

## Sunday AM – Adam Greenway

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

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**Crossroads Ministries**

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Several months ago when Alan Jones came to me about the Global Impact Conference about a celebration of days past but prayer for days ahead for missions, one of the things on the forefront of my mind was Dr. Adam Greenway. In just a few moments, you're going to have the privilege of hearing the word of God expounded to you from Dr. Greenway. Let me kind of give you a little background here. Adam Greenway and I have a long history together. He comes, he is the Dean of the Billy Graham School of Evangelism and Missions at Southern Seminary. Academically speaking, he has a Bachelors degree from Samford University, right up the road. He has a Masters degree from Southwestern Seminary. That's where we crossed paths several years ago. A PhD from Southern Seminary, and in his desire to be evangelistic and to be a missionary, he then went to Notre Dame to get his MBA. So he is stretched out academically speaking, but today he's not only a husband and a father of two little children and just a wonderful man of God but a very dear friend of mine. So today it's my privilege to introduce to you Dr. Adam Greenway. First Baptist, give him a warm welcome today.

Dr. Adam Greenway: Thank you Dr. Meyers for that kind and generous introduction in yet once again, in the month of the Reformation, you love to point out the Notre Dame degree. So thank you for that, dear brother. Let me say what a joy it is to be here at First Baptist, Opelika on this Lord's day. As Dr. Meyers mentioned, being a Samford grad, when I was a student at Samford 20 years ago I had the chance to preach all over the state of Alabama and anytime I have the chance to come back and preach in Alabama, I consider that to be a special privilege and joy so it's great to be here with you all today.

I also want to just add my word of gratitude for what's on this card. You'll notice it says: Cooperative Program, \$546,123. And while obviously we hopefully know that the Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists help support the work of our international mission board in reaching the nations, and our North American Mission Board in reaching North America, a significant portion of that also goes to fund the six seminaries that are owned and operated by the Southern Baptist Convention, including Southern Seminary where I serve, Southwestern Seminary where Dr. Meyers and I have degrees from, New Orleans Seminary, Southeastern Seminary, Midwestern Seminary and Gateway Seminary. Over 20,000 students are enrolled in programs at one of your six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries. More than one in five of every person who is enrolled in a seminary that is accredited in North America today is in an SBC affiliated

seminary and that's significant because we have the privilege of training those who will be the pastors of your grandchildren one day if Jesus tarries, and the next generation of missionaries reaching the nations. And because of your generosity through the Cooperative Program, every Southern Baptist student who comes receives an automatic 50% tuition scholarship because of the Cooperative Program. Every dollar that you give to the Cooperative Program is a dollar we don't have to charge our students. And so the first word I speak whenever I have a chance to preach somewhere is to say thank you, because of your giving and your sacrifice, it enables us to do what we do and we are so thankful to be in partnership with churches like First Baptist Church, Opelika.

If you have your copy of God's word either in print or in electronic form, I'd like you to take it out and turn with me to the book of Acts 1. We'll look at the first 11 verses this morning and I'm preaching on this subject, "Now what do we do?" Now what do we do? Acts 1:1-11 is our text this morning. If you have found Acts 1, let me invite you if you would to stand back up one more time and let's honor the reading of the word of God together this morning. Can we do that? Let me just invite you to follow along in your hearts as I share this word from God's word. This is Acts 1:1-11 and this morning I'm reading from the Christian Standard Bible. The Scriptures say,

1 I wrote the first narrative, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach 2 until the day he was taken up, after he had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After he had suffered, he also presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. 4 While he was with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. "Which," he said, "you have heard me speak about; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days." 6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." 9 After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 While he was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them. 11 They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven."

Let's bow for prayer together this morning, shall we?

*Sovereign and gracious God, we are so thankful for the joy it is to be able to be here in this place of assembly on this Lord's day for this Global Impact celebration. Father, the chance to come together as the local visible church to worship you in spirit and in truth, to sing these songs of praise to you and, Father, to hear a word from you. So God, we*

*pray now for the time of worship that we know is proclamation and I pray, O Lord, that you would set me free once again to preach and to teach your word. May nothing bind or hinder me from declaring your truth and, Spirit of God, you challenge us, convict us, and ultimately change us because truly we will have heard not a word from man but a word from you. Help us to understand what we must now do in light of what you have done for us. We ask and we pray all these things by the Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And all First Baptist, Opelika said. Amen.*

Please be seated and may God richly bless the reading and study of his word together this morning.

It may have been that great theologian, Bob Dylan, who described our present condition many years ago when he crooned that most famous line, "The times they are a changing," because we are living in absolutely transitory, changing, uncertain times, and even here in Lee County, Alabama and the home of the loveliest village on the plains, for those of you who have had some time around these parts, I'm sure you can see how things have changed over time. In fact, increasingly particularly for those of us who claim to be followers of Jesus, those of us who name the name of Christ, the reality is I don't know that there has been a more difficult period to do what we do how we do it than where we find ourselves in the year 2017 right here in God blessed America. We're seeing things happening right before our eyes that would have been unthinkable just a generation ago, particularly as it comes to the issue of what Christians have long believed as the truthfulness of God's word, the Gospel of grace, the mission that we have been given. It seems like that unfortunately more and more of our churches are not doing what the church is supposed to do.

Sadly as the broader family of Southern Baptists, though we are known as the greatest evangelistic and missionary force the world has ever known, the largest non-Catholic religious body in our country, the sad fact of the matter is that we are baptizing no more people today numerically than what we were doing 40+ years ago when the population of our country was less than half of what it is today. And by the way, let me just add how much it blessed me to see the service begin with the observance of the ordinance of scriptural baptism. Can I tell you that every time we see somebody profess their faith through the waters of baptism, that's like seeing Auburn score a game winning touchdown. That's what it's all about because if we really believe that Jesus is in the life-changing business and we are calling people to follow him with complete abandon and surrender, then listen, there is nothing that we do that is more important than seeing people come through those waters of baptism and saying, "Yes, I belong to Christ." It's something we should celebrate and something we ought to see more of.

We're living in a time where it seems like everything is changing because we think about who we are as the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and there are, frankly, some things that should never change, some things that we need to recommit ourselves to afresh and anew and that's what brings us to this time of Global Impact and celebration. That's why I'm drawn particularly to the book of Acts, especially Acts 1, because Acts 1 is really kind of a sandwich chapter, as it were. In fact, many preachers when they kick off a series from

the book of Acts like to start in Acts 2 with the day of Pentecost and the fire of God and the tongues and Peter preaching, 3,000 getting saved and all that. They skip over Acts 1 because Acts 1 is kind of the already but it's the not yet, in a sense. And yet I would submit to you that there is a word from God for us in Acts 1 because we find ourselves I believe much like the early disciples did, and here in this passage I believe we see a twofold challenge of things that we need to recommit ourselves to afresh and anew as the church, as the people of God, if we are going to rise up and to be the church Jesus died for us to be, to literally fulfill the mission that God has given to us of touching our world and impacting eternity for the cause of Jesus Christ.

Two things that are brought forth here that we need to have centered upon our hearts and our minds. 1. We need to be reminded of the absolute truthfulness of our faith. The absolute truthfulness of our faith. Now, if you've studied the Bible, you know that the book of Acts is kind of volume 2 in a two-volume set with the Gospel of Luke, both written by Dr. Luke and both begin kind of the same way with this introductory greeting or salutation to Theophilus, this lover of God, as it were. So there in Acts 1, Luke begins, "I wrote the first narrative, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up, after he had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen," verse 2. "After he had suffered, he also presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs." Let's stop there for a moment. That word "proof, proofs" is courtroom language. It's the language of a Perry Mason or a Ben Matlock or an LA Law, as it were, and it has to do with the evidence or the basis, as it were, for why we believe what we believe.

Now, this is not an unimportant issue because there are those out there who will try to dismiss the issue of proof and evidence. They will even say things like, "Well, you know, you can't prove Christianity is true, that's why you've got to have faith." And they will try to pit faith and reason against one another in such a way where they will say, "Well, you've got to kind of bypass the intellect or bypass the mind and just have faith." And by faith what they mean is you've got to just take a leap into the darkness; you've got to just hope something is out there and just have faith in kind of a blind sort of way. And yet that is not biblical faith. As the writer of Hebrews writes, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And I do believe that it is possible to prove the truthfulness of Christianity. I'm not just saying that. We find it in the Bible, in the Scriptures actually.

Hold your place there in Acts 1 and let's go over to Acts 9 for just a moment. Hold your place there in Acts 1, roll over to Acts 9. We have here the conversion of Saul. Saul, of course, we meet at the tail end of Acts 7 as he is holding the coats of those who have stoned Stephen, the deacon, who was a great evangelist. There in Acts 8, Paul is persecuting those who were followers of Christ and here in Acts 9 kicks off with he's on the road to Damascus and he has this great Hank Williams like experience where he sees the light and hears the voice and is radically saved there on that Damascus Road.

Let's pick up in verse 19, shall we?"And after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul was with the disciples in Damascus for some time. Immediately he began

proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues: 'He is the Son of God.'" By the way, that's a great reminder that some of the most effective witnessing that we may ever do is right after we get saved. There are some who say, "Well, you know, you really can't witness or show your faith until you've had a lot of discipleship and a lot of training. You've got to wait for a long period of time." And I believe that is unbiblical. In fact, we see in the Gospels in particular in John 9, the man born blind, he is radically healed, saved by Christ, and he begins sharing that with others in such a way where the religious of his day become kind of irritated and they start trying to inquire of him by what authority did this happen, by whose power did this happen, and all these other kinds of questions. And I love the response of the man born blind when he simply responds to these people, "These things you are asking me, I don't know. Let me tell you the one thing I do know, I was blind and now I can see and that's good enough for me." If you've got a testimony that Christ has changed your life, you can be used to see somebody else's life changed by the same Gospel that has gripped you.

"Immediately he began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues: 'He is the Son of God.'" Verse 21, "All who heard him were astounded and said, 'Isn't this the man in Jerusalem who was causing havoc for those who called on this name and came here for the purpose of taking them as prisoners to the chief priests?'" Verse 22, "But Saul grew stronger and kept confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus by," doing what? "By proving that Jesus is the Messiah." You ought to highlight that word "proving" there, the same word used in Acts 1, that Jesus is the Messiah, that Jesus is the Christ. In fact, you do realize that whenever you say the name Jesus Christ you are referencing the Messiah of Jesus because the term "Christ" is not Jesus' last name like Greenway is my last name, but it literally means Messiah, Moshiach, Christos, the Greek of the Hebrew Moshiach. By proving Jesus is who he said that he was, the Messiah, and that he did what he said he would do, which is to save his people from their sins.

You see, Jesus Christ showed up on earth and he made the greatest claim of all time, he said, "I am God," John 8:58, "before Abraham was, I am," ego eimi Yahweh, in the Old Testament. That's why they tried to stone him there because they thought he was blaspheming because he identified himself with the very personal, sacred, sovereign, revealed name of God given to Moses at the burning bush by God. "I am God. And not just my God but I am the only way to God," right? John 14. Thomas, not yet doubting Thomas, he is still believing Thomas at this point, asks Jesus, "Lord, we don't know where you're going and how can we know the way?" And boy, that's the money question, isn't it? "How can we know that Jesus is the way and there is not another way, some other religion, some other plan or pathway? How can we know that Jesus is the way?" And Jesus says in response to Thomas's question, "I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life. And no one comes to the Father but by me."

Now I admit that's not very PC, it's not very pluralistic, very inclusive, but of course none of those things matter. All that matters is is it true? And by the way, all truth is narrow. I hope you realize that. For example, two plus two equals four. Do you realize how narrow that is? It doesn't equal five or three or minus six or 3.1415927. Four and only four. Out of the entire range infinite numerical sequence, the only answer to that is four. All truth is

narrow and, by the way, there is no difference between religious truth and scientific truth, mathematical truth. Truth is truth.

You see, Jesus showed up on earth claiming to be God, claiming to be the only way to God and here is the amazing thing: he didn't just throw that out there, he said, "If you want to know what I'm saying is true, here is the proof, I'm going to die." Now he didn't put a period there like many other religious leaders and claimants and this kind of thing, he put a comma there and said, "I'm going to die and three days later I'm coming back and I'm coming back in such a way to show you that I have conquered death, hell and the grave."

Now that's not insignificant. Maybe it's an occupational hazard, Dr. Meyers, but because I do what I do, just like you do what you do, I meet a lot of interesting people. I've even met people who claimed to be God themselves. Have you ever met someone like that? They drank a little too much New Age Kool-Aid or watched too many old Shirley MacLaine movies and they think that they're God, okay? And a lot of us, we just kind of think these people are crazy and we just kind of let that go by, but yeah, you just really can't do that. That kind of claim needs to be challenged and so when I meet somebody look like that I'll say, "Well, okay, so can you, like, prove that you're God?" "What do you mean?" "Well, I mean, can you, like, give some evidence? So yeah, I believe God created everything. Everything. God, you know, spoke all into existence, created everything from nothing, so surely if you're God, you could at least make something, right? So why don't you just go ahead and make an oak tree right here? Just make an oak tree. Oh, you don't want to do that? Well, I'll tell you what, let me give you the acid test. Let me give you the test by which you could prove that you are God, silence all the critics and skeptics, people like me. Here is the test: let me kill you and bury you and three days later you just come right on back." You know, for some reason I have not had any takers on that offer yet and I don't suspect that I will because it is one thing to claim to be God, it's a whole other thing to back it up.

In fact, Jesus not just lived, died, was resurrected, but he gave us a ton of evidence for this, all right? Hold your place there in Acts 1, turn over to 1 Corinthians 15 for a moment. This is the longest chapter in the New Testament on the resurrection of Jesus and there is a lot of stuff here. It's worth us taking a quick look at. Verse 1 of 1 Corinthians 15, Paul writes under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, "Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand and by which you are being saved, if you hold to the message I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I passed on to you as most important," okay, most important, "what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." Okay, that's the Gospel. Most important. Death, burial, resurrection of Christ.

Now, anticipating the critics and the skeptics and the kooks, he starts to give evidence for this. So look at this, verse 5, "and that he appeared to Cephas." Now Cephas, of course, is who? Cephas is the rock, Peter, right? Now let's just suppose for just a moment that all

this resurrection stuff was bunk, this is all myth and fabrication, none of this ever happened, this is legend, mythology, would you not think it was just a little bit odd that Paul would give Peter the pole position of being the first person that Jesus appeared to in the list here? Wouldn't that be odd? Because remember, the last time we see Peter pre-cross, he's not exactly singing, "I am a friend of God," right? Remember the rock, Jesus who said, or Peter who said to Jesus, "Hey listen, man, even if all these guys run away, man, the Rock is going to hold." And Jesus said, "Hey, son, look, okay, you are going to deny me three times before the rooster crows." And sure enough, he did, and he didn't just deny him, cussed as he denied him and said, "I don't even know this guy." Do you not think for a second if this were legend or myth, that there is no way Peter would get the pole position, the last guy who stabbed Jesus in the back would get the first place of honor if this were myth? If this were myth, it wouldn't have been Peter who would have gotten the first place of honor, guess who it would have gone to? It would have gone to John, the beloved disciple, the one whom Jesus loved and to whom Jesus said for Mary to be with John, as it were. You see, myths tend to really play up the heroes and really makes the bad guys look even worse, so if this were fantasy or fabrication, it wouldn't have been Peter who would have been listed here, it would've been John which gives it the ring of authenticity.

Then he appeared to the 12. Of course, that is the 11 and, of course, as you know, it's really the 10 the first time it happens on a Sunday night because, again, Thomas who asked the question in John 14 isn't there for that first Sunday night prayer meeting post resurrection. Like the old preachers used to say, you can't explain glory to somebody who wasn't there, right? So Thomas isn't there and the other guys go, "Hey man, you missed out. You should have been here. Man, Jesus showed up." And Thomas says, "Unless I see the nail prints in his hand, put my hand in his side, I will never believe." So the next Sunday night, they had a prayer meeting, Thomas is there, Jesus shows up and makes a beeline to Thomas and says, "Son, you need proof? Here's proof right here. Put your hand out. Put your hand in. If you need proof, right here is proof. Don't be an unbeliever but believe." Now what's fascinating about that is there is no evidence in the Gospels that the disciples, the 10, went and tattled on Thomas to Jesus but he just knows because he knows it all. And Thomas falls down in worship and says, "My Lord and my God." One of the most explicit attestations of the deity of Jesus. And Thomas is not rebuked by Jesus by saying, "Hey, I'm not God, worship the Father," Jesus accepts worship as deity because, of course, he is fully God and fully man, right?

The 12, then "over 500 brothers and sisters at one time; most of them still alive, but some have fallen asleep." By the way, that has been the most criticized part of this passage because of people who say, "Well, it couldn't have been 500 people. Maybe that was just a mass hallucination, maybe just a mass delusion, as it were." Well, you know, hallucinations are interesting psychological phenomenon. I've done some reading on this and hallucinations are fascinating because they cannot create any new mental constructs, they can only distort existing mental constructs. And by the way, you don't have 500 people all hallucinate and all see the same thing at the same time even at Woodstock, okay? That just doesn't happen and the point Paul makes here is, listen, they are alive and ready to be questioned. I mean, imagine a major trial in the Lee County Courthouse

where you could have hundreds of eyewitness testimony being deposed and registered for days. I mean, that's just unbelievable. It has a ring of credibility.

And then maybe my favorite one, "Then he appeared to James." Now which James is this? This is James, the half-brother of Jesus who succeeded James the apostle, brother of John, son of Zebedee as head of the church at Jerusalem when Herod killed James. Now what's fascinating about this is when we see James in the Gospels, he's kind of a snarky dude, right? Like, "Who do you think you are, Jesus?" He has not signed up for the tour yet. So let me ask you a question: how many of you have a sibling, at least one sibling? Most of us do. What do you think it would take to convince your own sibling that you were God Incarnate come back from the dead in the flesh in such a way to where your sibling is willing to die for you? Any takers? Well, that is exactly what happens with James. He writes the letter of James and he is killed in the persecution along with Peter and Paul there in the mid sixties A.D. at the hands of Nero.

How do you explain that? People say, "Well, many people died for lies thinking they were true." Yeah, but nobody dies for a lie that they know is a lie. By the way, it's fascinating, they started preaching the resurrection of Jesus in the very city he was executed in where all it would have taken was for somebody to come along and say, "Hey, I know where the body is." They didn't go 500 miles away and preach a resurrection of a Jesus nobody could have disputed at that time. They preached Jesus as raised from the dead in the very city he was executed in and nobody could refute it, nobody could deny it.

The greatest miracle of all time, the greatest test of truth that could ever be given. You say, "Why are you making such a big deal out of this?" Here's why: because if all this happened, then it means everything that Jesus believed and claimed and taught is absolutely true and that means every person who dies without being in a saving relationship with Jesus Christ is lost, and not just lost but it means that not only do they not pass go and do not collect, they are lost and going to be eternally separated from God. You see, that's the Bible distinction of the human race. It's not black and white, male and female, Jew and Gentile. The only distinction really is the sheep and the goats, the believers and nonbelievers. Because Jesus is who he said that he was and he did what he said he would do, our faith is true and because our faith is true, secondly, it reminds us that we have a task we have been given. We have a task we have been given.

Verse 4, "While he was with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father's promise. 'Which,' he said, 'you have heard me speak about; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days.'" Verse 6, "So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?'" Now a quick question: has Jesus said anything about Israel in the preceding verses here in Acts 1? Has Jesus even brought up the word Israel anywhere along the lines there? Okay, this means yes, this means no, this means help, right? Yeah, no is the answer you're looking for. He said nothing about Israel. And this is one of those times where I almost wish there could have been a video camera there to see

Jesus perhaps put his head in his hands as he is seeing the disciples and hearing this and going, "Not again. Come on, guys, really?"

Verse 7, "He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.'" Can I translate that for you? I know I'm reading CSB, let me give you GSV, Greenway Standard Version, "Hey guys, don't worry about that. That's not that important. That will be in the Father's time. Don't worry about that."

Verse 8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Now this is the fifth time Jesus has given the Great Commission. He gave it once in the four Gospels, Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20 and 21, and he gives it again here. Why? Because evidently it still hadn't taken. This was the mission.

They are bringing up Israel and Jesus says, "Don't worry about that. Fulfill the mission." Unfortunately we are too much like the disciples at times because we can get distracted and diverted from keeping the main thing the main thing, and I just want to say to you very emphatically: I don't care what your pet project is, I don't care what your pet issue is, I don't care whatever ism you want to OD over, if it's not the ism of Jesus, evangelism, then something is wrong. Our priority must be fulfilling the mission because other than that, we're just a country club with a cross on top. And a lot of other people can do a lot of other things we can do. There are nonprofit organizations in Lee County who can feed people, clothe people, pass out water bottles, provide quality housing, do a lot of other social good, but the one thing they can't do is the one thing we must do and that is to tell people how they can have their sins forgiven and how they can experience new life in Christ. That's why we are the church and that's the mission we have been given, to do that, to reach our Jerusalem, our Judea, our Samaria, and to the nations.

And yet even here, verse 9, "After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going, they were gazing into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven.'" Evidently they were sitting there talking to Jesus and as they were talking to him, he begins to just move on up, move on up. And they are just gazing and gazing and, bless their heart, they would still be gazing if it hadn't been for those two guys coming and saying, "Hey guys, stop gazing and get ready to start going."

Too often in the church we do a lot of gazing and not enough going. It's time for us to go. There has never been a more urgent moment than now and God in his graciousness chose out of all of the epochs of human history that he could have placed us into, he put us here right now to be about the mission he has given to us driven by our commitment to the faith that he has delivered to us, the truthfulness of our faith, the task we have been given. That's how we will be a church that truly makes a global impact and it all starts with being in a personal relationship with Jesus. Has there been a point in your life where you

have turned from your sin in repentance and you have trusted Jesus to be your Lord and Savior? I mean, what are you doing to live on mission as you go? Whether you work at the university or teach in the school system or work in a business or something like that, how are you living on mission and giving for mission as you go?

Let's bow for prayer together. Every head bowed, every eye closed.

*Loving Father, we are so thankful for these moments together around the word of God, so thankful for these dear people and for the opportunity to be here this morning. Lord, I'm so thankful for what you are doing here at First Baptist, Opelika, but Lord, I know there is so much more that you desire to do in and through them. So Father, I pray for each and every person under the sound of my voice this morning and I pray, O Lord, that you would just stir something deep within them to help them to take this word and to live it out, to apply it. Lord, I have to believe in a crowd like this there are maybe those here this morning who do not know Christ as their personal Savior and Lord. O God, may today be the day of life change. May they come turning from their sin and trusting Jesus as their Lord and Savior. For those who are not yet members of First Baptist, Opelika, may this be the day they come home. And Lord, for all of us, may you do something to stir us to a greater commitment to mission as we go right here in Lee County and to the nations for the glory of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Bless us we pray in Jesus' name.*

Maybe you're here this morning and you don't know Christ as your personal Savior and Lord and you have never turned from your sin, you have never trusted him by faith alone. We want to extend to you an invitation. It's not merely our invitation but it is his invitation to come and to receive him this morning. In a moment we're going to stand and the pastor will be here at the front. We will be singing a song of response. If you are here this morning and you do not know Christ in a personal way, when we stand, come. Make your way out of these aisles, balcony, down the steps, come and find your pastor here. Let him share with you from the word of God how you can experience life change this morning, real life change, the way, the truth and the life. I pray that you'll come.

Maybe you're here and you would say, "I know that I'm saved and I'm looking for a church home." Man, what a great Sunday to come and say, "I want to be a part of First Baptist, Opelika. I want to make a statement of faith. Maybe I've never been scripturally baptized and I need to come and do like the one who came this morning."

Maybe you are a member here, maybe you've been here two years, maybe you've been here 25 years, I want to ask you: how are you living on mission? How is your life helping to connect people to Jesus Christ? Because that's really what we're here for, it's not just to make a paycheck, not just to have a family, not just to provide and have a good life and enjoy ballgames, it's to make a difference for the Gospel as we go.

Some of you God may be calling to ministry, calling to missions full-time and you have not surrendered to that. You sit here challenged that it's time to stop playing the game and come and surrender and follow the call of Christ.

Others of you, maybe you need somebody to pray with. You can spend some time here with the Lord in prayer. If our pastor could minister to you, he would love to do that. However God may be calling or challenging you this morning, I pray you'll be obedient to respond to him in this most important time of the service. Would you do that?

Let's stand together. Pastor, you come and lead us as we sing. The altar is open. Our pastor is here. As we sing, you come.