not saying you're never good enough.

God's saying you're never good enough. So I'll be good enough. You're never good enough. So I'll be good enough. He's saying you failed and I'll save you. And so I can have peace with God because I know what Jesus did.

[ 82 : 24 ] Next thing I want to show you. Go if you would to chapter 5 verse 2. We have access and standing. We have access and standing. Romans 5 2 says, By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

We have access and we have standing. What got me in, gave me access to this wonderful gift was the grace of God. It is the grace of God I even got in and it's the grace of God that I stand in.

I'm not under law but I'm under grace. It is God who saved me. In the Old Testament there's a story told that you probably know pretty well. It's the story of a lady named Esther and she was a queen.

And she had married the king who was a pretty wicked and mean king. She married a king. He was a pretty wicked and mean king. And there was a rule in his kingdom that you could only go into his presence if you were called.

And his soldier stood around the room ready to kill anyone who would come in without permission. And so they stood there and he stood in there. He sat in his room. His own wife had not been called in to see him for weeks.

[ 83 : 24 ] It had been weeks since she'd had a chance. And she heard about a problem and Mordecai, her cousin, uncle, had said to her, You need to go and talk to the king and you need to try to get peace for us.

And she was like, I hadn't been invited in. And you don't go in. If you go in, he'll kill you. You just can't walk in there when you want to. If he doesn't call you, you don't go. And the guy said, well, you just better take your life in your hands and go in there because somebody's got to do something to save us.

And so she gets everything ready and she goes in and she gets to the door. And the rules are that if she comes in, if he doesn't lift his scepter and hold it out, she'll be dead. So when she steps into the room, all the soldiers have got their swords out and their spears and they're ready to kill her right there, even though she's the wife of the king.

And he holds the scepter up and she goes over and touches the head of the scepter and she's allowed in. That's kind of like the story. You're not allowed into God's presence. You're not allowed into God's presence.

We're enemies of God. Don't forget that. We don't have access to God. And if you knew a little bit of Old Testament, which we don't have time to go through a lot of it this morning, you would know this, that there was a tabernacle built.

[ 84 : 29 ] And in the tabernacle, there was this room called the holiest of holies where the high priests would go in once a year. Once a year, just one day, one guy got to go in there right into the very presence of God.

And outside that, there was another area and a few guys got to go in there. And outside of there, there was where the women had to stop. No woman ever got to go into God's presence. No woman ever got to get that close to God.

And outside that, there was another place where the Gentiles, us, that's where we stopped. And nobody had access. Nobody could get to God. And that was teaching us a big lesson.

That high priest represented Jesus. He's really the only one that has access to the Father. That's why he said in John 14, 6, Jesus said to them, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No man comes to the Father. No man gets to my Father except by me. Nobody ever gets in there except by me. Did you help me with that, Ed? Nobody ever gets in there but by me. So it's God who gets us in and gets us to the Father.

[ 85 : 28 ] And so, thank you. So we couldn't get in. But what happened when Jesus died? The veil was torn in two. The veil was torn in two and it was screaming out, Hey, come one, come all through Jesus Christ who is the veil.

It's torn and now you have access. And then in the book of Ephesians, Apostle Paul said, And the middle wall is broken down. We are no more strangers, Ephesians 2, 19. We are no more strangers and foreigners, but we are fellow citizens with the saints.

In the Hebrews chapter 10, verse 19, the Bible says, Boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus through the new and living way, which is consecrated through us through the veil.

That is to say, the flesh of Jesus Christ. Let's draw near. We have access and standing. Now listen to this. Listen to this. We were enemies. Hey, we wouldn't even have been one of the guys that came outside the tabernacle.

We wouldn't have been one of those that stood outside the tabernacle. Remember, one guy gets in. Some other fellas get in a little bit further. The women don't get in. And, you know, everybody's kind of out here in this outer court.

[ 86 : 35 ] And then outside the outer court, there's the court of the Gentiles. And we were enemies. We wouldn't even have been there close by. We were enemies. But God made peace through Jesus Christ.

God sent Jesus to die on the cross and purchased our salvation. Two words in that verse two, Romans 5, two. I want you to underline them. We have access. We have access.

But we also have standing. We have standing. See, we're still here. We didn't get in once, touch the head of the scepter, and have to leave. We got in. And he let us stay. We're in.

How many of you are glad you're in? Say amen. We got access and we got standing. Standing, I mean, like, hey, they know me here. My name is written down. I'm accepted in the beloved. Hey, I'm a born-again son of God.

I have access. I have direct access. I have effective access. That's because of grace, not law. Romans 5, one and two says, therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have access by faith into this grace, the grace of God, the grace to be justified, wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

[ 87 : 45 ] Last thing. Verse 2. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Romans chapter 5 and verse 2. That's talking about our future. See, we were justified in the past.

We were justified in the past. I got married almost 40 years ago. That's past. I got saved over 50 years ago. That's past. I was born again justified by what Jesus did on the cross.

But present, I have standing, and I have access. I got in, and I get to stay here, boy. And I'm in the process of being sanctified as God makes me whole and makes me like Jesus. But here's my future.

Here's my future. We rejoice in this hope. We rejoice in this hope. Verse 2 says, we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Before we had no hope but hell.

Before we had no hope but hell. We were the enemies of God. We had no peace, and we had no way to get in. We have, now we have hope, and now we have joy. Now we have hope, and we have joy.

[ 88 : 42 ] We will soon see the glory of God. If you're a born-again Christian, we will see Him as He is. Now we see through a glass darkly, but soon we will see Him face to face.

Everybody that has this hope in Him purifies himself. We are hungry to see Him. We will see Him as He is, and we will be like Him. I need to end on this so you know.

Some of you in this room, how many of you are glad, how many of you know you've been justified? Say amen. You know that's a done deal. It happened. He saved you. He justified you, and He declared you righteous.

Not on who you are, but on who He is. That's a fantastic truth. If you don't have that, you should know that right now. He declared you justified. How many of you realize that today, because He justified you by faith, you have standing and access.

You have access to God. We can come boldly to the throne of grace. We can bring our prayers to Him. We can worship Him because of that, and our presence is fantastic. Can you say amen right there? And you realize this?

[ 89 : 42 ] Soon, soon, and I mean very soon, we're going to see Jesus. When you die, you know, when you die, when my dad died, before his body ever hit the ground, before we ever pronounced him dead, I remember very distinctly that last sound that came out of his mouth.

Before that sound finished, he was in the presence of God. We have that glory. We have that joy. We can boast about that. But you couldn't do any boasting before. You know why?

Because we were sinners. In Romans chapter 3, verse 27, where's boasting? It's excluded by what law works. Did you know if you were still under law, there's no room for boasting?



No bragging. And nobody in this room would be walking around and said, hey, I did great 17 days in a row. If it weren't for the grace of God, we'd be like Alcoholics Anonymous. Hey, my name's Austin. And it's been two weeks since I sinned.

Next week. Hey, my name's Austin. It hadn't even been two hours. We had no peace. But by the grace of God, I am born again. I have access to the Father.

[ 90 : 49 ] If you're here and you've never accepted Christ as your Savior, you still stand as an enemy of our God. But he loves you. And he paid the price. He has a door open.

And he invites you to come to him. And he will save you. You can be born again today. You can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you are justified, saved from wrath, saved from hell, saved from the old life, called out of the darknesses.

Brother Frick described so wonderfully, called in unto Jesus and into his holiness. If you're not saved, I ask you today to do that. Let's borrow his forward of prayer. Father in heaven, I love you and I praise you and I thank you for the chance to serve you.

God, I pray that you would save somebody this morning. That there would be someone here today that would say, I know I have sinned against the holy God and I know I need to be saved. And I pray, God, that you'd do a work in their life.

God, I pray that you'd help Christians to have security of their salvation through what you did on the cross of Calvary. I pray, God, that you'd do a mighty, wonderful work and I will give you great honor and glory and praise for all that you do.

[ 91 : 53 ] With every head bowed and every eye closed, if you're here this morning and you've never accepted Christ as your Savior and you're not sure that you'd go to heaven if you were to die, I want you to know you can be saved. And I have people standing ready right now who would love to take the Bible and show you how to put your trust in Jesus Christ and his finished work on the cross of Calvary.

Would there be anybody that say, Pastor, help me? You just raise your hand. We won't embarrass you. We'll talk to you in private. We'll help you. If there's anybody, I see a lady with her hand. Can I get one of the ladies to help me, please?

Back there in the back. Okay, anybody else? Thank you, ma'am. Anybody else that say, boy, I wish somebody just talk to me. Not embarrass me. We won't embarrass you.

Kelly. Right behind the halls there. Anybody else? You'd say, man, I wish somebody just help me. Somebody help me. Take the Bible and show me. Would you let me help you? Would there be anybody else?

Would there be anybody else? With every head bowed and every eye closed, would there be a Christian here and say, boy, I am so grateful for my salvation. I've doubted that I was completely saved, but I realize now I have peace by what Jesus did.

[ 92 : 56 ] Would there be anybody like that in this room? Thank you, ma'am. I see that hand. Thank you. God bless you. Anybody? Thank you, sir. I see your hand. Anybody else? Anybody else? Father God, magnify yourself.

I love you and I praise you. I thank you for what you're doing and I pray that your name would be glorified and you would work in our hearts. We'll give you praise for all you do. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. You have been listening to Austin Gardner, pastor of Vision Baptist Church.

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