

# There Is No Turning Back Now

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Twenty-six individuals had the opportunity to demonstrate their faith in Jesus Christ through obedience in baptism. That was then, today is now. Today we come to celebrate that God is not just the God of yesterday or hopefully tomorrow but he is the God of today. Let me remind you that when Moses questioned the ability and the power of God and particularly asked, "What is your name?" He said, "I AM THAT I AM." No matter what God has done in our life in days past or what you hope he may do in days future, let us declare this truth today that he wants to move and operate this day in our lives. Let's pray to that end and then we'll study his word.

*Lord, as we come today, we know it's not yesterday and it's not yet tomorrow and you made it very clear that when you modeled for us how to pray, that we are to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Lord, you brought us to this place from various paths and various journeys and various perspectives but we have gathered together in this place at this time to receive your word. So Lord, I pray that this day would be a transforming day, it would be a life-changing day because of not just yesterday or hopefully tomorrow but what you desire to speak to us at this time and at this moment. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

This morning I want to encourage you if you have a Bible to open to the Gospel of John 2. Now, as you turn to John 2, we're going to begin today with what we know as the public ministry in the life of Jesus Christ. Now, this is an important day in the life of our church. Whether you are aware or not but about a year from now we're going to begin as a church family both young and old, those that are brand new believers, those that are much more mature, we're going to go on a journey together through about a 13 week discipleship study about a year from now where we're going to study the word of God, we're going to memorize the word of God, we're going to be challenged by the word of God. Many of our Sunday school classes, adult classes, are beginning today walking alongside within the Gospel of John as we enter into the public ministry and life of Jesus Christ headed toward John 15. John 15:5, a very important statement, Jesus says that, "I," speaking of himself, "am the vine. You are the branches. He that abides in me and I in him will bear much fruit for apart from me you can do nothing."

That's where we're headed and today I declare there's no turning back. That's what we find ourselves in John 2, at a point in the life and the ministry of Jesus where there is no turning back at this point. In fact, in John 2 at what we know as this famous marriage

feast where the turning of the water to wine, he has declared not just who he is in that moment but we're going to see that he is making a very specific statement about the future. He's going to reference the past but more importantly for you, he's going to make a declaration about your present. Today as we turn to John 2, it is more than just merely the turning of water into wine. Allow me to go ahead and get this out of the way at the beginning because it's an old joke but let me go ahead and say it: Jesus turned water into wine and then Baptist's turned it back to grape juice. So there you go.

John 2, beginning in verse 1, it says,

1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: 2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. 3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus said unto him, They have no wine. 4 Jesus said unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother said unto the servants, Whatsoever he says unto you, do it. 6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus said unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he said unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. 9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, 10 And said unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but you have kept the good wine until now. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him. 12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

We have today the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus Christ and the question that's going to kind of be the overarching theme is why water to wine? We're going to see in just a moment that this is more than just one physical element into another.

Let's begin with this picture of the future. We see that Jesus is more than just a wedding feast, it's more than just a few days in Cana of Galilee, Jesus is giving us through his actions that even his words, he's giving us a picture of his future ministry and future endeavors as Lord. In fact, the first thing he does is gives us a statement that is very prophetic. Now, when we deal with a "prophet" in Scripture, understand there are many prophets. Jesus himself, we find out he's a prophet, he's a priest and he's a king, but a prophet had two functions: they both foretold and forth told. In other words, they told the truth, "Thus saith the Lord," but oftentimes shared events or scenarios that were forthcoming in the future.

Notice the very first statement of this passage, "And on the third day." Does that ring a biblical bell in your mind? For three plus years later, it would be the third day that would

change everything. Jesus was crucified, he died, he was buried in a borrowed tomb. Day 1 nothing. Day 2 nothing. But on day 3, the stone had been rolled away. And when Jesus comes to this wedding feast and turns the water into wine, he comes and it begins on day 3. It's a very prophetic statement of what's to take place in the future.

Also we see that it takes place in the midst of a wedding. He could have performed his first miracle anywhere in any circumstance but he begins at a wedding. Later in the life and ministry of Jesus, he would use a wedding again as an illustration, that the Lord is having a wedding feast and people have been invited and some reject and some refuse but some receive the invitation. You make your way through the New Testament, particularly the book of Ephesians 5, it says that our relationship with the Lord has a picture of a marriage. As Christ is to the church, the husband is to the wife. It's not a picture of siblings, coworkers or even best friends, it's a picture of a marriage covenant. Then when you get to the end of your Bible, the book of Revelation, it says that when all the saints as Ephesians says, the dispensation of the fullness of times is gathered, it's called the marriage supper of the Lamb.

So at this first miracle, he's picturing not only an empty tomb three years later, he's also picturing the reality of a relationship with him where the two become one. A real, living, breathing relationship, not a religion. But there is another statement in this passage when he's conversing with whom we know as Mary, his earthly mother and he says, "Woman, why do I have to do with thee?" We'll talk about that statement in a moment. "Mine hour is not yet come." That statement is used seven times in the Gospel of John, "mine hour." In the life, in the ministry of Jesus, some three plus years in length of which the Gospels, about half of their contents contain the last week of his life and ministry, Jesus says, "mine hour." In other words, very prophetically he is stating that there is a very specific reason why he is there.

When you get to John 12:27, the disciples, the apostles are discussing, or shall I say they're arguing with him about his declaration of going to the cross. He says that he will be crucified. He will die for the sins of humanity. And they're debating and saying, "Oh no, you don't need to do that." And he makes this statement, "Shall I flee or escape from this hour for this hour is why I came." In the very beginning moments of Jesus' public ministry, he is declaring that the cross event and the resurrection and the empty tomb is the single solitary reason for his being here. He has come to save. He has come to redeem. And by turning water into wine, he is literally speaking prophetically about the days ahead.

But he also speaks very particularly. Now, I want to take you back to that verse that I just alluded to in verse 4 when he says, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" Now, there are many who read this verse and think Jesus as being rude and somewhat crude. I mean, after all this young lady bore him in the womb for nine months. This young lady whom we know as Mary went through all what we call the physical trials and tribulations of child-rearing and such and here 30 years later, he uses the phrase, "Woman"? At no place in Scripture does Jesus ever refer to "mother." Others do. He never calls her by the name Mary. And there are lots of reasons that people have speculated but I want you to think in

terms of Jesus picturing the future here because when you go to John 19 at the end of the Gospel, Jesus is on the cross, the crown of thorns have been placed on his head, the spikes are in his hands and in his feet, and he makes only seven statements that are recorded from the cross. One of those statements is, "Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother." It is the statement where he gives the physical responsibility of caring for her to John whom we know as the Apostle John who was family speaking, a distant relative.

Why is that so important? Why was he so particular? Because in chapter 19, verse 35, the Bible records there were five people at the foot of the cross: John the apostle whom we know as the one the Lord used to give us the Gospel of John and others, and four women. Does anybody want to take a biblically educated guess at what their names were? They were all named Mary. It was John and four Mary's at the foot of the cross and so if he would have used the statement, "Mother," all of them were moms at some level physically speaking, if he had used the name Mary, which one are you talking about, but when he says, "Woman," he is making a direct reference to the future of when he will give her physically in the care of John the apostle.

You say, "Why is that so important?" Because in your Old Testament, particularly the book of Ruth, there was a very important function of the Messiah. He was – listen – the kinsman redeemer, the one who would save humanity from their sins but he also fulfills in picture the role of this one taking care of the needs of this woman to John and upon his death. It's a future picture not only prophetically of the cross event and the empty tomb, but it's also a future picture of the fact that he came as a kinsman redeemer to do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

But we also discover in picturing the future, that it's a very powerful illustration here in John 2. He turns water into wine. A pretty significant event. Not just on a chemical level but a picturesque level as well. When you begin to read throughout the New Testament, eventually you get to the last book of the Bible, eventually you get to a book entitled Revelation where we see, particularly in chapter 19, the heavens open and Jesus descending. The Bible says that all the saints of glory are with him as he descends, not just in a spiritual reign of our hearts but in a physical reign of the entire universe. In his wrath, in his judgment of those who rejected him, resisted him and want nothing to do with him, the Bible makes this illustration: that he treads – listen – the winepress of his wrath. Water to wine, pretty significant. In fact, in the days ahead he'll take a withered hand and make it whole, he'll take three different men who are blind and make it to where they can see. A man by the name of Lazarus and his family will never be the same because he was dead for four days and he was raised from the grave. A boy's sack lunch will feed thousands. The ocean he will be suspended above and walk simply across it. What we see is that it's a picture of the powerfulness of what he will do, not just in the fact of walking on water or healing the lame but that one day at the end, at the consummation of all things, the judgment of God will be as the winepress.

So when Jesus shows up to this wedding, it's more than just a feast, it's more than just the exchanging of vows, and it's more than just turning water into wine, he is picturing for us

a significant series of events that are going to take place in the future, but he's also referencing the past. Those of you that are nimble of hand and quick of finger, there are a couple of passages in the Old Testament that we're going to go back into, Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 32. You may want to look those up yourself and as you're turning, allow me to share this, it's a rhetorical question: have you ever thought why did Jesus turn water into wine? I mean, he's Jesus, right? He can turn anything into anything else. Why water into wine? Why this specific miracle? Why that particular element? Why did he use what I'm going to call such precise language in such a precise illustration? Why did Jesus take water and turn it into wine? Why was this his first miracle? And why is this the declaration that he would make to all of us?

Well, if you go back to Genesis 49, we have what we call the last will and testament of Jacob. Now, Jacob was named Israel. This is the man who had the 12 tribes as his sons. So here he is sharing with them what will happen in their life. He's foretelling the future of their life, their lineages and ancestry and such. We know that Jesus physically descended from what is called the tribe of Judah so allow us to go back to Genesis 49, beginning in verse 9 and read what is said about Judah from the blessing of his dad, Jacob. Verse 9 of Genesis 49, it says, "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his donkey's colt unto the choice vine; he," listen, "washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk." Isn't that interesting, that the tribe of Judah which Jesus would physically descend, when the last will and testament of Jacob or Israel is given, three times there is a reference to wine and that wine is correlated with garments being washed in blood. In fact, it's Hebrews 9:22 that says without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

So why the wine? Well, go to Deuteronomy 32 and we're going to have what we call the song of Moses. Those of you may be familiar with the song, "Ten thousand reasons or the song of Moses," it's based on this passage. This is the last message, the last declaration of a man whom we know as Moses, the one who prophesied the Messiah would come in like fashion as him. Now, I'm not going to read all of chapter 32 of Deuteronomy. It is basically a declaration of what God is going to do in the Promised Land. We're going to go to verse 14. It's going to sound like a grocery list because he is sharing with them all of the physical blessings that God is going to give them in the Promised Land.

Verse 14, "Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and you did drink," listen, "the pure blood of the grape." When Jesus turns water into wine, you cannot ignore the fact that he is precisely referencing blood; the fact that it was prophesied from the tribe of Judah that blood would be shed and blood would be the means for the remission of sins. When Jesus is referencing the pasture, when he turns water into wine, the reason he chose these elements was not random, it was not happenstance, it was not just because, "Well, I

happened to be here. Let's try this." He was very precisely picturing to them that it would be his blood that would wash us of our sins.

But what he also does is gives us a paradigm change or a paradigm shift. I want you to think: what is the most famous story you know of in the Bible where water is turned into blood? It's the book of Exodus. It's the plagues that God brings upon Pharaoh for not letting the people of God go. You know the story well, that Moses goes and declares, "Let my people go." Pharaoh says no. And so in the resistance, the Lord comes and says, "Alright, if you will not do as I have asked, there is going to be a series of consequences." We know them as the famous ten plagues. The very first plague was water into blood. Notice that the first miracle of Jesus is water into wine. What did Deuteronomy 32:14 call wine? The blood of the grape. What did Genesis 49 say? It talked about the blood of the grape. Here's the paradigm change, though: in Exodus, water is turned into blood because God is cursing or judging humanity for their sins, but in John 2 there is a change because Jesus is declaring redemption, deliverance and forgiveness of our sins.

So he's taking a very precise element, he's giving a complete change of paradigm and saying that which at one time was a plague is now come as a means of redemption and salvation. But when you look at the past, we also see that it was a fulfillment of a promise. In fact, we go all the way back to the book of Genesis 3, there was a time when humanity was not wrapped in sin. There was a time when we were not depraved by nature. There was a time where the Bible records that we walked in the garden in the cool of the day with the Lord. But we know that we fell, that humanity ate of the forbidden fruit. We consumed that which the Lord said do not consume.

Beginning in Genesis 3 toward the end, the Lord begins to hand out the punishments. When he speaks to the serpent, the one who deceived Eve, the one who put the idea in humanity's mindset to do this, his punishment to the serpent is he says that a seed will come from the woman and though a seed come from the serpent that will crush his heel, the seed of the woman will crush his head. We call it the very first Gospel in the Bible. You see, when Jesus turns water into wine, he is speaking of a future empty tomb. He's speaking of the fact that he's a kinsman redeemer and one day will judge all of humanity but he's also saying, "I'm the one that was spoken of from time beginning. I'm the one that in the garden of Eden was said would come and crush the head of the serpent. I'm the one who will take the blood of the grape and in my garments will wash your sins white as snow." This was more than just a wedding feast. This was more than just one element being turned into another. This was a declaration of the future as well as the past.

But what about you? What about today? What about tomorrow when the alarm clock goes off? How does this story impact your life? How does it change how you see the world and live in this world? What is the declaration for your life in light of this passage? Well, I think the first thing we need to realize is this is a story that's very personal. I want you to notice what happens when the water is turned to wine and who knows or shall I say, who notices what has happened?

I want you to look at verse 9 of John 2. We're going to see that not everybody understood what was happening. Verse 9 it says, "When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, he knew not." He did not know how it happened. He did not know who made the change. Notice the parenthesis, "(but the servants which drew the water knew.)" When you begin to look at this story from a sociological perspective, most likely there would have been a large group of people there but only a small group of people actually understood who had made the change. Obviously we know that Mary, the mother of Jesus, knew. Most likely the apostles because it said "they believed." And the servants.

There is an eerie parallel to our world today because there are a lot of people who've heard the name of Jesus and a lot of folks who have heard things about Jesus but only a very small group of people had actually seen the transformation that Jesus had done. You see, the belief in Jesus is very personal. It's not just an objective cerebral fact, it's a personal heart transformation that he can take that which is sin and he can make it clean. He can take that which is old and dirty and depraved and he can as Isaiah 1 says, wash it white as snow.

Any time you have a conversation with a pastor or preacher particularly who's been in ministry 20-25+ years, we all have our fair share of what we know as wedding stories but I want to share with you what took place a couple of years ago in my life. I had one of those couples, in fact, one of those couples that as a pastor you just love the opportunity to be a part of their wedding. I knew them pretty well, knew their families, was excited about them, had gone through all the premarital counseling, had read the books, had prayed together, talked together. Everything was great. It was about two months before the wedding. One day without warning after a Wednesday night Bible study, the bride-to-be caught me in the sanctuary and said, "Pastor Jeff, I need to have a talk with you and I need to talk with you now. It cannot wait." Now there was panic on her face and I could only imagine what had taken place. We're two months out from the wedding and things happen. That's why they have a show called "Bridezillas." I mean, things happen, okay?

So we sat down on the pew and I said, "What's going on?" She said, "I don't know what to do but something's come up." I said, "What is it?" She said, "Well, you know that we're supposed to get married in about two months." I said, "Well, yeah. I'm planning on being there. I got it." And then she mentioned the name of her fiance and said, "He's got an opportunity in about two weeks that's the opportunity of a lifetime." She said, "20, 30, 40 years from now I'm going to wish that I was a part of this and I can't be a part of it." I said, "Why can't you be a part of it?" She said, "Because I'm not married to him. They won't allow a fiancée or a friend. You have to be their legal spouse in order to participate and I won't be and I can't participate. What would you do if you were me?" Well, those of you that don't know me well, I just said what came off the top of my head. I said, "How about we get married in my office and we'll celebrate it in two months?" She looked stunned that here her pastor would give her that advice and she said, "That's what my grandmother told me to do." I said, "I think she's a smart woman. Let's do it."

So we gathered the family, the groomsmen, the bridesmaids. We all had our own private wedding ceremony. Six weeks, eight weeks later, we had the formal one. It was interesting because there were a lot of people that were there that had no clue what had really happened. Oh, the bride knew, the groom knew, the family knew, all the groomsmen, the bridesmaids knew because they knew what had happened behind the scenes.

It's a very personal story. A small selective group of people knew what Jesus had actually done but a large group of them were just like, "Hey man, the party's going to get better." You know, that's an eerie picture of our world today. A lot of people know the name of Jesus, heard the name of Jesus, but very few have actually been transformed by the person of Jesus.

What we see though, it's not just personal but there's a prescription that's given. I want to back it up to verse 5. I want you to see what Mary, the mother of Jesus, says. Now, I grew up in the home of a pharmacist so this is about to get real personal for me. Verse 5, "His mother said unto the servants, Whatsoever he says to do, do it." Now that's a prescription. Now, as I said, growing up in the home of a pharmacist, allow me to share with you what I know about prescriptions: you do not have the right or the liberty to change what the doctor prescribes for you and if you do, you are bound to get yourself in a medical mess. If it says do not operate heavy machinery after taking it, do not get on a Caterpillar D9. It's not good for anybody. If it tells you eat it with food, you should eat it with food. If it tells you to do it at night, you should take it at night. When we begin to self-prescribe, when we begin to say, "Well, I don't want to take it three times a day. I don't want to take it on an empty stomach," we always end up in trouble. But you know we do the same thing with Jesus. "I don't like what you're calling me to do, Jesus. I don't like what you're asking me to stop, Jesus. I don't like what you're asking me to be a part of, Jesus. This is how I'd rather do it." What did Mary say? In fact, some people have called this the Gospel according to Mary. "Whatever he says, do it." What a prescription that we're to have in our lives. So let me ask you: what has Jesus told you to do? What has he said to be a part of? What has he said to stop doing? What has he said to give to? What has he said to quit? Because whatever he says, the prescription is to do it.

Now, there are two possibilities to this scenario in our lives. We can either heed what Jesus has told us to do in our lives or we can run from it. Now, I want to share with you today a story of, in fact it's probably my favorite wedding story of all time. Allow me to set the scene for you. I want you to imagine an August wedding in the state of Texas outside at 2:00 in the afternoon. Can you imagine that with me? Some of you are starting to fan yourselves because it's just hot thinking about it. That's what I was scheduled to do. That was on the agenda and it had been for months with this couple that I had been walking with toward their wedding day until about a week before. I got a phone call and they said they'd like to meet with me again and when we gathered at that place, there was another couple there. They introduced them to me that they were their best friends and they had been engaged for a while and they desired to be married as well. So we walked through all the necessary steps and asked all the pastoral questions and I was like, "Great. I'd love to be a part of your lives as well." I said, "When do you want to get married?"



They said, "The same time." I said, "I can't be at two places at one time." They said, "No. Same time, same place, same day." I said, "What?" I said, "We're doing a double wedding?" They said, "Can we?" I said, "Sure, why not?"

So that day, in fact, I have copywritten the lyrics to a future country song. If you know anybody who wants to make a number 1 hit, here are the lyrics to this. Are you ready? It was a double wedding on the deck of a double wide. Can't make this up. The groom's wearing jeans way too tight and neither of the brides were wearing white. That'll sell, folks. I'm gonna tell you what, that will sell. I've got the chorus, I just need someone who can sing and write verses there. With all that being said, so we gathered August, 2:00, outside, Texas, deck of the double wide, two sets of vows, two sets of rings but the picture of the weddings was very similar to John 2. Let me tell you why: notice that first phrase, "On the third day." You see, weddings in most of our culture 20-30 minutes, ornate buildings, beautiful décor but in Jesus' day, they would go for six or seven days in length. In fact, when they exchanged their vows, it was just the beginning of the celebration, not the end.

Well, at this wedding while I was assisting with the vows, while the rings were being exchanged, in the background as only could take place in this story, there was a full fledged Texas barbecue taking place. They were barbecuing. There were kids playing on the playground. It was a scene to behold. It was a celebration. It was a party. And the reason that they had it so early in the day is they wanted to enjoy each other the rest of the day. There was food aplenty, family aplenty. The vows were just the beginning, not the end.

Well, they said I do and the rings got exchanged and the right ring got on the right finger and I was just celebrating that fact and about 10-15 minutes after the pronouncement of husband and wife and kissing the bride, I noticed something very alarming to a pastor, that one of the brides – notice I have to qualify that – one of the brides was getting into an automobile with her mother and they were beginning to drive off. Now, I went into full fledged panic mode because we've got barbecue and kids and there are people playing football in the backyard and we're having all kinds of fun. So I began to chase the car down and I stopped it in time and they rolled down the window and I said, "What are you doing?" To which and I cannot make this stuff up, to which she looked at me and said, "Oh pastor, my shift at the grocery store begins in 30 minutes. I've got to get to work."

Now, I want you to think about that with me for just a moment. This is your wedding day and you didn't take the day off. This is your wedding day, you're going to leave the barbecue and family to do what you do every other day of life. Now let me bring that back home. How many times believers, I'm talking to those of you who already believe in Jesus, I'm talking about those of you who have already said I do to Jesus, how many times are we guilty of the same? I said I do but rather than fellowship and rather than a relationship with you, I'd rather go do what I want to do, what I need to do, or what I feel like I'm expected to do. You see, Jesus performs this miracle in the middle of the celebration to show us that it's a declaration that saying I do to Jesus is not the end, it's the beginning, and unfortunately in a lot of our lives, we see the, "Yes, I believe in you,

Jesus," as the end when it is actually supposed to be the beginning of a thriving real relationship with him.

So there are the possibilities. We can say I do to Jesus and miss out on all that he has planned because oftentimes he says, "I need you to do something you not necessarily want to participate in." Or you can say I do and say, "Okay, Jesus, whatever you have for me, wherever you lead me, I will just simply do as you prescribed." There are two possibilities: you can either have a real thriving relationship or you can run away.

Let's pray with our heads bowed, our eyes closed. Maybe you're that person here today, maybe you're that individual who realized for the very first time that you have no relationship with Jesus Christ. Maybe you're that person today, you've realized that you've never said, "I do," to Jesus. It's never been initiated, it's never begun in your life. Then I have some great news for you today, you do not have to go through a series of religious rituals, you do not have to jump through a bunch of hoops or check off a bunch of boxes, you just need to have a very serious conversation with God. Now I know oftentimes we call it prayer but as you pray, as you converse with God, you don't have to necessarily say anything out loud, you don't even have to say what I would say exactly as far as verbatim, but maybe your conversation with God would go a little something like this today. "God, I realize today that I have not lived the life that you've designed me to live. I have done some things I shouldn't have done. I have said some things that I shouldn't have said. And I've surely thought some things I had no business thinking. And I know because of that, I have sinned. I have rebelled against you but I understand and I believe today that you love me so much that you were willing to come and live a perfect life on my behalf. I understand that you were willing to be nailed to a cross to take the punishment of my sin and rebellion. I also realize that you were able to raise from the dead so I could be forgiven and I could be saved. And God, today I don't have all the answers to all the world's problems but I do know that Jesus is the answer to my sin problem so I'm asking you to forgive me. I'm asking you to save me not based on what I've done or what I hopefully one day will accomplish, but based on what Jesus Christ alone has done on my behalf. In the best way I know how, I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed and our eyes still closed, maybe you're that person who had that conversation with God this morning. We'd love the opportunity to celebrate with you. We'd love the opportunity just to have a conversation with you in a few moments. Or maybe you're that person, you're already forgiven, you're already saved by the blood of Jesus but that phrase, "Whatever he says to do, do it," continues to ring in your ear. Maybe it's following in baptism, maybe it's becoming a part of a fabulous church like this, or maybe it's something outside of this room, maybe there's a decision that needs to be made, an action that needs to be taken, a word that needs to be spoken and you know that he has asked you to do so and you haven't followed the prescription. Whatever the decision is this morning, this is an invitation, this is a celebration to do as he has asked and to follow in obedience.

*Lord, as we come to this time, we are grateful that your plan for our life is not to leave us from whence we came onto this campus. Lord, your plan, your desire is to take us to the next stage, the next step or whatever that might be in our relationship to you. For some it is to believe for the first time. For others it is to finally obey after many times of calling. God, I pray that whatever it is that you've called us to do, we would simply just act out in faith at this moment. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

I'm going to ask you to stand with me as our team leads us. Any and all decisions, we'll be here at the front.