

# Missions Conference: Witness 4

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] you will be listening to the recording of our 2012 witness missions conference all right y'all go ahead and take a look in your bibles if you would at matthew 26 just a quick thought this morning uh and just a pinch of my testimony is something that was real for us as far as going to spain but uh matthew 26 and best thing we could all talk about at church is jesus amen that's the most important thing uh matthew 26 and verse 36 just read you a couple verses there and then uh give you a word the bible says then come to jesus with them into a place called gethsemane and saith unto the disciples sit ye here while i go and pray yonder and he took with him peter and the two sons of zebedee and began to be sorrowful and very heavy then saith he unto them my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death tear ye here and watch with me and he went a little further and fell on his face and prayed saying oh my father if it be possible let this cup pass from me nevertheless not as i will but as thou wilt and that last phrase of verse 39 is the focus point of what i'm saying this morning jesus said nevertheless not as i will but as thou wilt you know the most important thing that any christian could ever do is the will of god in their life amen i mean that's the most important thing anybody could you think of what jesus i mean this is such a familiar passage sometimes i read familiar passages and if i'm not paying attention i get done reading my devotions and i'm like where was my mind but you read a familiar passage like this and just stop and try to imagine what was going on there in the garden of gethsemane i mean you think of the fact that jesus was there praying with his disciples and even though jesus was 100 man he was still 100 god and knowing in his in his foreknowledge that these events were about to come the disciples didn't know jesus knew and he still prayed there in the garden and said not my will but thine be done lord i mean jesus had a purpose and and god had a plan for his life on this earth you know and i think just imagine with me you imagine the the the physical pain that was about to be on christ that day i mean he knew that judas was coming he knew that he was going to surrender himself to those soldiers and then be led captive and lied about in a court he knew that he was going to be scourged with a cat in nine shells just the bible says his visage was marred unlike any other man's jesus knew that was going to take place and he knew that he was going to be hung up between heaven and earth just just in front of the whole world paying for ours for my sins he knew that was going to take place and he still said not as i will but as that will but you know you take that even one step further and you think about what christ did that that moment he was praying and he knew the spiritual pain that was going to be on him as well uh just trying to even fathom the sin i mean from the beginning of time up to that moment jesus was saying yeah i'm going to pay for that i'm going to make a way for mankind to have a way to god and even from that moment to the end of time i mean just even make it personal i mean the sin in my life jesus was saying yeah i'm going to pay for that so that mike can have a way to go to heaven and even though he knew all that stuff he said nevertheless not as i will but as that will you know and i think god made us i mean my god my great big awesome god in this bible everything he did was perfect right and he made every single person a specific person the way he planned for you to be did it on purpose god didn't make any mistakes amen and every single person is different with their own characteristics and their own abilities and i'm glad every person is different i've met some people i'm glad there's not two of but i'm sure you might have met some folks like that too but you know if god made you a certain way and and made you who you are don't you think that same god that god of order that god of perfection would have a specific purpose and plan for your life and mine i mean if all we were meant to do was to get saved and trust jesus as our savior and that was it why don't we go to heaven right after we called on him for salvation he left us here for a reason for a purpose to do that specific perfect will of god in our life and you think of what christ did christ came and he knew the suffering he was going to experience he knew the

the the the agony he was going to have on him that day even so much that god the father couldn't look at his own son because the sin of mankind was on him at that moment jesus knew all that and he still said nevertheless not as that not as i will but as that will you know christ had a surrendered attitude a surrendered spirit to the will of god in his life and how much of a challenge is that to us as just finite man finite women to say yes lord i'll do what you've got for me to do you know and you you might think and i know sometimes i think this well lord i've surrendered i you know i've done your will in my life i've surrendered to that surrender is not just a one-time event for a christian surrender ought to be a lifestyle it ought to be a lifestyle that we constantly wake up every day and say yes lord no matter what you want i'm saying i'm going to do it lord your plan is better than mine i'm just a sinful creature i'm imperfect i'm going to give my life to you i'm going to surrender to you each and every day you know and for the longest time and i'll show you a quick word of testimony about about us uh the lord dealt with me started dealing with me about spain back in 2007 when i was in bible college still and uh just through a different series of events it was really obvious that god was saying hey you need to go this direction and uh then the we had you know the economic downturn in 2009 and and the lord was still working on my heart about that i had just graduated we just gotten married we had uh jack and we had oliver on the way and i'm thinking okay lord well look i know you want me to go be a missionary in spain but you know until you really get clear with me lord like a brother west was talking about that lightning strike in the front yard that says go here that's not the way he works is it that's still small voice that says hey you need to do this that spirit of god that each of us as christians possesses that says hey do this do this will of god in your life and i thought lord until you get really obvious with me i'm just going to you know look for a position at a church somewhere uh assistant pastor youth pastor to try to get some experience under my belt it isn't it silly sometimes when we try to just debate with god and try to negotiate with him about his will for our life i mean think about that little old me uh trying to tell god that i've got a good idea it just seems foolish doesn't it and i guarantee a church this is what happened i sent my resume to four different churches who were looking for a for a fella and um my resume was good i mean i'm not gonna lie it was pretty decent uh but i sent my resume out and not a single one of them took debate there were guys buddies of mine that were still in bible college hadn't finished school weren't married still trying to pay their school bills that were getting job opportunities left and right and i remember coming home one one one morning after i got off work and just laying there in bed and and staring up at the ceiling and saying god why why am i so frustrated why am i so miserable i mean why can't you open any doors for us in in the ministry i said lord i've surrendered to the to the will of god to be in the ministry to preach why can't you make it work lord what's wrong with me it was almost like the holy spirit said i already told you what to do why aren't you doing it you know and i'll tell you this the book of james says the double my demands unstable in all his ways church you try to take part of you and live in the will of god and then take part of you at the same time and try to do your own thing and to live your own dreams and pursue your own goals and ambitions i guarantee you try to do two things at once like that and not 100 percent committed to his will you'll be frustrated miserable unsatisfied in your christian life the will of god in your life what will you do with it you know and and i put the importance on that but why is it so important why is that will of god so important take take a peek with me real quick second corinthians 5 verse 14 my life verse second corinthians 5 verse 14 the word of god says for the love of christ constraineth us because we thus judge that if one died for all then we're all dead and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them and rose again you need a motivation a drive a reason to wake up every day and say yes lord i'm going to live for you i'm going to give myself to you 100 today the love of christ constraineth us that love that jesus showed you and me on the cross to calvary

that day paying for my sin making a way for me to have heaven nobody else has ever done that for me nobody else has ever loved me or you that much nobody else has ever paid such great a sacrifice for the sins that i've committed the love of christ constraineth me that word constrain means a lot of things and i wrote down a few definitions here but that word constrain that love that jesus showed us constrains us that means to compel or force to urge with power sufficient to produce the effect doesn't the love of christ once you drive you and make you and push you and compel you to do his will each day i challenge you church you know many times uh we as christians we want to please those who've trained us please our pastor maybe our parents or maybe our teachers if you're living the will of god or living the christian life trying to please others that's the wrong motivation if you're living it to try to make a name for yourself a wrong motivation and even when i think about going to spain as a missionary and all these missionaries we're excited to be able to go but you know and this was a shocker when it hit me i'm not even going there for for the lost people that are in the country i want them to get saved and praise the lord their salvation will be a byproduct of my obedience to his call on on my life the spirit of god will work with them but my job is to go and bring the gospel like he's commanded me to do what's the will of god in your life the love of christ constrains us to do that will but you know when i think of this lastly and i'll give you one more verse that word constrained means to produce an opposition to nature that love that jesus showed us doesn't that cause us to act in opposition to our sin nature doesn't that love that he showed us on calvary that day cause us to get involved here at church cause us to go out and be a witness in this area cause us to be a part of a missions program or a sowing program or whatever the case may be you know and people might ask you you you spend how much your time at church or you give what to that church or you go out and invite folks or you witness the love that jesus showed me and you that's that causes us to act in such an opposition to our sinful nature does it not you know we we need a reason a drive a motivation to do god's will that love of christ that's it right there the love that he showed you and i yeah i'll wake up every day and say yes lord whatever you want no problem but you know we understand the will of god it's important christ love is our motivation but a lot of times you know doing what's right living living the will of god and taking that step and obeying the call of god in your life is not it's not always an easy thing sometimes you get afraid sometimes you're fearful sometimes i i mean we're just you know finite creatures we can't see the future like he can hebrews 11 6 says this this is how you do the will of god but without faith it's impossible to please him for he that cometh to god must believe that he is and that he's a rewarder of them that diligently seek him you believe you got a great big awesome god up in heaven today you believe he's the master and creator of the universe the one who's sent his son to save your soul the god of eternity is he your heavenly father he's mine and he's a big god and it says but without faith it's impossible to please him so many times the holy spirit says hey child of god i want you to go and do this in your life and we as as just people can't see that far in the future and we say but lord if i do this think about you know my finances think about my family think about my job think about all these different things and the devil comes and sits on our shoulder and says yeah you're just going to make a fool of yourself if you step out and do what god's got for you to do in your christian life and you know here's what happens our fear of the unknown our fear of what we can't see even though we've got a god that we can trust a god that's proven himself for thousands of years right here our fear of the unknown keeps us from doing anything fear paralyzes but faith provides the fear of stepping out by faith and doing that will of god in your life keeps us from doing anything and you know while we're many times debating and wondering about a god who's proven himself the world around us is slipping off into eternity without ever having another chance to hear about christ i mean think about that person who reached you what if they were too afraid to step out by faith and and witness to you go to your house bring you to church disciple you where would where would

we be the will of god in your life what will you do with it thank you that you're here glad to have every person that's here visiting with us and glad to have the opportunity to have all these missionaries with us brother chris fees if you would come on up brother chris is a missionary out of our church and he is with uh voice in the villages and i hope that you'll uh i already know you love him and we're behind him but i hope you'll know a little bit about the ministry that god's given him all right if you would take your bibles and turn to acts chapter 11 and i was going to share a little bit from the bible this morning and uh brother stirwald preached from the passage i was going to share with so um he had somebody give his introduction so i've had somebody give my introduction now so i can get right to the point uh my name is chris fees my wife kathy we're missionaries with voice in the villages and it's our goal to train national leadership on rural mission fields and we'll be working in west africa in the country of burkina faso where we hope to create a model that we'll be able to use around the world and so pray for us as we do that and in that story that brother stirwald shared last night i kind of like to think that's a little bit of a voice in the villages kind of a story but the truth is it's just a great story uh about the glory of the lord and the people of the lord doing what the lord would have them to do acts chapter 11 and verse number 19 if you would and it says there now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about stephen traveled as far as phoenix and cyprus and antioch preaching the word to none but unto the jews only and some of them uh were men of cyprus and cyrene which when they were come to antioch spake unto the grecians preaching of the lord jesus and the hand of the lord was on them and a great number believed and turned unto the lord at this point in god's word we find a story about people who really don't have any name um they're just people that were persecuted scattered abroad they went out and then when they got to wherever it was they were going it says they just preached the lord they uh they preached the lord jesus and it's kind of interesting because some of the people that were scattered thought well we preach to the jews and then there was this a little bit more ignorant group uh maybe i can relate to them a little bit better um but they just said we're going to preach to whoever we're going to just talk to people and an amazing thing was is that was the birth of a church a church started because these people said we love the lord and because we love the lord um we are going to share him with other people so i just thought i would jot down a few characteristics uh of these people and and what uh what they're about um the first thing is they were persecuted and i'm sure they didn't handle their persecution with smiles all the time i'm sure it was a difficult thing that they had to go through but the lord used what was otherwise a bad circumstance to bring these people to a place that he was going to use them and uh and through that persecution and through all of the things that happened to them um i'm sure they could have said we give up the lord uh look at we were here in a great city in jerusalem and now we've been persecuted let's just give up but instead they said well we love the lord we're going to share him with people and a great ministry rose out of that uh they were persecuted it says they were preachers it says three times in this passage that they preached they preached the word and then in verse 20 it says um they just went about preaching the lord jesus and uh and and again we're not looking at apostles here these aren't apostles this isn't barnabas the missionary this isn't

saw the persecutor who went on to be an apostle this is just us it's just regular church people church members who said we're going to love the lord and go out and do his work so they were preachers and it says uh the hand of the lord was upon them uh in uh verse number 21 uh the says the lord didn't leave them alone in this situation the lord worked he put his hand on them and later when barnabas comes as we we saw last night that he saw that the grace of the lord was with them he was glad to see what the lord was doing with them and then uh verse 21 it says uh the lord produced a great work through them it says many believed and turned unto the lord uh they developed a testimony of doing the work of the lord now they developed both a testimony with other believers it says the tidings went back to jerusalem and the people in jerusalem heard about the work that they were doing and then uh and then also it says among the unbelievers they had a testimony because this is the place where people were called christians first they were called christ followers um and then uh lastly uh the grace of the lord was with them when barnabas came it says who when he came had seen the grace of god and was glad now if i would have read that list of things about anybody else in the bible we would have thought man that must have been that must have been the apostle paul that must have been uh that must have been somebody extraordinary and they were extraordinary but it just says they them they they were not named in god's word and they were regular church members now that leads us and this is what i want us to get to as a church as a church family do we display these characteristics can we look at these people and say you know what i love the lord and i share him with my family i love the lord and i share with share him with my co-workers and i could see the lord working in my life and uh and do we have those characteristics and then here's the here's the mission part of this whole thing do we desire to see other antioch started out of our ministry do we desire to give to missions so that we can see other antioch churches the church in jerusalem heard about it and said we're going to send a missionary there do we have a desire to send missionaries to where we know the the gospel is needed um with the voice in the village's ministry we saw the other night the story of moa and how sad of a situation it was that moa was alone in his village all all but only as far as moa knows the only believer there in his village all alone and we we look at that we say then we need to get somebody there to help moa start a church in his village um wouldn't it be an awesome thing to turn the story of moa into a story like this of the church at antioch so that we see a transformation instead of a story of tragedy of a man alone without anyone to train him into a story of triumph because a great church is built up and i hope that you'll see in this story that as we talk about missions and we we put this into the forefront um that that you'll say you know i hope through our ministry we'll see many antiochs built up antioch churches we'll see churches built around the world and people trained and leaders trained now one last point um that brother stirwald made last night the antioch church is the church that was paul's home church the apostle paul learned to serve the lord in that church and it took a great church in order to help prepare a great man of god and is there anything that we can learn from these people oh absolutely and i hope this morning that you will be open uh to learning those things pray for us as we uh look to train leaders in the out in

[ 20 : 16 ] the rural village areas we have different things that we're doing um we're we're uh sending material over to be translated we have mp3 players i have some things on my table back there that i'd love to talk to you about uh ways we're using media and different things to reach out and train people pray for us as we go forward uh to do the work of the lord thank you i want to invite you to open your bibles to the book of psalm and chapter number 96 the book of psalm chapter number 96 and uh just for a moment right there i want to show you just a few things that i hope will be a blessing to you let me say just a few things uh before we jump into psalm 96 uh yesterday uh we had the privilege to share a little bit about vision baptist missions what our history is what our goals are and uh this morning just for a few moments let me say uh just a few things about our family my name is jeff this my wife mindy we're the bush family uh we've spent the last 12 years as missionaries in argentina and god was very gracious and very generous to us we were on furlough last year we arrived uh near the end of the year on furlough here in the united states we were traveling back and forth to different churches and uh as we were traveling uh for some reason we felt like the lord was maybe closing doors and opening doors at the same time when i was in bible college i remember uh felt like the lord was closing doors to uh me ministering in the united states and opening doors that i would leave and and go to argentina and in the same way i felt like the lord was doing certain things and uh so i began to pray about it my wife began to pray about it we began to ask the lord what it would what it was that the lord was trying to tell us and i had many different pastors that would ask us different questions um so how did this affect you we had struggled or better said we had confronted a different spiritual warfare as any other missionary or many christians uh have in their lives we had um my wife we were she was at four months and uh we we lost a baby and it was an emotional time but harder than anything um i almost lost my wife through a blood transfusion through different times that were going on there we were robbed at gunpoint we had all kinds of different struggles like anybody else but that wasn't the reason we felt like god was closing the doors in fact a little bit back farther than that we felt like the lord had us go to argentina and our goal was in argentina we thought that we were going to die in argentina we thought that we would live there for all our life and that we would stay there we would die in argentina but for some reason we felt like the lord was maybe switching some of our plans and i had went so far to really not even imagine what life was outside of argentina and i believed the lord began to shut different doors in our lives and i began to say lord what is it that you want us to do lord what is it that that is going on in this uncomfot in my heart right now make a long story short uh we began to pray about it and we felt like the lord was calling us this direction to become the director of vision baptist missions and so we let that uh i guess we stepped out on faith we made that decision and we caught the flag i guess the only body who was happy about our decision was my mom my mom's about happy about anything that we say uh everybody else is a little bit upset about it and didn't understand it and i'll be honest with you we didn't understand everything about it uh just two weeks ago we had our tickets to return back to argentina and uh that was a an emotional day for us uh but as we called back in argentina and as we talked to the people the churches are going forward the bible college is going forward the radio is going forward many people are still being saved we still hear from the pastors and in fact uh when we dropped some support here in the united states many of the churches in argentina picked us up for financial support and much more than uh united states churches is is supporting us and we are very humbled by the fact and we didn't know exactly how to accept it but we are thanking the lord for what they are doing and how god is using them so if you'll take your bible to psalm 96 let me share with you just a few things the bible says this in psalm 96 and if you would in verse number one

here's what the bible says psalm 96 in verse number one sing unto the lord a new song sing unto the lord all the earth verse number two sing unto the lord bless his name show forth his salvation from day to day verse number three declare his glory among the heathen his wonders from all the people now our desire my family and i as we arrive back this first month and a half that we've been here in georgia and we've been settling and and maybe making a change we'll be traveling this week and going forward we've left a ministry in argentina but we feel like the lord's opened another ministry in our hearts and our desirous as we travel from church to church and getting to colleges and getting to high schools and getting to camps in different areas our goal is to share and raise up a new generation of young people who will go forward and preach the gospel into all the earth as missionaries and as we look down and we begin to think about this the bible says some different interesting things in my life here in psalm 96 the bible says that we are to sing that we are to sing that we are to sing and if you look at it there's a pattern going on here we are to sing because one thing all the glory belongs to god dear friend let me tell you that all the glory belongs to the lord jesus christ you see whether we sing or whether we talk and whether we give our testimony whether we preach or whatever we do god wants all the glory whether it's here whether it's there wherever it may be god wants god deserves all the glory the book of revelation chapter number four says it this way it says revelation 4 verse number 11 thou art worthy oh lord to receive glory and honor and power for thou has created all things and for thy pleasure pleasure they are and were created you see all the glory belongs to god but not only all the glory belongs to god if you take psalm 96 look down just a few more verses there look at verse number seven would you the bible says this give unto the lord oh you kindreds of the people give unto the lord glory and strength verse number eight give unto the lord the glory due unto his name bring an offering and come into his courts verse number one two and three said that we are to sing sing sing because all the glory belongs to him verse number seven and eight says give give give you see all the glory belongs to god but not only all the glory belongs to god all the gifts belong to god all the gifts yes all that we can give and let me tell you not just materially speaking but you and i are to give our lives and our hearts pastor said just the other day that it that missions does not start with your wallet my friend mission starts with your heart when you and i give our hearts to god he can do amazing things and although i thought i was saved at the age of 15 i gave my life to god at the age of 16 to be a missionary and god took me to argentina i thought we are going to die here and i remember conversing with many of my missionary friends and they said well my goal is to go there for this many years and i said you're wrong i'm gonna go there all my life and then the lord simply humbled me in a in a nice way and switched all my plans but the lord says you give me your heart you give me your life and i'll do whatever i want look right up here young people today i'm not teaching the youth lesson but i am while i'm up here you are to give your life you are to give your heart you are to give your all to god and whatever he wants to do and wherever he wants to take you that's his business you just give him your all we as parents or we as adults we're to give him our lives listen we're to give him our material possessions we're to give him our health god gives us many things so that we can turn around and give it right back to him your health is not your health your health belongs to god your influence is not your influence your influence belongs to god your material possessions are not your material possessions they belong to god and god gives you everything so you can turn

around and give it right back and he'll take that and all the glory belongs to him all the gifts belong to him. James chapter number one, verse number 17, the Bible says every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and come it down from the father of lights. You see, God deserves everything and he gives us everything so that we could turn around and say, God, if some way you can use this, it's yours. You see, it's not about us. Life doesn't revolve around me and life doesn't revolve around you, my friend. It revolves around the Lord Jesus Christ and what you can do for him.



All the glory belongs to him. And sometimes that I've heard said that you and I talk about the second coming when some people have never heard about the first coming of Jesus Christ. All the glory belongs to him. How is he going to get the glory when you and I decide that all that we have and all that we are, we're going to return it right back to him. He'll receive all the glory. And when we give all our gifts and all everything that we have, it all come back to him. And if you look down very quickly to verse number 11, the Bible says, let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad, let the sea roar in the fullness thereof. Verse number 12, let the field be joyful and all that is therein. Then show all the trees of the woods rejoice for summer 13 before the Lord for he cometh for he cometh to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with the righteous and the people with this truth. The Bible says that all the glory belongs to him. We are to sing, sing, sing, and all the gifts belong to him. We are to give, give, give. And at the very end of this chapter, it says, so let, let, let, let. When you and I give all the glory to him and we give all the gifts to him, we can begin to let him have all the glory. We can begin to let all the nations rejoice because he is receiving what he is worthy of. It is a privilege for my wife and I to serve right here at the Vision Baptist Church. And in this short time, we are here. We've had so such a wonderful time and be patient with us. We're learning everybody's name. Just the other day, I told somebody, hey, how are you doing? I said their name and I thought, I walked away and I thought, stink, that's the wrong name. You know what? I'm working at this. But you know what? As we are here, my wife has enjoyed it so much and we are getting involved and enjoying helping, uh, get things ready for the missions conference and the other different thing. This is a pleasure for us. But as we travel around and my goal as I leave tomorrow morning and I'll travel to different churches, that Vision

Baptist Church will be represented as more missionaries are raised up and they go to the fields. But listen, let all of us finish as this chapter finished. Let the Lord receive all the glory because you and I are giving him of our goods and giving him all the glory that belongs to our Savior. Pastor? If you enjoyed that, say amen. We'll have Brother Travis Snow here in just a second to come and share his ministry and what God's done. And you can see your investment. But let me just say something about what Jeff's doing and what's going on. You know, our church has a training center. You may not know much about that, but we have a training center where we work at training missionaries.

[ 31 : 38 ] We bring in people from, uh, uh, different places and you've met them over the years, the six years that we've been in existence. And our goal is to raise a whole new group of missionaries. There's a, you'd have to talk to a missionary like Brother Sturwald and really talk to him in private to understand that there's a lot of problems on the mission field. A lot of missionaries that don't do the job, don't train leaders, don't stay and so on. And so I really believe with all my heart that God's allowing us to see a young group of missionaries raised up that have the proper training to go to the field. So we have a training center and I wanted and was praying that God would provide us with somebody that would help me because you know, as I get older and as I step aside one of these days, uh, uh, that, that the mission would continue and that the goal would continue, the work would continue and God worked and brought Jeff here to our church.

And Jeff on the field did what I taught. He lived it out. God used it. And I'm excited that he's here and he can help train missionaries. He can take that, that idea much further. I really believe the vision Baptist church was raised up for a very peculiar purpose. I really believe that other churches, uh, might not understand why we would start a church here, but this church is a very unique church with a purpose of getting the gospel to the world. Man talked to me last night, brother David Lundy is a member of here. And he said, boy, I just love vision Baptist church.

No place else was such a missionary emphasis. And he stood back and we talked about that. I just want you to know that you pray for Jeff and pray that the gospel would continue to go around the world, that God would continue to bring young people up through our ranks and also in from other places and that we could help them get ready to go to the mission field. So that means you got to pray for Jeff, pray that God would use him, pray as he goes on the road. Uh, this is a big job. Um, uh, I would have stayed in Peru. I would have stayed in Peru if it weren't for this one thing.

We wanted to train missionaries to affect the entire world. And so I hope that you will, I hope you'll be in prayer. Well, brother Travis is our missionary. He's home on furlough.

We've been investing in him ever since we've had a church and now you'll hear from him in the, in the ministry. And you'll know that what you've been given through faith promise has been worth it. It's good to be with you this morning. And I want to just kind of encourage you this morning.

[ 33 : 47 ] The guys are going to help me with a few pictures, hopefully. Um, and I want to read from Philippians chapter number four and verse number 17. And Paul was writing back to the church at, uh, Philippi and he, uh, was thanking them for their faithfulness, thanking them that they had stood by him, that they had supported him at a time when not a lot of people were doing it.

And it's interesting because in the passage, he reminds them that he can do all things who Christ would strengthens him. And it's important for us to realize this morning that God does not need us, that God's going to get his work done. And God has all the resources. God's not begging and God's not, uh, you know, desperate this morning, but we have an opportunity to be used by God.

And I believe that if we don't, he will, he will use someone else. So it's an opportunity this morning. And he says, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. And then he goes down and he says, but the reason that I wanted you to give was because I wanted you to have the fruit from what God was going to do. And so it's a privilege this morning to be able to be a part of world evangelism, whether you're a goer or a sender, because we get, get a part of the fruit of what happens.

And so I want to just show you a little bit of the fruit. When we went to Ireland, I did not really know what to expect. I had a lot of ideas and plans and I thought that I knew what I was doing, but I realized very quickly that I wasn't as smart as I thought I was, that I wasn't as skilled as I thought I was, but God did a work in spite of me. And you know, when, when you go out as a missionary and sometimes you think, well, these missionaries have it all together, but truth of matters, we just try to give that appearance, but God has it all together and God does the work.

And so I'll show you a little bit of our ministry. When we went to Ireland, we've been planning churches there in Northern Ireland since 2004. Our first two years, we worked with Roe Valley Baptist Church in the town of Limavati. It was started by another missionary there and that church is still going today. And we praise the Lord for the witness there. All of our children were born in Northern Ireland. We left, there was just Terry and I, but all three of them were born there and they all have little Irish accents if you speak to them and they love living there. Then we moved up to the city of Derry or Londonderry. It's a city with two names. Northern Ireland, as you know, has had a lot of trouble between the Catholics and Protestants. And so the Catholics call it Derry and the Protestants call it Londonderry. It's a city of about a hundred thousand people. Eighty thousand of those are from a Catholic background. Thirty thousand of those are from a Protestant background, which means they're Presbyterian, Methodist, Brethren, Anglin, even the Baptists there. A lot of them consider themselves be Protestants.

[ 36 : 35 ] And there's a lot of challenges in Northern Ireland. A lot of people have been hurt by religion. They see religion as the cause of all the troubles there. Most of the troubles actually are political. It's not really religious. And there's a lot of people who are bitter because of the years of conflict. This picture is a picture of the one of the house apartments in Derry. And it has a dove there. And the dove is not complete. And they say whenever there's peace in Ireland, they'll complete the dove. They haven't yet painted it. And you know, they're not going to paint it. They shouldn't paint it until Jesus comes because only he really brings peace. But there's a lot of opportunities because people are searching for the truth. They've seen the emptiness of religion. They have there's very few Bible preaching churches there. In the area where we're at, there's about 80,000 people. And there are no Baptist churches in that area. And so it's been exciting to see the Lord plant the Northwest Baptist Church. And that's where we've been for the last six years. And this is a group of our people there. The guy about seven from the left is Lee. And he got saved about a year ago now and baptized and joined the church. He's from a Catholic background. And it was exciting to see him get baptized. And our church is involved. The way we started the church was we first of all did evangelism. And here's a picture of some of our outreach on the picture on the left is a picture of us going out to the local university. And the young people, there's like a bar they all go to. And we were able to go about two o'clock in the morning. And they're coming out and give them tea and coffee and witness to them. And I must say that is a real experience. But you get into some very good conversations and some really bad conversations.

But it is a good opportunity to speak to them about about the Lord Jesus. The middle picture is some of the folks from our church along with Brother Tony Howarth doing some outreaching. Looks like they're a bit confused. I don't know where they're going, but they're trying to figure it out from my maps. And then on the right is just a picture of one of the special services that we had at the church.

And then after we do evangelism, of course, we don't want to just bring spiritual infancy into the world and leave them. But then we have discipleship. And there's a picture of some of our discipleship happening through the Sunday school and the ladies meetings. And then, of course, you want to form them into churches. It's so important that there is that if we don't just do evangelism, we could, you know, we could spend a million dollars and just pass out a gospel tract to every person or mail it to them and think, well, we've done our job. But that isn't what the Great Commission is only about. We have to start churches because long after we leave, we need a gospel preaching center that is there that will continue to evangelize the people.

And it's exciting to know that we have missionaries here that come off the field on furlough or in different reasons. But those churches are left there and they continue to preach the gospel.

They continue to reach souls. And then some of the ministries in our church, so we have a youth ministry and we're very excited about that. This is a picture of our teen camp we had this past summer.

[ 39 : 42 ] And it was one of the best camps that I've ever been a part of. We had a great time. And it's exciting to see these young people that are on fire for the Lord and learning and growing and preparing them to be servants. Also, next picture is our children's ministry there, our summer children's work, and then our ladies ministry. We've also been able to have, if you just keep going there, to get onto the radio.

So we've started doing two just short little thoughts for the day every week. And it's been a good opportunity to get the gospel out. It's also got our name in the community because we're, we're like a sponsor. And so every time that they would give their sponsor list, they say the station would not be possible without this, the support of the Northwest Baptist church. And people are thinking, what in the world is this church? But it's been amazing. I was talking to somebody on the phone. We were renting a van to pack our stuff up. And he said, are you that guy that's on the radio with Felix? And I was like, yeah, that's me. So it's been a really good opportunity to get the word out in our community. Of course, our discipleship ministry training others. We've also been able to be involved in going on mission trips. We just, a team from our church just got back from Morocco this past summer. And so we don't want the investment you make to stop with us. We want it to go on. And so we're trying to support missionaries and train young people to go to the mission field. And so our vision for the future is to continue training men for ministry through the Bible Institute and Bible college to help existing churches to grow stronger. A lot of the churches in Ireland, the UK are very small and to get them strong and become fully indigenous and to plant more churches across Ireland in the UK. So you can pray for us that laborers will come help us, that preachers will be raised up, that souls will be saved, that the churches will grow and that doors will open. I am very excited about the work in the British Isles. I am very excited about the future. I'm excited about the labors that God is raising up. And I hope that you will pray about what you can do to be involved in it. And I want to say thank you for your faithful giving and you have fruit in heaven because of your investment in the work here and also in the work around the world.

And I hope that you're excited about that because you really should be. Thank you very much, Pastor. Doesn't your heart break for the day that his name will be praised all over the world in every language? Amen. And don't you yearn to have a church that really does care about getting the gospel message to everybody? I know you do. I thank you for being a great giving church and how that you have sacrificed. Let me show you some Bible verses. Go with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 8 if you can. Let me just tell you what I know from heart. And if I make a mistake, I'll apologize.

Approximately \$102,000 was pledged in faith promise giving last year. That's what you prayed about and you said you'd give. And this year you have given over \$108,000. If I'm not mistaken, that's pretty close. And then above that, a lot of you give special offerings. And Brother John, I think, told me about \$140,000 has been given total counting the special offerings. Right now our church is at 720 something thousand dollars that you've given in a little over six years. And I just praise the Lord for what you give. I want to talk to you about this is now like this is our day. This is reset day. We start on zero today and we start on a new goal. And what will God have us give? And Betty and I have thought about it and prayed about it. We've decided on how much we want to increase and what we'll give this year. And I just thank God that in bad times, in bad times, when everybody else is probably backing up, some of our missionaries have been losing support. You have been able by God, you've been able to keep on giving. You've been enabled by God to keep giving and for us to continue supporting missionaries and actually take on more missionaries over this time period. Now we, there's some things that I say to you and I would like to remind you. So let's go over the number one thing is what are the rules about faith promise at our church? If you've been in a, maybe an independent Baptist background, you may think there's some rules about how you're supposed to give. So we do have two rules. There ought to be rules at every church. Amen. What's the first rule in faith promise giving at vision Baptist church? What is it? There are no rules. And by the way, if somebody were to say that where we have one second rule, guess what the second rule is. If somebody says there are rules, refer back to rule number one. Amen. So there are no rules. We give because we want to, we give because it's born out of our heart. Now, if you've got your Bible, look at second

Corinthians chapter eight, second Corinthians chapter eight. And just let me remind you real quickly, right down through the verses. The first thing we saw was in chapter eight and verse five, they first gave their own selves. It starts not with giving money. And too often missions conferences turn into, I'm going to give money and it turns into a money raising thing. And we definitely do want to raise money without a doubt. We want to raise money. But the truth is we want God's people to be in love with God and to glorify God and to give themselves to God. Can you say amen right there?

[ 44 : 36 ] Can you put up there? If Patrick is back there, can you give me second Corinthians chapter eight and verse five, the Bible said in this, they did not as we hope, but they first gave their own selves to the Lord. They first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God.

Now you've had Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, you've had a picnic, you've had a banquet, you've had all this time this morning to get to know some missionaries. I hope you fall in love with them. I hope you give yourself to God. And I hope you also fall in love with these missionaries.

I really believe that if you do, God will use you to give the second thing we saw during the Bible, during the conference was chapter eight and verse nine. The Bible says that Jesus was rich.

Jesus was rich, but he knew you were poor. He knew I was poor and he gave up of everything that he had for us. Look at what it says. And for, you know, the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for our sakes, he became poor that through his poverty, his poverty might be rich that you through his poverty might be rich. And you know, none of us really live. I have never lived like brother Randy Sturwald lives. I lived in South America. We had some hard times, but I never had brown water on a consistent basis. We might have a, we might have some times when we went one time, two weeks and 18 years, we went two weeks without water. One time, other times we might go a day or two, but there was two weeks is our worst and longest time. And yet, and yet God has called this man to go to a place where it's much more difficult. I am rich compared to him. I'm all, I'm always rich compared to everybody else around the world. I'm a born again, Christian.

I'm a new creature. I don't have the same old desires I had. I'm a new person. And because of that, I am rich. I am rich in Jesus Christ. And so here's what goes on. I'm rich and all to realize, man, I can make a difference with what God's given me. He's given me the good news. He's given me the word of God. He's given me salvation. He's given me the Holy spirit. Then in Romans, uh, second Corinthians chapter eight in verse nine, the chapter eight in verse 12, excuse me. It says, for if there be first a willing mind, it's accepted according to the man hath, not according to that he hath not. Now don't watch this. Many people have turned faith promise giving into something really spooky. They've turned it into, you're going to pray. And God's going to give you some figure you pull out of the air and you're going to say, Hey, I think I'll give God a million dollars this coming year. And if by faith, God gives me that million dollars, I'm going to give it.

[ 46 : 58 ] That's kind of like the guy that says, when I win the lottery, I'm going to give God half of it. Well, that's really an empty promise. You need to sit down and say, God, this is what you blessed me with. And I'm a steward. I'm in charge of your money, not my money, your life, not my life, your time, not my time. And God, what would you have me to give? And you just ask God said, look at it and say, God, I ought to give to support my church. And you ought to, I mean, I tell you sometimes tithing is like teething. That's where you get started. But as you grow, you get, you do more and more, but then above that, y'all just say, God, what can I do for missions? And you do that because you have a willing mind. Why do you have a willing mind?

You know, do you ever realize what kind of givers we are? This is a wild and crazy church. You are giving people, but can I just tell you, it's not because you're so good. Are you ready for that? It's not because you're so good. It's because he changed you. He made you willing. He gave you a new heart. He gave you new desires. And what others have spent on other things, you're willing to give to God. You're willing to give, to get his gospel around the world. You are giving people. He gave you a willing mind, but then it says not accepted according to that a man half what you have. You see, God wants me to give based on what I have. And if he gives me more, I'm going to give more.

So I looked at ours today and I said, I think we can do this. We hadn't had a raise, but I think we can do this. We hadn't had, uh, we hadn't had some kind of windfall, but I think we can do this. And so you just decide, I want to do that. It's not, and it's not out of something I don't have.

It's not, it's just because I won't try to mark, by the way, God doesn't want your Coca-Cola money and God doesn't want your potato chip money. I mean, that's a really cheesy way to go about giving to missions. It ought to be, I give out of my heart because I'm in love with Jesus. I'm in love with the word of God and I'm in love with getting the gospel around the world. Now let me give you two more verses. Second Corinthians chapter nine, verses six and seven. The Bible says, but this, I say he, that he would soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly. And he would soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. So look at the verse. If you would, did you know that God blesses according to how I give that doesn't mean that God always makes me have more money, but God does promise that however I sow, I will reap bountifully. Boy, he has been so good to Betty and I over the years. He has blessed us with letting us see people saved. He's blessed us with letting us have a church like vision Baptist church. He's blessed us with letting us have friends like you. And yes, he's blessed us financially as we have given. He has given to us more to give. If you're not faithful over the little you have, why should God trust you with more?

Why would God continue to give you money? And so, you know, the whole deal is I want to give and my giving, my giving often determined determines my ability to give. Did you hear that? My giving often determines my ability to give. If I'm stingy with a little, I have, I'll be stingy with more. Almost everybody would say, if God had made me rich, I'd give. No, you wouldn't because you don't now. That's where the tithe comes into something very beautiful.

[ 49 : 49 ] You know, a guy comes in and said, you know, when I was in Prue the Kingdom and they said, we can't tithe. We don't make anything. I said, well, I guess if you don't make anything, 10% of zero, zero. And so you can come this Sunday and tithe. Amen. It's not that hard to tithe. It gets hard to tithe when you make \$10,000 a month, doesn't it? That's when it changes. You say, now, wait a minute, 10 bucks is okay. And a hundred bucks is okay. I don't mind making big car payments, but big giving to God. That's a different matter. But anyway, here's the deal.

He that sows sparingly reaps sparingly, but don't you take that as an excuse as a preacher trying to pull some seed promise on you? Or if you give, God will make you rich because look what the next verse says. Look at verse seven. If you would second create design seven, every man as he, as according as he purposeth in his heart. So you today will purpose. And you will say, I believe that my wife and I, or my husband and I, our family can give this amount. We pray about it.

We want to, we purpose in our heart. It's born in us that we want to give like this. So as you purpose in your heart, so let him give. Then it says this, not grudgingly. You know what? I don't want to turn our church ever into one of those places that are mean spirited, manipulative, and guilt producing churches. I don't ever want us to be like that. I want us to always be a church where we come in here excited to be here, excited to hang around here, excited to stay here. We do it because we love Jesus, but we just love Jesus and everything we do. We just do it because we love Jesus. Hey, it's not that the preacher's going to browbeat us. It's not that we're crying about how the missionaries are going to starve. We just love Jesus. Can you say amen right there? Love Jesus, love Jesus, and love Jesus. So not grudgingly, I would hate to think that the giving I did was based on me feeling like God was twisting my arm. Can I just say this? God's not going to break your leg if you don't give. God's not going to send your car to the repair shop because you don't give.

God is not up in heaven saying, I can't make without them. I think I'll shoot two or three of them. So the rest of them will know to give. That's not what's happening. You know why? Because he said, I love a cheerful giver and not one who does it grudgingly, nor does he want you to do it because well, poor brother, Randy Starwalt, poor brother, Randy Starwalt has to live in Kenya, poor guy, poor guy. And look at all those swollen bellies in Africa. Let's all give for that. And let's all, let's all give because of the need. There's some people that missions is all about garbage dumps.

Boy, the more of you show of a garbage dump, the more people want to give because of necessity, but God doesn't need us. God doesn't need us. God's going to do it with us or without us.

[ 52 : 20 ] You know what he told the Jews one time? He said, do you think that I need your money? Do you not know that if I were hungry, I own the cattle on a thousand hills? Fact is he owns the hills too.

He said in one place, all the gold of the earth is mine and all the silver is mine. So he doesn't ask me to give it because he needs it. He asked me to give it because it's a blessing to me. It's a blessing to me. It's a blessing to me. And God loves a cheerful giver. God loves a guy that's going to say, boy, I'm so excited about my opportunity to give. I don't give grudgingly.

I don't give of necessity. I'll just give you one last thing. Second Corinthians chapter eight, verses three and four. The Bible says this for to their power, I bear record. Yay. And beyond their power, they were willing of themselves. You know, the church at Corinth heard about the need in Jerusalem.

And that's what this offering was about. It really wasn't a missionary offering. It was a mission. It was an offering to take care of the mother church that had sent other people out and they were going to send this money back. And here's what he said. He said, boy, they wanted to be involved.

Do you know that Paul came to that church and he actually did like this? He said, man, y'all are so poor. I don't think y'all should have to give. I feel sorry for you really well to be taking up an offering for you. So I'm not going to take up an offering from you. And they said, it said for to their power and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves. I look at verse four, second Corinthians day for praying us. They came saying, please, Paul, we beg you take the gift. We prepared to send and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. They wanted to be involved.

[ 53 : 54 ] Can you imagine how God allows you to impact some places in, in, uh, in Kenya? If we could take on brother Starwalt, brother Starwalt would be able to train more preachers and brother start to be able to carry on the ministry and God will do more. And though we won't be doing anything and really he won't be doing anything. God will be doing it all. We get to have a little part of it and he would add fruit to our account. Can you imagine what happens when you get to get involved in a man going to India or a man getting the first Bible, so areas of the world that haven't had the Bible. Can you not imagine God's allowing us? I cannot wait for the day when I will stand in glory. And what the young people did just a minute ago when they sang in different languages will be real. It will be real. It is already real. I guess it was last night or the night before Ed sang that song. And when he saw those Chinese people getting baptized, everybody, anybody who knew Ed knew God was really dealing his heart. He was emotional. He was excited. You know why?

Because he sang those songs with those people because he saw those people get saved. He saw those people get baptized. And his heart is to get back to that place. God is doing a work.

God is at work. And God is victorious. And he will be victorious. And he will get all glory. And he will get all praise. So pray about it. What are we going to do this year? No guilt. By the way, guilt won't only keep you for a week or two. Guilt is like when the kids on Peru, the Peruvian kids would come to me and beg me for money. And you give them the smallest coin you have. Hey, need, need. You'll give somebody's need once or twice, but you'll get tired of that. But if you fall in love with Jesus, you'll give because you love him. I pray that God will let you be a real giver.

Can we have a word of prayer together, please? God, would you bless as we give? Would you bless as we pray about what you'd have us to give? Would you touch your hearts, people, your people's hearts? I thank you, Lord, for how you have been working in our church. I pray. I thank you. And I praise you for what you've been giving through us. I am looking forward to what you're going to do this coming year. And I'm just excited. God, whether the number comes in lower or the number comes in higher, I just want to magnify you with my, my, my life. I pray God should help our church to do more than ever before. I pray we'd become more and more like you. And I'll give you great honor and glory and praise for all that you do in Jesus precious name. Amen.