

Selfless Service for the Savior p1

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Grab your Bibles and let's go to Philippians 2 tonight. I'm convinced the Lord led me to this text as we want to stir our hearts and challenge our hearts about this new year and serving the Lord in this new year. We'll go to Philippians 2 and I want to look at verses 1-11 in just a moment but before you go there, I have a confession to make. I didn't want to preach tonight. Does that surprise you? I just didn't feel like preaching. Now, that's an interesting thing because I enjoyed studying the text and studying the text I was stirred. I was excited about sharing it with you, but like an hour or so before coming to preach, I just thought, "Can I just turn on a video or something and let them watch that instead?" I'm just kind of tired. I just didn't want to do that. Now, that doesn't happen a lot but it's regular and common in all preacher's lives, but you know, we don't go by our feelings, do we? If you're in service to Christ's church it's based on your feelings, you're going to be like one of my favorite phrases, you're going to be like these fickle, fleeting, fragile Baptist who just run to and fro to this church and that church just, you know, following your feelings around like a little girl. And we don't do that. We have to command our feelings to get yielded to truth.

Now, no doubt, I'm already excited about preaching again and that's kind of the way, have you found that's the way it works? You do what you're supposed to do in your service to Christ in your local church and the feelings catch up with the commitment to truth. Amen? Have you found marriage works that way too? If you commit to love her like Christ loves the church, you feel more love for her. If you commit to submit to him in all things the way the church is to submit to Christ, your joy in submitting grows. But truth is objective. It has to be discovered. It's outside of you. You find the truth outside of you, you step into it in obedience and then God brings the emotional support but it always flows in that order.

Well, as we go into Operation Andrew and we're challenging each other to come together and do something as a team, do something as a body, as a coordinated effort to reach the lost. And you might say, "Well, pastor, we always try to enroll people." Yes but we have special seasons when we try to get it foremost in our hearts and minds. Now, Jesus and his followers were basically always reaching out but he had a special time when he sent out the 12. He had a special time when he sent out the 70. By the way, we don't find it regular, we don't find any systematic way, just at times he would do it and at times he didn't. So we find that the Scripture is full of this kind of balancing seasons. You know,

Israel had years of Jubilee where they let the land rest and they took some rest. Then they had times when they got with it. Well, Operation Andrew and going into the True Church Conference is a get with it time. It's when we gird up our loins, we've had a couple of weeks off, we had a great December and Christmas praise. My favorite thing of the whole year. I love sitting back and doing nothing and getting blessed. It's just wonderful. So we've had some things like that but it's time to get going but we're are going to have to have that mature Christian spirit of, "I'm going to do something for my Lord through my church, whether I feel like it or not." I just call it selfless service for the Savior.

I'm going to end, I actually need to cut this message into two parts. I'm not exactly where it's going to happen. I remember who was the preacher that said this? B. R. Lakin. Any of you remember B. R. Lakin, the old Baptist preacher? Brother Norman, I know you remember B. R. Lakin, not many of you do but he used to say his sermons were like a stick of baloney, he could just slice them anywhere, same thing, same difference. Did you get that? You can slice a stick of baloney anywhere and it looks the same and, you know, I hope it isn't that way but I'm going to slice this somewhere and finish it next week, Lord willing. But it is a fantastic stirring encouraging word for selfless service for the Savior. It really is.

Look at it together, Philippians 2, beginning in verse 1, Paul says, "Therefore," now he's talking about them being about the task of in unity going forward for Christ, alright? He wants this church, the church at Philippi, to get together and accomplish something together and here's what he says about that. "Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete." He's functioning as their pastor and he says, "Make my joy as your pastor complete." How? "By being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose."

Now, how is that going to happen? Verse 3, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

So what a powerful statement he makes. "Church at Philippi, get together. Be unified. Selflessly let your ideas die. Let your perspectives die at least in this area of serving together as a church or getting something done as a church, and let's accomplish a task." I think that's a great guideline for us today. I call it selfless service for the Savior. Now, I. is the equipping for selfless service. You can't just take natural man and whip him into shape and make a good Christ servant out of him. He's not equipped for it. He's not made

to do it. There is a work of God that brings about the equipping, if you will, so that you can, not perfectly, but in some degree of a pattern serve in your local church selflessly for the glory of God.

And here's what he's going to say about that. First of all, in verse 1 of chapter 2, he says, "Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ." Now, we have to begin with that little word "if." It's a first class conditional phrase that the word "if" starts and what it means by first class conditional phrase is it's assumed as true. It's not like if this happens, do that. It means since this is the case. That's really what it means there. So he says, "Since there is encouragement in Christ. Since there is the fellowship of the Spirit. Since there is affection and compassion."

Now, let's think about those for a moment. First of all, he says, "Since there is encouragement in Christ." And he wants you to think back. Now, these guys came from such a Christ-less environment. Now, most of you grew up in kind of environments where the Bible is talked about, in the Bible Belt, so it wasn't such a radical change though your heart was radically changed, but your environment wasn't radically changed when you became a Christian. These guys came out of abject antichrist settings whether they were Jew or Gentile, to this brand-new social environment and setting. I was going to mention it in the message this morning but you realize to become a devoted follower of Christ in this day amounted to high treason against your own country. They had to turn their back on trusting in the priest system. They had to turn their back on the ceremonies and rituals of Judaism. They had to turn their back on just following the law of Moses and even as Paul writes in Hebrews, consider all that now obsolete, to turn, to embrace this Christ who died for them and rose again on the cross.

So they made a radical step culturally, nationally, in loyalty to follow Jesus Christ and we have some persecution today to try to honor Christ. I know I've heard so many testimonies from so many who get a little mockery, a little sneering, a little jokes about them for coming to Grace Life or whatever it may be, nothing compared to what the folks in this day encountered. I mean, nothing in comparison. However, he's saying to them, "Hasn't your heart been encouraged by knowing Jesus Christ?" In other words, it's just a redundant statement. I mean, in a way its rhetoric. There is nothing else that can be said. It's absolutely true. There is great encouragement in Jesus Christ.

Then he adds to that, he's building on it and he says, "if there's any consolation of love." In other words, is there any comforting in your heart knowing God's love through Jesus Christ? I'm telling you, there is absolutely no way to humanly express, there is no way to intellectually fathom, the deep wells of enriching comfort we have from knowing Christ and his love for us. As we mine through the rich treasures of all that our Lord is and all that he has accomplished, how he has saved us, how is saving us, how he keeps us saved, how there are infinite multiplying pleasures in Christ for us for all eternity, we are overwhelmed at the comfort of being surrounded and swamped and swallowed up in this thing called the love of Christ. I'm going to preach to you with all of my ability, with all of my tongue, with all of my intellect, the deep unfathomable riches of Christ so that by the day you die, you're overwhelmed with the love of Christ.

So Paul says, "Is there any comfort in the love of Christ for you?" And, of course, the resounding amen is absolutely. There is great encouragement. There is great consolation or comfort of love. Then he has a third phrase here, "if there is any fellowship of the Spirit." Now, that phrase "the fellowship of the Spirit" means his personal, or rather the person and the work of the Spirit. Man, the fellowship of the Spirit is so wonderful and precious. I've said many times to you, early in my Christianity, not just here at Grace Life but in other settings, I'd be around people and they claimed to be Christians and I thought, "Man, I just don't fit with them. Something must be wrong." I always thought something was wrong with me and then I began to realize part of the problem was me but often the problem was they were false professors. They had learned the religion. They would go through the motions but they didn't have the warm, humble devotion to Christ and, man, when you get in a small group, when you get into a setting of guys or ladies who love Christ, always very imperfect, but they're genuine in their love for Christ, there is a fellowship there like none can compare. You Alabama fans are going to be altogether tomorrow night cheering on your team and just acting like a bunch of idiots all night long and I want you to enjoy that, I want you to praise God for the common grace of having a good football team and the common grace of being enjoying a ballgame, but at the end of it, I want something to resound in your hearts and say, "That was fun, but it's nothing like the fellowship of the Spirit of God with the saints of God." Amen? I don't know if I want to say this or not, I'm not going to say it. I was going to pick on you but I'm not going to do that.

Encouragement. "Is there encouragement in Christ?" Well, amen, Paul, of course. "I mean, is there any use, is there any consolation of love? Does a little Christ not bless your heart?" Well, of course, Paul, absolutely. "Have you tasted at least something of that special fellowship with other believers, the fellowship only the Spirit of God brings?" Well, Paul, absolutely. Absolutely. He goes a little bit further, "is there any affection and compassion?" Of course, this flows out of the fellowship of the Spirit there. Oh, there is a rich affection for one another and a rich compassion. As my mother-in-law broke her shoulder a couple of weeks ago, I don't know how long ago, and so many have showed compassion and showed loving concern and it's just a blessing. I'll tell you, it's just a blessing to see the church family love and show that.

So the resounding note that comes out of all of these statements is absolutely. Now Paul says, "All right, so, you have all of this already going for you. All of this is in your life. All of this is a change which has occurred in your heart." And boy, I know that is so true of me. I mean, I went from totally oblivious to the church even existing to loving going to any place that would teach me anything about God and his word. I mean, I had people laughing at me. Not laughing in derision toward me but laughing at me because I would be so excited about visiting some of the churches I visited and the people who knew those churches said, "You've got to be kidding? You're blessed by going there?" I was blessed going anywhere where there was one half notion about serving Jesus. I mean, I was just on fire to find something that had the touch of God on it.

Well, God changes us and he gives us all of these things so we have these radically transformed lives and we're experiencing, to some degree, these radically transformed emotions, these encouragements, these consolations, this fellowship, these affections and all this compassion. Now, he says, "Since you have received all of that, you are well equipped. You are well equipped to now render selfless service for your Savior." You ought to be so humbled and so grateful that you're willing to buy into and get in on a churchwide effort to do something for God's glory. That's exactly what he's talking about. Do something that may not be quite the way you would do it, may not fit your personal agenda or the way you thought about it, but it is good and it is right and you're capable of selflessly saying, "I'm going to put all my thoughts aside and get in on this task."

So let's go to the second thing here. He said, "you're well equipped now for selfless service," now there's this strong exhortation to selfless service. Verse 2, he begins by saying, "Make my joy complete." It's all right and it's good to want to be such a Christian that your pastor has great joy and I can say to you unequivocally that pastoring this church gives me great joy. That's difficult at times, there are trials at times. We have discipline cases every week that break our hearts but nevertheless, nevertheless you are such a good people to pastor and I know what Paul is saying there, but here he says, "Make my joy complete." It actually has the idea of filling it to the full. "Bring my joy all the way up to the full by doing something."

First of all and we're going to break this down a little bit at a time because he outlines it one phrase at a time. Look at verse 2, "Make my joy complete by being of the same mind." Now, that's a present active verb, it means by continually striving to all of you be of the same mind. Now, it doesn't mean that you all have the same lifestyle. No, some do this thing, some have these hobbies, some enjoy this project, some enjoy that kind of project. We all work at different places. That's not what he's talking about. He's not saying the same lifestyle. He's certainly not saying the same personality. Aren't you glad when you get saved you don't completely lose your personality. We are all unique and that's what shows part of the glory of God because God is so multifaceted.

Well, varying lifestyles and varying personalities, but being of the same mind has the idea of having the same values. We have chosen to dislodge in our thinking what our old values were and as Christians we go to the word of God and we establish new values. Let me suggest three thoughts here. First of all, we're coming to chiefly value the glory of God. Amen? As a new creature in Christ Jesus, I'm on this sanctifying spiritual pilgrimage, beginning to grasp and value God being made much of. I want my marriage to be the kind of marriage that people would look at and say, "God must be doing something special there." I want my children to be the kind of children where people would look at them and say, "God must be behind that." I want my church family above all, because by the way, when you get in heaven there will be no mom and dad and husband and wife. Jesus said it's not going to be like that, but the church will be in heaven, so the church even above all things we want to be glory of God focused and so that's one value we can agree on. And it's amazing when you get that nailed down, it's almost like 99.9% of everything else gets kind of easy in the church because we kind of get all our value right and all the particulars line up well under the value.

Well, the second value would be the health of the church. The glory of God, secondly, I'm concerned about my church being strong and my church being healthy and my church being pleasing to God. That's the thing I highly value. Do you know why we highly value that? Because God highly values that. Now, God has a lot of you involved in a lot of important things. Your work environment, that's a spiritual service unto the Lord whether you put nuts on a bolt or whether you oversee a lot of men or whether you're in education, that's a calling of God. God has you in his place for his purposes. Don't deemphasize that. However, at the end of the day, all of us are a part of the body of Christ and we save energy and we save our heart and we save that high value in our heart to wanting the church to be all it can be for the glory of God.

We value God's glory. We value the church and the health of the church and then we value the Scriptures. We have decided that by the transforming work of the Spirit of God in our hearts, we believe this is God's inerrant and sufficient word for all faith and practice. And people may ask you, they may challenge you intellectually, "How do you know that's the word of God? How can you prove that?" Well, by the way, there are some good intellectual and scientific arguments about the authenticity and the accuracy and the dependability of the Bible and it's not wrong to investigate some of those but, folks, at the end of the day you can argue that until the world changes, at the end of the day, God changed my heart and the Spirit bears witness with my spirit that this is the word of God. That's just it. That's just it. You couldn't have been more of a skeptic, you couldn't been more of a know it all, you couldn't have been more proud and unbelieving than I was but the night I was driving back to Middle Tennessee State University and God invaded my car and I was gloriously born again by the Spirit of God, I loved the Scriptures. It was that quick. How do you explain that? I had, some of them are in this church, I had classmates who reminded me that I stood up in class and argued that the Bible was not the word of God in high school and then God saved me and I just live it. I couldn't explain why. I couldn't debate why. The Spirit of God affirms it. So we have the same value so Paul says as the pastor of the church at Philippi, "Men, bring my joy up to the full by you guys all having the same high values: the glory of God, the health of the church, the Scriptures are our authority and they are sufficient for all faith and practice."

Well, he goes further. Not only the same mind which has the idea of the same values, but he says also in verse 2, having the same love. "Make my joy complete by being of the same mind maintaining the same love." Now, that means the love that Christ had or a love defined by Jesus Christ. Now, far different is this love from the worldly gushy sentimentality that is called love. Now, it's nauseating to me to see these Hollywood types come on and hug and kiss each other on the cheek and act so loving. They know nothing about love. Do you know why? They don't know the truth. And we are about love which is of truth. You can't know love if you don't know truth. You know feelings, you know this gushy ever-changing fickleness that people call love and that's why they are in a marriage and out of a marriage, in a marriage and out of a marriage, because they are following the fickleness of man's fallen heart. But we have a kind of love that is defined by Christ, the love that will sacrifice for a brother; the love that will be long-suffering with a brother or sister; a love that would be patient. Listen, the love that will

overlook a sin and keep it covered unless it absolutely has to be exposed. Amen? That kind of love.

As we talk about doing church discipline, that we go the absolute extra mile to resolve everything in utmost confidentiality unless we absolutely can't. If I ever hear somebody making a public thing out of somebody's sin and failure when they haven't made every effort possible to resolve it privately. By the way, that would be a worse sin than almost any sin you're talking about. Did you hear that? Making a public noise out of somebody's failure when it ought to be handled in utmost confidentiality is a bigger sin than whatever that person's failure was. Now, there are some exceptions. Some things are just public. But that's the kind of Christian love we ought to have, to cover a sin as the Scriptures say. Love covers a multitude of sin. If at all possible.

Paul says, "Men, my joy would be full if you'll function in that kind of love," but by the way, not only is that love encouraging, not only is it patient, not only is it long-suffering, not only is it forgiving and covering, it's also correcting. True Christian love will in great confidence and humility correct a brother according to the truth. Why? Because if I'm in sin or you're in sin and somebody doesn't help me, sin will ruin me and ultimately dishonor my Lord. So love says, "I love you too much to let your sin kill you and I love my Lord too much to let you go on in sin and dishonor him." So that's another thing we are to be walking in, Paul says, this, how does he word it, maintaining this same love.

Then he talks about being united in Spirit and intent on one purpose. This is the idea of the unity of all those people going together in the same direction. It's the team spirit. It's like when your small group gets together and you decide, "Hey, as a small group, we're joining in with the rest of the church on Operation Andrew and let's pray together and let's bind our hearts together to see if we can get this job done. Let's see how many we might get enrolled by," what's the date, David? Where did he go? 24th. Buddy, you're a little slow on me back there, man. Come on. You were praying? Okay, I'm sorry. By the 24th of February. You know, it's the united in Spirit.

Now, Operation Andrew starts, how easy would it be in your small group, "Operation Andrew, Operation Jesus, Operation whatever." You know, just kind of get your own thing going, find a new little group to be skeptical. That's easy to do. Anybody can do that. Do you know what happens? You might be right, it might be a silly name. You might have this point right, and this point right, and that point right, but your spirit of independence and your spirit of factionalism causes great damage for whatever point you had right, your little independent party to be against the group is very damaging to the body of Christ. That's why Paul said, "Make my joy full by not being like that but united together on one purpose, all of the gang going in the same direction." One of the things I think that has been a huge blessing to me personally but I think a blessing to our work at this church, is our Purpose and Strategy Statement that we voted in together many, many years ago that we would bind ourselves to that biblical purpose statement and we would bind ourselves to those three biblical strategies to fulfill the purpose. They are not perfect but as best we understand Scriptures and we fit many, many, many hours on it, this is something we can give ourselves to. United on one purpose. Going forward together.

Now, look at verses 3 and 4. Verses 3 and 4 are essential to carrying out verses 1 and 2. How is all of this going to happen? Well, you do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit. In other words, let no group or individual in the church have an eye for their own interest alone but have a heart and an eye for what's the church's calling and what is the church's purpose. You know, our fallen nature tells us that life's greatest happiness is found in satisfying our own desires but once we are born again, we start getting a greater joy and a higher joy by dying to the old self desires and joining God's desires and the church's desires for his glory, the health of his body and by honoring the word of God. Galatians 6:14 is a good cross-reference, "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." In other words, I have died to those things, thus selfless service for the Savior.

Now, he says there, "do nothing," verse 3, "do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves." Boy, what a spirit that is, just a general spirit to say, "Generally speaking, what my brother wants, I'm going to consider more important than what I want." Now, there are some exceptions to that. Parents can't always do that. Pastors can't always do it. Someone has to make decisions and lead but generally speaking, that's a great spirit to have and that preserves the unity of the church.

Verse 4 and then I want to give you a loving challenge and we'll go on. "Do not merely look out for your own personal interests but also for the interests of others." After that, he goes into an exhaustive exhortation or explanation rather, of the great example of Christ in this selfless manner. So he says, "Don't keep looking out for merely your own interest." Again, it's a present active. It means continually make this the practice of your life. Look for the opportunities to get in on the team effort and go forward for the glory of God.

So that's the challenge I want to give you from the word about Operation Andrew and the challenge I want to give you from the word about our True Church Conference. At the end of the day, has God changed your heart? Then you are capable of enjoying doing what you don't want to do sometimes. Does that make sense? You're capable of being fulfilled and deeply blessed by stepping out when maybe my old flesh doesn't want to but I know it's the right thing to do. I don't know what it is, but make yourself available.

Now, let me turn just for a moment to our Operation Andrew effort. The Scripture says that Andrew found Christ and then he went immediately and found his brother Peter and said, "Come and see. We found the Messiah." And that's what we're talking about here. Finding someone in your workplace, someone in your family, someone in the neighborhood, just an open door. Somebody that God sort of put in your path, made open, and at least saying, "Can I enroll you in our men's Bible study fellowship? Our men's small group? Or our ladies Bible study fellowship? It just makes you a part of the group. It doesn't make you a church member," but it gets them in the door. It lets them start to learn and see and know Christ and hear of his Gospel.

Now, I want to give you four assurances. Would you go ahead and put those up on the screen or at least put the first one up? Four assurances. Now, PJN there means they're from Pastor Jeff Noblit. It means they're not from Jesus, okay? But after 33 years of pastoral ministry and seeing God's faithfulness and knowing something of the word of God, I believe these are going to happen, okay? 1. If you will pray daily for an open door starting now, just pray daily, "God, today give me an open door, somebody I work with, somebody I meet at the restaurant, somebody in my family. Just, Lord, give me an open door to the person you want me to enroll in small groups." Alright? Would you do that? That's easy. In the morning, "Lord, give me an open door."

2. I think I can give you this assurance that God will open some doors. You will be surprised at the open doors you will find. Now, I have to give credit to Brother David some because the people that we enrolled in the restaurants two different days in the past couple of weeks, he kind of took the lead on. He thinks he actually enrolled them. He really didn't, I did, but he believes he did. But do you know the one good thing about it was I needed the accountability. He's been in small groups and thinking about this, and I've been thinking about, you know, my next sermon or whatever so it was good for me. That's iron sharpens iron. One man sharpens another, amen? He kind of got me on track. He'd get the conversation going and I would chip in and we got two ladies to enroll in small groups. Unchurched, lost ladies. Do you know what happens? If you get 300 unchurched people enrolled in small groups, you'll see more of that 300 come to Christ than if you have 200. Amen? It's not hard. "Well, pastor, what about the predestined and the elect?" The more you enroll, the more get elected. Amen. We don't worry about that on the front end, we go after souls here. That's what God commanded us to do.

All right, if you will pray, you will be surprised you'll get some open doors. 3. It will be easy. If you'll pray first and God opens the door, you're going to be surprised that it's not going to be hard. I mean, folks will just like that you're interested and I'm just going off, I've enrolled tons of people in small groups through the years but the last two that we were able to enroll were single girls with children and not in church and we talked about somebody to teach their children the Bible, ladies that are where you are in life that will love you and include you and immediately their hearts opened up. "You know, I need something like that." Here they go. And we said, "Look, it won't make you a church member but we're going to enroll you in small groups." By the way, if it's a busy situation, you know, and you do have to be careful when people are working. It's not right to pull a person away from a man they are employed for. Amen. So you want to be very brief but if you can at least get their name and a phone number and men have to be very careful with the ladies that way, by the way. If you can get a name and a phone number you can say, "I'll have your small group leader call you and tell you all the right information." So I texted Kathy Underwood and I sent her the name and the phone number of this lady we enrolled and she's already been talking to this lady and I had a contact with her previously and starting that relationship. Do you know what happens? The more people you enroll, the more people you touch, the more people you start a relationship with, the more people God saves. It's always been that way, it's always worked that way.

And the more we have these encouraging campaigns where we are saying selflessly get in on it. Let's all kind of hold each other accountable and see what we can do. The more we find, the more we reach out to and the more we see converted. Matter of fact, overwhelmingly the people we see saved at Grace Life Church were first enrolled in a small group. It's a biblical principle. It's not a gimmicky thing. It's just a biblical principle of inviting people into the group so they can see and learn of our Christ. One person likened small groups to the Gentile court of the temple. What was the Gentile court area of the temple for? So non-Jews could come learn about Israel's God. Well, that's what small groups is. They can come and learn about our God and our Savior. It's a good environment for them to do that. It's just going to be easy. You're just going to find people open and receptive if you pray first. God opens the door.

4. The fourth assurance: you'll enroll more than one. You're enroll more than one. Now, ask for one, would you do that? "God, give me one person." That's challenging for six weeks, isn't it? Just one. Just one person and, folks, it doesn't matter if it's the person, if it's the homeless person on the corner or the bank president. Anybody and everybody anywhere can be enrolled in Sunday school or enrolled in small groups. We used to joke and say if you walk by the front of the church slowly you're going to get enrolled in a small group. But ask God for one, would you do that? I always think of Chad over here. Chad was enrolled or reached out to and it was a small group class. Chad is a teacher for us now and has been enrolling people lately and the class is doing great, but somebody's got to start it somewhere and whoever reached out to Chad and enrolled him was challenged in an effort to reach out to people. Actually, it was a friend day that he was particularly involved in and I think many of you probably would fit in the same kind of category.

I remember a story told by Dawson Trotman. He was with a discipleship group and they weren't real local church centered and I think that's a glaring weakness but, nevertheless we can learn from a lot of people, and their discipleship ministry was really involved with military men and Dawson Trotman had a group of men, Navy guys, and he was discipling them and growing them in the Lord and one of the guys went out on a six-month tour and he challenged him to reach some of those sailors on that ship for those six months and disciple the ones he reached. The six-month tour was over and the fellow came back to Dawson Trautman, his discipleship leader and Dawson said, "How did it go? How many did you reach and disciple?" He kind of put his head down and kind of kicked around and said, "I didn't reach anybody." Dawson Trotman said, "You didn't?" He said, "No." He said, "Well, what did you do?" He said, "Well, I sincerely prayed. I prayed, 'God, give me dozens of men. Give me dozens. I want to reach a lot of these men on this ship.'" He said, "It just kind of never happened." And Dawson Trotman said, "You know, Jesus only really trained and discipled 12 men." He said, "When you go back out on your next tour, just ask God for one. God, just give me one that I can reach. Just one that I can win and disciple." And he prayed that sincerely, went out on his next tour, and he found a man and he discipled that man and then there was another one, and then there was another one, and the story goes that that ship actually was sunk in battle but there were enough survivors off of that ship that there were missionaries in all the continents of

the world who survived from that ship even after it was destroyed in battle because one sailor asked God to give him one man.

There's a lot of power in that. How many are in this room tonight, I don't know, a few hundred, 300, 400? And if everybody says, "God, give me one," 400 new folks, unchurched people enrolled in small groups. Do you realize, I think I'm accurate here, David, about 30ish% of the folks we enroll end up joining or getting saved. 30%. But I can guarantee if you'll really ask God every day, "Give me an open door. Give me one," you'll enroll more than one. But, you see, if everybody would have a heart, "Lord, I can reach at least one."

Now, if you're a Sunday school teacher, small group leader, or an elder, or a staff member, if you'll commit me to do this, "Pastor, I'll purpose to do that." Would you stand? Just stand up. "I'll just commit to do that." We'll just all kind of look around and challenge each other. Now, the rest of you will say, "Pastor, I'll try." Nobody is going to call you up and say, "How are you doing?" Okay, now your small group leader might encourage you and hold you a little accountable but we're not here to embarrass you or put you on the spot. You say, "Pastor, I'll trying to do that. I'll try to pray daily and look for one person I can enroll in small groups." I want you to stand. "I'll do my best. I'll give it a try. I'll seek the Lord and ask him to give me one person that I can reach."

Now, I know we have folks who are not members or whatever. Let's all stand now and let's pray together, all right?