

Watch and Pray

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[0 : 00] Well, good evening. That was week. And I'm excited, though, that you all are here. And if you're a visitor, you might ask what in the world is going on here at Vision Baptist Church. Well, tonight's not a normal week or midweek service here at Vision.

Actually, we get the opportunity to celebrate some graduates here. They have completed the Our Generation Training Center program, and tonight is a special night for them. And so they have done all the requirements as it was asked of them.

They went to the classes. They did six months on the field. They've read the books. They've preached. They've led the Lord's Supper. They tried to disciple. They've done all that, and now it is our turn to honor them.

Tonight, we get to honor Robert Becker, Jens Looney, Justice, and Courtney Mize. And as a church, I hope you guys don't forget that we are truly blessed to have this happen inside of our church.

I mean, we get the privilege of not just being a part of sending the gospel to regions where it's not, but we get the opportunity to help train missionaries and send them out. So I hope you guys realize that that's a huge thing.

[0 : 57] Tonight, I also like to say, parents, I want to say a great job on raising these young men. You have truly been blessed to have children like these. These young men and women have a great desire to do something great for God, and we realize that God used you all.

And so tonight, we want to say good job. Congrats. Becker, congrats, my friend. You did it. I know there were times in your life that you had fear, and it could have overcome, but by the grace of God, you were able to complete your task that was given to you.

I remember when you came here to camp because of, was it Jason Mann, right? And now you're married and on deputation. Keep on working. Keep on serving the Lord. Keep loving Him with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, and then watch how God carries you on to perfection.

Congratulations, my friend. Jens, you have gone a long way. I put down, he has gone from Bowie knife to completing the training center.

If you guys don't remember, when Jens was taking up the offering, he had this huge knife. It was almost like a sheath on the side of his leg, and he was taking up the offering. It was really weird, and he had this little eagle shirt.

[2 : 06] But anyways, it's been quite a ride, Jens. And you've always found ways to complete tasks around here, and I thank you for how you worked inside the church, and I can't wait to see what God has in store for you in the future.

Congratulations, Jens. You did it, buddy. Justice and Courtney, way to go. It's been exciting to watch God work in your life justice. Be diligent in keeping your heart and mind state on Jesus.

He is the author. He is the finisher of our faith. Never forget that. I'm very excited that you get to go to the deputation to go to Nepal. I love you, and I'm very proud of you. Now to the church.

I want to thank you, church, Vision Baptist Church, for being a church that loves and helps raise missionaries. I know that these men and women, y'all have spent countless hours with them, from discipleship, like going through the book of 1 John, to working along these students to help them inside in ministry and teaching them how to do ministry, and even to raising one of these guys up and through our high school program.

Not to belittle others, but Vision is truly one of a kind. A model church that others should follow suit. Vision Baptist Church, thank you for who you are and what you do. Keep it up.

[3 : 17] Then last, but certainly not least, we also have to thank our pastor, Pastor Austin Gardner. It's truly your leadership in all this. I really do praise God that he saw fit to direct your lives back here in the States.

I'm not trying to be trite or corny when I say this, but you have taught us the Bible faithfully, you have lived transparently, and you have been open with your time and life to see others fulfill their dream in serving God around the world.

And for this, we thank you. Students, don't forget that God has done a great work in your lives over these past years. Congratulations. We as a church are very proud of you.

We can't wait to see what God will do with you guys in the next few years. Tonight, we hope that you guys get blessed. Let's pray, and then we'll have you guys up here to give your testimonies. Heavenly Father, I thank you for what you're doing. I thank you as these guys walk their way up here and give their testimonies.

Thank you for them. I thank you for how you worked in their lives. Lord, God, I ask that you would just bless them tonight. Lord, I ask that you would just use them greatly. Lord, help us to get more students, Lord. We desperately want to see this world reach in our generation, Lord.

[4 : 19] We need more men and women like this, Lord. We need men and women that are going to take it serious. Lord, studying their Bible, preparing, and getting ready for the mission field, Lord. I love you so much. Thank you for allowing me to be a part. I have a small part.

For it's in your son's name. Amen. Amen. Well, I grew up in a Christian home, and I'm so thankful for my parents to be able to be here. They've always been behind me and pushing me towards Christ, even when I didn't want to.

They were pushing me, sometimes with a baseball bat, but I'm so thankful. You know, I grew up in a Christian home. I had that opportunity, but it still took me 15 years to make salvation my own.

I was at summer camp, and I was reading some memory verses there at summer camp, and some of the words in the memory verse was, your own salvation. The Holy Spirit stopped me dead in my tracks and said, Robert, your own salvation.

I said, yeah, but I go to church. He said, no, Robert, your own salvation. Yeah, but my parents are saved. That's good enough. No, Robert, your own salvation. I can remember that night as a 15-year-old going to my youth leader and placing my faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone for the salvation of my soul.

[5 : 24] If you don't know that, please, tonight, know that it's by grace through faith alone, and that not of yourselves. It's the gift of God, not of works that any man should boast. A year later, I was back at the same summer camp.

I was there, and I was preaching the word of God, and I was hearing this message about how Christ is our high priest, and just like the high priest in the Old Testament, he gives us jobs. And it was during that sermon that I felt the call of God in my life to be a preacher.

At 16, I had no idea what that meant, but I said, yes, Lord, I'll do it. I kind of thought about missions simply because I had a missionary friend of mine invest in me when I was younger and give me some missionary biographies. So I went, and I read those biographies, and I thought, ah, missions might be cool.

And then I had a friend, Jason Mann, invite me to the Our Generation Summit. And then I met Vision, this group of crazy, passionate people that are so concerned about this world, so concerned not about whether or not they have clean water to drink or good food to eat, but whether or not their soul is prepared for eternity.

And I remember hearing the preaching of the word of God and just seeing the love that you all had for that. And I remember the Lord calling me that night to full-time missions, and I surrendered my life. It took me six months and a camp to finally get down here, but I got down here in 2015.

[6 : 35] It's been a wild ride, and I'm just so grateful for all of your help in getting me to where I am tonight. Thank you so much. For those of you who don't know, I am Jens Looney, the crazy guy with the bully knife.

Once I held it, hidden my jacket. Nobody knew. But I could tell many crazy stories since coming here through my life.

By word of quick testimony, I got saved when I was 13 years old. And I remember the day so clearly because the week had been a battle. I was arguing with God over whether or not I had been saved.

And that's never a smart thing to do, to argue with God. He knows everything. But on Sunday, my youth pastor got up and he told me, Look, Jens, if you're here today and you're doubting your salvation, you should ask God about it.

And I remember thinking, He already told me. And so I bowed my head and I accepted Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior. And from that moment forward, my life has been a wild ride.

[7 : 36] I had an opportunity to go all over the United States with an evangelist. I had an opportunity to come to the summit, which probably is the single event that changed the course of my life. The summit was where I was introduced to vision and Vision Baptist missions.

It's where I was introduced to people that I would someday call my dear friends. People I would look up to for the rest of my life. And it was at the summit that the Lord placed the desire to be a missionary in my heart.

It was at the summit that He called me to be missions, called me into missions. And I said, Okay, Lord, I'll pray about it. Yeah, I like arguing with God, apparently. But God went out.

He said, Jens, I want you to be a missionary. Jens, I want you in here. I need you. I want you to serve me. And so I surrendered my life and I started working to come to the training center. I started working to come here. And when I finally got here, there was a lot of rough edges.

A lot of rough edges. But God had prepared this church called Vision Baptist Church. He prepared people in that church to help me.

[8 : 40] He had prepared people here to help curb some of my strange tendencies. And to make me more the man He wants me to be. And if it's one thing I want to tell you today, is that I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Vision Baptist Church.

Because of the influence God has used you on my life. And I look forward to serving God with you. I don't have a ton to say, but I just want to say that I'm very grateful.

I'm very grateful for a wonderful family who has supported me in moving here and in doing whatever God wants me to do. I'm very grateful for John and Becca Anderson. They really encouraged me and helped me realize that God could use my life, either in missions or whatever else he wanted to do.

And I'm just grateful for Justice's family and encouraging us as we've met here and gotten married and been serving the Lord. And I'm just very grateful that God can use us.

I'm grateful for you as a church. I thank you so much for all that y'all have been to us. And I'm just excited to see how God will use us and me and my wonderful husband as we serve him wherever. Well, it's kind of intimidating to get my testimony up here because y'all all know me in this room better than people outside of this room, so I'm worried about fact-checking here.

[9 : 58] But I cannot be thankful enough for my mom and dad. Sorry. I hate crying.

But she only knew the way they loved us. Where's mama, daddy?

I see you. I don't see her. There she is. They apparently don't like each other right now. On the other end of the row. But I couldn't ask God for better parents.

Couldn't ask God for better brothers and sisters. Couldn't ask God for a better church to grow up in. My family got here when I was 12 years old. And Robert took me under his wing and started doing foundations and got me involved in children's ministry and really showed me the priorities that we should have as Christians.

It's not about us anymore. It's not about what we want. It's not about our desires. It's about him. He's done so much for us. How could we not do anything for him? And how does it go?

[10 : 59] The love of Christ constraineth us. And just thank God for y'all. Thank God for what he's done in our lives. And thank you. And these students have brought much joy to us over the years. You have worked hard.

You put in late hours. You have sweat. You have given your all to make this night possible. And before you guys get too boastful, I'm not talking about you. I'm talking about our church here.

Amen. I get to give the challenge to the church. And then Brother Jeff will give the challenge to the students. And rumor has it is he's going to pay off all college debt. All right. Tonight. It's not as big a deal, but it's still pretty amazing that he's going to do that.

But it has been a great honor, church. And I want to encourage you for a second and challenge us to stay committed to this, that we made decisions. You know, as a church, we make decisions. When we laid out a new building, we had room set aside for a training center.

But that's the easiest decision. The biggest decision is that we're going to make room for them in our lives and that they won't come here and just be bystanders. But they'll be welcomed not only into our building, but into our homes and into our lives and into our ministries.

[12 : 00] And it's just been wonderful. And it's been said many times tonight. And we always go to the Pauline epistles often and look at the example of Timothy and Paul and the relationship. And it's so fitting for us.

Timothy comes to Paul. He doesn't necessarily come from the right background. He isn't somebody of great prestige. He didn't have a father that was a spiritual leader. And I'm thankful that's not the case with our graduates.

Timothy, he's not Paul. You know, he doesn't have all. He isn't the veteran missionary. He hasn't done all those things that he will do someday in his life. But he had a godly mother.

Timothy did. And he had to be taught to avoid temptation. First Timothy chapter 6. He was tempted at times. He dealt with health issues when Paul was trying to train him.

First Timothy 5. He was young for the role that he was playing. That's why he was told to let nobody despise his youth. He didn't have it all figured out. At times Paul had to write to him and teach him how he ought to behave himself.

[13 : 00] And how they ought to teach other people how to behave themselves. But the most important thing that Timothy saw in Paul is that he had a heart for God. And that's what we found. We can joke with every one of them. Some more than others.

And about what it was like. As Justice said, coming here at 12. You know, they said prophets will reward his own country. So they have stories. Jim's at a young age meeting him at 14 when he started coming to events.

But there's one thing that's been true about them is they've had a heart for the things of God. And there's been things that we've had the opportunity to trust them or to teach them. As they've led different events and do different things.

But they've always been an example to us of commitment and a love for the Lord. And we should be very grateful of that. And we should always be open for more of that. So Timothy chapter number 3 and verse number 10 says, First two words is but thou.

Because it's drawing a contrast between them and the group of people that were mentioned before. There's a dividing line here from the group of people that were being ruled by the spirit of that day. And then who Timothy was.

[14 : 04] And we could say that about the students that God sends to us. But them, but thou, this group of students, they're not like millennials. They're not like the rest of this generation. And they need to be taught. They need to be instructed.

But they have a heart for God here. And it says that they've fully known. That speaks about the diligence in which they would pay attention to what we're doing. They carefully studied what was happening. It also speaks about us doing things in an open way.

Including them in. Not doing things the easiest way or the fastest way. But doing things in a way which involves the students that God sends us here. They have fully known. It says that they have fully known our doctrine.

And that doesn't just happen Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday in the classes. But what we really believe as a church, they're going to learn in the Sunday school classes. And the small groups. Adult Bible fellowships.

Life groups. Or whatever I'm calling them this season of the church. Right? They're going to learn there what we really believe. If we really believe it, it's going to be important. They're not only going to hear it being taught. And talked about in the four year. And when we're on van rides with them.

[15 : 01] But they're going to see if we really live it out. Are we going to sing the songs about reaching the world? And are we going to be actively involved in doing it? So they've learned our doctrine. But they've also seen our manner of life.

As they've worked with us. As they've prepared for events with us. As they've walked in here on Thursday nights. And seen you sitting in a corner. Teaching somebody in foundations. As they've heard you teach. They've seen you respond.

The teaching. How we respond to difficulty. They've heard even in our voice as we pray for missionaries. Are these people that we know and care about? Or are we just reading the list? They've learned it. And they've had opportunity to see it.

And then also they've learned our purpose. And that isn't just something that we could put up on banners in our church. But it's something that they see in every part of what we do. Vacation Bible School and Children's Church.

And every time we meet. We are publicly stating what our purpose is. And faith along suffering and charity. Along suffering that being patient with them. With little irritations that people have in life.

[15 : 56] But our love for them flowed from the doctrine. And the belief that we have. That we want to help. And the persecutions. Of all these things. They've seen that people with a heart for God. Knowing the right doctrine. Trying to live holy lives.

They've seen that we still suffer persecution. And we're afflicted. And they've learned from us. How we can respond to that. And now they have an example. And it's been a great blessing with this group. And I pray that God will allow us more.

So here at the church. We pray that they not only know what to believe from God's word. But they've had a living demonstration. Of what it looks like to live it out. In this context. And that we've taught them. And given them the tools. To do it.

On their next mission field. Would you open your Bibles to the book of Genesis chapter number 50. Genesis chapter number 50. As well as Psalms chapter number 63. I get the opportunity to challenge you students.

And I'm very thankful for this day. In fact. Brother Trent told me. That if I would pay off your debts. For the school bill. He promises to buy each of you a vehicle for deputation.

[16 : 53] And I mean I just think. Like his generosity is way beyond mine. So I mean. Y'all need to thank him for that. Genesis chapter number 50. Very quickly. I want to give you a couple thoughts. Very quickly.

I remember I was finishing up high school. Getting ready to. I thought I would be done. And as I was going towards the end of high school. I remember the Lord put it on my heart. To be a missionary. And I thought.

Okay great. What do I need to do? And I remember. The pastor that I grew up under. He got me to the side. And he said. So you think God wants you to be a missionary? I said. Yes sir. And he said. Good. That means continuing on. And I said. Okay. What does that mean?

You know. I barely made it out of high school. I thought. You know. Praise the Lord. No more books for me. You know. Get rid of this thing. And he told me. If you're going to keep going forward. You've got to keep learning. You've got to keep growing. You've got to keep moving forward in life.

And I thought. Well you know. I don't know about that. But as life comes on. I realize. That you know. Sometimes we think. Well that was the step. And now from here on. It's just smooth sailing. But you know. In our lives. We have to go forward.

[17 : 47] His favorite verse was. So how can we go forward in our life?

How can we? So I'm going to give you two quick thoughts. If you want to grow in your life. If you want to go forward. If you want to advance. If you want to keep moving forward in your life. There are two things. Two biblical principles. Two biblical truths here.

That we're going to find that we must do. Genesis chapter number 50. Our very first one. We see here. Genesis chapter number 50. And our biblical person. That we're going to see here. Is Joseph. Genesis chapter number 50. Verse number 20. It says. But as for you.

Now Joseph's coming towards the end of the book. And his brothers sold him off into slavery. And done him all these wrong things. And he said. But as for you. Genesis 50 verse number 20. As for you. Ye thought evil against me. But God meant it unto good.

To bring to pass. As it is this day. To save much people alive. First thing that you must do. If you're going to go forward in life. It really depends on how you handle the setbacks in life. You know. All of your life.

[18 : 45] Things are going to hurt you. People are going to hurt you. Things are going to happen. It seems like life is unfair. Seems like. Well you get curveballs all the time. In life. The only way you're going to go forward. Is depending on the setbacks.

You know. There's Joseph. He could have got bitter. He could have thrown a fit. He could have said. That's it. God. How could you do it? You gave me these big dreams at first. What in the world's happening? But he saw that setback. As actually a launch pad.

That God said. I want to use this. To push you forward in life. So how do you see the setbacks? You see someone. An enemy. You see something. An enemy. When you see something. That happens to you. I enjoy missionary biographies. A favorite that I have.

Is about Jacob DeShazer. He's a young man. Who'd given his life. To go into the U.S. military. And just at that time. Pearl Harbor was bombed. And so. They were looking for a couple. Young men. That would give their lives. To go into the Doolittle Raiders.

A couple guys. That would fly out into Japan. And they would bomb the area. Well. He was one of those young men. And he went over there. They captured him. He was a prisoner of war. They tortured him. They beat him. They mistreated him.

[19 : 40] He had it rough. I mean. He tells all the stories. And how they did to him. They can hardly give him food. And everything else. We end up getting saved. While he's there. A couple years go by. And U.S. takes over. And they win the war.

And as they win the war. They release all the prisoners of war. He gets home. And everybody says. Vengeance buddy. And he's got all these imaginations. You know. I mean. That guy beat me when I was there. And they mistreated me. I'm going to get him.

All of a sudden. God puts in his heart. I don't want you to be mad at him. I don't want you to look for vengeance. I want you to be a missionary. And go back and tell the people. That you. That beat you. About Jesus Christ. So people start asking him. Said. What in the world are you doing?

He said. You know. They only did that to me. Because they did not have Jesus Christ in their hearts. What was a setback to some. Became a launch pad for him. So the first. Very first thing. If you're going to go forward in your life.

You have to realize. What you do with the setbacks. Will determine. If you're going to go forward in your life. Second one we see here. Psalms chapter number 63. Very quickly. And whereas. Joseph was the one who taught us about the setbacks.

[20 : 33] We see in Psalm 63. That David teaches us something else. Psalm 63 verse number one. The Bible says this. Oh God. Thou art my God. Early in the morning will I seek thee. My soul thirsteth for thee. My flesh longeth for thee.

In a dry and thirsty land. Where no water is. So very first. We have to handle those stress. Those setbacks that come in life. Second of all. We have to desire the right things. In other words.

You know. Your growth in life. And I really do believe this. Your growth in life. Is determined by your desire for God. You know. You're as close to God right now. As you want to be. James chapter number four. Verse number eight. Says. Draw nigh to God.

And he'll draw nigh unto you. In other words. God is always in the same spot. You and I are the ones who go back and forth. And forth. So get close to God. And over and over. We go through. Proverbs chapter. I love the book of Proverbs. Proverbs chapter two. Verse number one.

Two. Three. Four. And five. It goes through. Then it says. About wisdom. It says. If you want wisdom. If you'll look for. If you'll search for. If you'll seek her. As for hidden treasure. Then. You'll find her. You know. God's not hiding.

[21 : 27] God doesn't play hide and go seek. God's right there. And he says. Lights are on buddy. I'm right here. I want you to find me. And you and I. If we desire God. We can go forward in our life. Matthew chapter number. Five. Verse number six.

Says. The hunger and thirst. Have the righteousness. He shall be filled. So you know what? We can always abound. We can always go forward in our lives. But it's really determined by the setbacks that we have. Don't let them stop you.

You might sit down for a little bit. But say. All right God. Now I want to go forward. Now I'm ready to go. By the setbacks. How you handle the setbacks. And what your desire is for God. Money. Possessions. Positions. They all come and they go. But your desire for God.

Your proximity to God. That's what's going to get you. Continue on in life. Stay close to God. You hunger and thirst after him. I promise you. You will be filled. If you have your Bibles.

Please turn with me to 1 Samuel chapter 3. 1 Samuel chapter 3. I know I'm not on the schedule. But the Holy Spirit told me to get up here. So I got to listen to the Holy Spirit. A.K.A. Austin Gardner. I wrote this then.

[22 : 23] This is for you guys. I guess for everyone here too. So you're listening. I believe that the sad reality of the world is that. The fact that there is no open vision. At all around the world.

God is rarely heard of or seen. Throughout the world it is uncommon that people would hear or actually see God. It's a very rare thing to see or hear a true Bible preaching where God is exalted.

Jesus Christ is worshipped correctly as victor and king. It is rare to see men. No matter their stature or talents. It's to esteem the words of this book.

Greater than their own feelings. Greater than their own opinions. And even greater than their own egos. It's truly a sad state when we really give thought. That the whole world.

The world on a whole. That they don't have anything to regard what God has to say. One writer said that there is a truly. Truly there is a famine in the land. All those.

[23 : 24] There are those who call themselves spiritual leaders. And they are corrupt people. All around the world. Are not obeying God. And they have gone their own way.

It's almost like the silence of God. Is his judgment. When God gives man over. God gives mankind over to himself. So that they can fulfill whatever desire that is.

It all goes downhill. Right. I don't want to be dark. Or I don't want to be too dreary or despairing. Because it seems that in places. Or it seems in the Bible.

That where there are places. Where there is famine. That the God of heaven often prepares a man. A man. One of his own. And he sends him forth. To deliver these wretches.

And he does so by his word. Psalms 107 verse 19. Psalms 107 verse 19 and 20. I love this verse. My mom often quoted it to me. She said this.

[24 : 18] She said. Well actually. The psalmist said this. God said this. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble. And he saved them out of their distresses. Verse 20. He sent his word.

And he healed them. And delivered them. From their destruction. This is what you guys have trained for. While in the training center. To be messengers. To the darkness.

You have said. That you have followed God. Into what you believe. Is full time ministry. Can I remind you. These few things. A few things. As you go on in the next stage. Of ministry.

I see this in 1st Samuel chapter 3. In the life of Samuel. The first thing is this. Is. Your relationship with God of heaven. Is of utmost importance. You guys get that?

That's the point. While we have the training center. We want you to know God. It's not just doctrine. We want you to know the God of a doctrine.

[25 : 15] That's all talking about. Your walk with God is vital. And in this story. Samuel doesn't know God's voice. And he needs an Eli. To say.

This is God speaking. And so when God speaks. This is what you say. And in verse number 19. Samuel grew. And the Lord was with him. Can I tell you guys.

Your relationship. With God. God in heaven. Is priority number one. Don't ever forget that. You are listening to him. You are following him.

And everything he has to say and do. There is a famine in the land. That's what he says in the beginning. In 1st Samuel chapter 3 verses 1. And the child of Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli.

And the word of the Lord was precious in those days. There was no open vision. Nobody heard from him. And so they needed a man. And your guys' walk with God.

[26 : 12] Is so extremely vital. Not only that. But what I see in this chapter is this. It's all about him. And it's all about his word.

That means there's no place for you. It means if you're going to do something great for God. God needs to work. I love when I hear Brother Gardner talk about when he went to Peru.

He's like I just had a Bible. I'm just a Bible teacher. I went out there and I taught him the Bible. And I saw what God did all around the world. I love that. Isn't that what it's all about?

Man, he had a relationship with God. And then it was all about God and his word. And as he preached his word. The word had effected it. And it changed the community. You need to remember that.

It's not your message. It's the power of God. Which gives you great boldness. Because it's his work and his word. It means you need him.

[27 : 09] In 1 Samuel 3, verses 19. I love what he says right here. Samuel grew and the Lord was with him. And did not. And did let none of his words. His. God.

God let none of his words fall to the ground. What does that mean? It means whatever God said came true. He didn't let his words go waste. He is not slack concerning his promises.

That's what it means. It means whatever he says comes to fruition. Goes back to point number one. You need to be with him. You need to know him. You need to know his word. And the third thing is this. You must be a servant.

When Samuel speaks to God. He said speak. For thy servant heareth. You serve others. You serve the church.

And you serve the God of heaven. Just like those who have gone on before you. And have been forgotten. So you will. The psalmist says.

[28 : 05] In Psalms 146 verses 4. It was brought to my attention. This week. His breath go forth. And he returned to the earth. In that very day. His thoughts. His plans. Perish.

You realize that? One day. Your life is going to end. Your dreams. Your plans. Will cease to happen. Unless. You line up your plans.

With God's plans. And whatever he wants. And as you line up your life. With what God wants. It's going to last forever. So don't forget these three things.

Number one. Your relationship with God. Is of utmost importance. Number two. It's all about him and his work. Number three. Your servants. Heavenly Father. Thank you for this day. I thank you for these young men. And women.

Thank you for what you've done in their life. Lord. Thank you for your word. Help us to never forget. It's all a work of you. Lord. I love you so much. In Jesus name. Amen. If I could have the staff come up. And the students as well.

[29 : 03] If you all would come up. Trent. Hefe and Jeff. Jeffe. If we could you guys come up here. At this time we get to present to you guys. Your. Your diplomas. And I want to say.

We're very very blessed. To have you guys be a part of our ministry. And I want to say. It doesn't stop right now guys. You're studying. It only continues on. We love you.

We're proud of you. Keep on serving Jesus. With everything you got. If we could. I can hand these over. You want to read it or something like that. Or should I read it? I don't know. I'll read it. I can't even read this font. So anyways.

Upon faithful completion. Of all required studies. Both here and abroad. In the classroom. The church. And on the mission field. Vision Baptist Church. The faculty. And the pastors. Do certify that. Jane's. Or Jen's.

Enrico Looney. Be conferred to this. Bachelor of Biblical Studies. And missions. Together with all the rights. And honors. And privileges. Thereunto appertaining. And witness whereof. The signatures of the officers.

[30 : 00] Thereof. Are hereunto affixed. Given in Alpharetta, Georgia. In the year of our Lord. 2019. The 13th day of June. Jen's. Justice. Courtney. We're very proud of you guys.

Give them a round of applause. If you take your Bibles. And turn with me. To Ephesians chapter 6. And while you're turning.

I'd like to remind you. That thousands of years ago. The entire world. Plunged into great darkness. They were in the very presence of God. They enjoyed walking with God.

And talking to God. And in fellowship with God. And they chose. To sin. Rather than obey God. They were cast out of that special. Close relationship.

And they were alone. They were naked. They were ashamed. They had no hope. But God. Is so sweet. That from the very beginning.

[30 : 55] He started seeking after man. He went after. He went out of the garden. He found them. And clothed them. With the skins of. What are surely lambs.

That blood was shed. As a symbol of what his son would die. That his son would die for us. And give us salvation. And what we do. As a church. Is. We're his.

And we're on his mission. And his mission. Is to tell the world. That he loves them. And churches. Quickly become. Cities of refuge.

Where people huddle together. And hold on. They hold the fort. Till Jesus comes. But in the Bible. They put on their armor. And they walk straight into battle.

And they know they're in a battle. They know they're in a war. They know the devil has power. They know the devil would do anything he could. To stop them. And as a church. When we. Prepare ourselves.

[31 : 51] And we prepare students. We are to take. The gospel message. I would like you just. If you read quickly. Look at verse 15. Ephesians chapter 6.

And verse 15. As he put the armor. On those guys. As he said. And y'all be sure. Put something on your feet. Those beautiful feet. Those feet that preach the gospel.

He said. Put on your feet. The preparation of the gospel. Of peace. You might be at war with me. But I'm not at war with you. I am taking good news to you.

So you can be. Born again. Just like I did. After the garden of Eden. I've been doing it all through the Bible. All through the Bible. I've told you. I am merciful. I am long suffering.

I'm full of grace. I'm full of goodness. I'm God. And I am good. And he has been seeking people. And then he sends people out. And he tells them. He said. Put on your feet.

[32 : 44] The preparation of the gospel of peace. What you guys are going to do. You need to know. Look at verse 10. Ephesians chapter 6. And verse 10. You cannot. None of us. Can stand for God.

And none of us have in us. The ability. Or the power. To be used of God. It says in chapter 6. And verse 10. And you should underline it. In your Bible. Finally my brethren.

Be strong. In the Lord. So the whole thing is. I want to get close to God. I want to walk with God. I want to know God. I want to. I want his strength. In my life.

And then it says in the verse. In the power. Of his might. In the power. Of his might. After he gets them all dressed up. And ready to go to battle.

You get it down to verse 17. And I really. I thought about you. And I prayed for you. And this is what I really think is good for you tonight. Watch. And pray.

[33 : 42] Or in these verses. Pray. And watch. The Bible says in Ephesians 6. 17. Take the helmet of salvation. And the sword of the spirit. Which is the word of God.

Get your sword. And go to battle. Get your sword. And go to battle. I remember sitting outside our little house in Nunley, Tennessee. I was on the swing.

I was probably. Six or seven years of age. And my dad carried a red. A red back. A red leather Bible. And. He was getting in the car.

And he said. Boy, I forgot my sword. Go get it. That's the first time I knew. I was carrying a sword. From then on. I have liked swords. I like swords. Because it's a sword.

It's the word of God. Look at it. He said. He said. He said. He said. In the verse. The sword of the spirit. And then in verse 18. He said. Praying always. That's because you can't do it.

[34 : 39] That's because you need him. That's because you're going to be begging him. You pray with all prayer. You got to always be praying. And supplication. You got to keep begging him. And you beg him in the spirit.

And you watch thereunto. With all perseverance. For the sake of time. You go ahead and underline. Praying. And watching. Praying. And watching. Praying. And watching. It's a regular thing through the Bible.

That we are to watch. And pray. Every church. Is a heartbeat. From losing its purpose. Every Christian. Is a heartbeat. From stopping doing.

What God's called us to do. We have to be on the lookout. The devil will lull us to sleep. He will. He will cause our church. To die to it. He will turn our church. Into good stuff.

But not great stuff. He will turn us into. What would keep us. From doing. What the Lord's called us to do. Verse 19. I'll be back to that in a second. Verse 19. He said.

[35 : 35] While y'all pray. And pray for me. That utterance. May be given unto me. You should align that word utterance. He said. I need to know how to talk. I need to know how to talk. I need to be able to get the words.

Out of my mouth. I need to be able to get them out right. Which he's going to say that. At the end of verse 20. As I ought to speak. He said. I need God to give me utterance. He said. Open a door. And show me where to speak.

And how to speak. And that I may open my mouth boldly. To make known the mystery of the gospel. God loves them. But they don't know it. And I need to show them that. And I am an ambassador.

And I'm in jail. I'm in handcuffs. I'm in bonds. That therein. I may speak boldly. As I ought to speak. So I would like you to know.

Number one. You are in a literal war. I think it's very easy for us to forget that. When you live in Alpharetta area. You live within 25 miles of here. You don't know we're in a war.

[36 : 31] But I can imagine what it was like when young men got on airplanes. Back when I was a kid and flew to Vietnam. They left all this over here. And we didn't even know there was a war going on.

Except we wanted to rebel against it. And they would leave a peace and security of the United States. And be dropped into a jungle to get shot at. And killed. It's very easy for us to think.

Everybody has a gospel preaching church. It's very easy for us to think. That everybody's hearing about what Jesus did on the cross. I don't know what the Bible teaches. At all.

And I would remind you that 35% of the world is all that even remotely claims to be Christian. And when I say that I'm talking about every cult. 35% of the world.

One out of every three people even claim some form of Christianity. Two out of every three would say I'm not Christian. I have nothing to do with that word. I am Hindu.

[37 : 24] I am Buddhist. I am atheist. I am not Christian. America is considered Christian. And you know that Christian doesn't mean Christian even here. We are in a war.

In the verses we were told to put on armor. We were told to prepare for an attack. And we were reminded that we are not adequate for that task that he has put before us. The second thing in verse 18.

We are to stay in touch with heaven. Look at verse 18. Praying. Praying. I need God. You can't do God's work. Only God can do God's work.

Only God can will the sword of the spirit. You can stand in pride. I've been reading the history of Chile today. And in Chile they had people who wanted to teach real good doctrine.

Dry dead doctrine. And no matter how hard they preached. They couldn't build churches. They just died. And the Chileans said. All brain. No heart. Nothing in there changing my life.

[38 : 23] You just want me to memorize a bunch of facts. And I don't need those. And this is what it's saying here. Praying. I need God to touch hearts. I need God to change lives. Praying always. With all prayer and supplication.

In the spirit. Praying always. With all prayer and supplication. In the spirit. Pray for all the saints. That they can have victory. You know the devil's beating up our people.

The devil's causing our people to fall in sin. We don't live. We don't live like we ought to. And the reason is we don't pray. I mean at least that's what I think it's saying here. I think here it's saying.

Praying always. With all prayer. And supplication. What's happening is our people fall in sin. We need to pray for preachers. That God would use them. In this passage of scripture.

The apostle Paul is saying. Y'all need to pray for me. Because I don't always know what to say. I don't always say it boldly. And I don't always have an open door to say it. And yet we come to church. Like we don't need God.

[39 : 17] I hope the preacher got a hold of God. But we don't pray for the preachers. We don't pray for the missionaries. When they stand up. But we need to pray. We need to pray. God will give wisdom.

God will give boldness. And God will help us speak correctly. Let me give you the last one. We're to stay alert. We're to watch for the attack. And somebody just said to me the other day. I don't think we're supposed to focus on the fact that we're going to get attacked.

And I said well you haven't read the Bible. It says watch and pray. Why do you reckon it said watch? It should have said don't even think about it. Don't even think about it. But any guard standing place better keep his eyes open.

Wonderful thing about Prue is that when we have a guard that's watching for your place. He's called a watchman. Which is just they're trying to say watchman. And so when you hire a guy to guard your house.

You call him a watchman. And he's supposed to be watchy. He's supposed to watchy people to make sure they don't do anything. Watchy people so nobody gets hurt. Watch. And you're not a call to watch.

[40 : 19] Look at it. It says here watching with perseverance. Look at that. Don't stop. Be patient.

Endure. Be persistent. Don't stop watching. And the devil wants me to fall into sin. The devil wants to get me out of the ministry. And by the way the devil doesn't just want you to do bad stuff.

The devil would love to choke out the word of God with all the good stuff in your life. He just wants you to hush. He just wants you to calm down. He just wants us to quit giving.

He just wants us to not worry about it. And I'd like to remind you students of three things that I've done. Don't think you're above falling. A dear friend told me, asked me one time. He said you really think I could do that?

I said do I think you could do it? I know you could. The minute you think you won't fall, you better take heed lest you fall. First Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 12.

[41 : 19] And by the way whatever you're going through in this room, you may think you're getting beat up by unusual temptation. But the apostle Paul under his praise of the Holy Spirit said no, no, no. Nothing's happened to you.

It ain't happened to everybody. He said in first Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 13, it is common to man. Then he said, but don't worry. God's faithful. And he'll always give you a way to have victory if you want it.

You can have victory. But then I'd like to remind you that Paul had to watch because he didn't want to be a castaway. He didn't want to be set on the shelf. He didn't want God to say I've used you and now I quit using you.

In first Corinthians 9 27, it said, let's say by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. I'm scared to death of that myself.

And I think we ought to be watching and praying and thinking that all the time. And so if you think that it's you're above temptation because you're in the ministry, nothing could be further from the truth.

[42 : 19] You know what the devil would like to do right now? He likes the darkness. He likes the fact that people are going to die and go to hell without Jesus. And he would do anything he could to calm our church down, stop all the mission effort, stop every one of us from going out.

And so biblically, when you pray, you're not even supposed to close both eyes. You're supposed to say, dear God, I'm here to talk to you. I need some help because I'm going to watch out. The devil might be coming. You say, not literally.

I don't know. You ever read about Gideon and his men, the ones that stuck their head in the water? He said, get them out of my army. The ones that drank watching, he kept them in his army. Stay awake.

Stay awake. Thank God use you. Father, thank you for these young men and young lady. And I pray God you'd use them. And I thank you for everybody in this church and all the work they do. I give you praise for it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Well, at this time, I want to pray for our students. And after that, I'm going to present them. Thank you, Pastor, for that message. I hope you guys took heed. Heavenly Father, I love you so much.

[43 : 19] I thank you for this church, Lord. Lord, I thank you for what you've done in the lives of men and women here, Lord, how they have a desire, like we just sang about, to see your name worshiped, to see you glorified in all the world, Lord.

It's truly our heart and our desire, Lord. We ask that you would be with these students, Lord. Lord, we ask them, Lord, that you would make them aware of what's happening in and around them, Lord. Lord, I ask that you would just work in their lives, help them to realize that you're at work.

Lord, I ask that you would help them to rely on you. Lord God, I ask that you would help them not to be not observant of what the enemy is doing at work. Lord, I ask that you would just use them greatly.

Thank you for them, Lord. Thank you for these graduates. And, Lord, as I think about this more, Lord, I ask for more students. Lord God, there's such a great need around the world. God, we know that you desire that your name would be worshipped everywhere.

So, Lord, we ask that you would use this church, use me, use the staff. Lord God, use the missionaries as they're out on deputation. Lord, raise up a next generation of young men, Lord. Lord, we want you to be praised.

[44 : 27] You are worthy of it, Lord, and we will give our lives to it, Lord. I love you so very much. Glorify yourself, Jesus. We pray in your name.

Amen. It's with great honor and privilege to present to you the class of 2019. I don't know what to say. Clap for them. Clap for them. Alpha Clap for them.

Clap for them. Clap for them. Clap for them. Clap for them. Clap for them. Clap and dinheiro. Clap for them. Clap for them.

Clap for them. Clap for them. Clap for them. Clap for them. Clap for them. Clap for them. Clap.