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We make that declaration. What a powerful name it is and oftentimes we question what does that really look like? What does that really mean? Over the course of the last couple of weeks, I found myself in Central America on a mission trip specifically to Costa Rica, found myself this last week in the mountains of Tennessee at student camp, and over the past two weeks, I've been with multiple generations, I've been with multiple people groups, I've seen every layer of socioeconomic capacity that the world has to offer and here is why the name of Jesus is so powerful: because it's not limited to a specific culture, it's not limited to a specific strata of socioeconomics, it's not limited to this generation or that generation. When we say the name of Jesus is powerful, it means it doesn't matter who you are, where you're from or where you think you may be headed, he is able to be a part of and to alter and to change and to ultimately forgive your life. You see, the power of the name of Jesus is that no matter who you are, he is able to affect your life.

Let's pray.

Lord, as we come to this time of challenge, Lord, as we open up your word, God, I pray this wouldn't just be a reading of ancient literature, this wouldn't just be a study in religious opinion but, God, that we would hear your voice from on high, that you somehow supernaturally, you would leap off the page and into our heart and into our mind and, God, show us, demonstrate to us today no matter what the words are that I speak, Lord, show us through the Holy Spirit the powerful name of Jesus. It is in his name we pray. Amen.

This morning I want to encourage you if you have a Bible to open up to the Gospel of John 7. Now, the Gospel of John is the fourth book of the New Testament and the Gospel of John chapter 7 is where we're going to spend our time today. If you're a first time guest or visitor, we are very systematically walking through the Gospel of John for a very strategic purpose. This isn't just because we can, but ultimately we're headed toward John 15. You see, in John 15, one of the most strategic powerful statements in all of the Bible is said by the mouth of Jesus. Jesus makes this statement, he says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him shall bear much fruit for apart from me you can do nothing." And so as we walk through the Gospel of John, yes, we're seeing the miracles of Jesus, yes, we're listening to the messages of Jesus, but all with the intent of building this foundation to truly understand what does it mean for my life, what does it mean for my home, what does it mean for my community to say that Jesus is the vine and

I am the extension thereof, and when we get to John 7, today we find ourselves in a very practical part of the Scripture.

Now understand, I believe that all theologically intense material is practical and all practical material is theologically intense, however, when you compare it to chapter 6 and chapter 8, theologically speaking chapter 7 seems like we're kind of taking a breather, so to speak, that is incredibly practical for what we're about to see in the life of Jesus, in the ministry of Jesus, is a demonstration for something that all of us need to learn. How many times have you heard this statement: don't work harder, work smarter? That's exactly what we're going to see today in John 7 in the life of Jesus Christ, that his ministry, his teachings, his actions, he was not going to work harder, he was going to demonstrate for us what does it look like to operate smarter.

So in John 7 beginning in verse 1, we find ourselves in Galilee, the northern region, headed toward Jerusalem for a very important event that I'll discuss a little bit in a moment. It says,

1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. 2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. 3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart from here, and go into Judaea, that your disciples also may see the works that you do. 4 For there is no man that does any thing in secret, and he himself seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world. 5 For neither did his brethren believe in him. 6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. 7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hates, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. 8 Go you up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come. 9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee. 10 But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. 11 Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? 12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, No; but he deceives the people. 13 Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

Notice at the end of that passage it says that as they gathered at this feast, as they gathered in Jerusalem, there was a split crowd. Some of them thought that Jesus was exactly who he said he was, he's the Messiah, he is God in flesh; and other said he is a deceiver, a worker of evil. But none of them spoke openly because they were fearful of those that were in power and it's those that were in power that we see the brethren, as this is termed, or the brothers, come to Jesus and say, "Okay, Jesus, if you really are who you say you are, if you really are who you claim to be, you wouldn't be doing what you're doing in secret. You need to go and show the whole world."

Now, here's what's interesting: what we see in this passage is a temptation of Jesus Christ. Now, you may be thinking: but the temptation of Jesus took place in Matthew 4. You

know, when he's there in the wilderness 40 days and 40 nights, he hadn't eaten, and all of a sudden the devil comes to him and he tempts him, "Turn this rock into bread." Then he tempts him to come and cast himself off the temple. He tempts him to bow down in worship. Yes, that was the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness but what we see throughout the entire ministry and life of Jesus is various other temptations that are not necessarily as bold and in the open but just as strategic for, after all, they come to him and they're tempting him saying, "If you really are who you say you are, why don't you go down to Jerusalem to the feast of Tabernacles and show yourself openly?"

Now, we've got to dig down a little bit here because everything Jesus had done had been open to everybody to see. He would go to the seashore and the Bible records that entire towns would empty out to come and see Jesus. It's not like he was hiding. In fact, it would be in the garden of Gethsemane when Judas and the 500 would come to him at night, they came with swords, they came with staves, that famous kiss, that denial. Remember what Jesus said? He said, "I spoke openly with you in the temple. I walked in the market place and yet you come to get me in secret." So when they claim that he's operating in secrecy, nothing could be further from the truth but what we see is a temptation yet subtle.

Now, the issue we've got to deal with here is timing. Now, it says there that the feast of the Tabernacles, now this is, if you want a reference point later, the book of Leviticus, I know you read it regularly but the book of Leviticus 23 talks about this in depth. The feast of Tabernacles was one of seven critical feasts or festivals in the life of the Jewish people; in the course of a year they would attend one or more of these seven festivals. Now, they were so important to the Lord, they were so important to the Israelites, that in Deuteronomy 18 the Lord even made provisions for people who lived a long ways off to attend these feasts. We hear a lot about it and sometimes people are critical about "tithing," giving 10% of one's resources, and Deuteronomy 14 talks about this, that the Israelites gave 10% unto the Lord, unto the temple, unto the synagogue, but then they were also to give – listen to this – a second 10% that they were to set aside in a special savings account so – listen- they would never have a financial excuse that they could not make it to a feast or a festival because oftentimes they would live a long ways away. You say, "Well, why did the Lord set that up?" Because in Leviticus 23, the feast of Tabernacles which began on the 15th day of the seventh month which in our calendar is the middle of October, when that feast began according to verse 42 of Leviticus 23 – listen to this – all Israelites had to attend. Y'all know what the word "all" means, right? It means all.

So I want you to notice what's happening here. Here are the brethren, here are these people coming to Jesus and they're saying, "Hey, why don't you go to the feast of Tabernacles, show yourself openly?" What does the Bible say? They desired to kill him. You see, the feast of Tabernacles was not only so important the Lord said that all of you must attend, in fact, for the male gender, you could not skip. Ladies, if you had just had a baby, about to have a baby, had some things going on in life, you did not or were not required to attend but, gentlemen, we had to go in those days. It is such an important feast that in the book of Zechariah 14, all the way at the end of your Old Testament, the Bible

is speaking of a coming physical reign of Jesus Christ one day that even during that time when sin has been abolished, when the enemy, Satan, has been cast into the lake of fire, even during those days it says the feast of Tabernacles is still celebrated. In fact, you get to Revelation 21:3, there is a new heaven, a new earth, a new Jerusalem. Eternity as we understand it has begun and it says there in verse 3 that God tabernacled with them. It literally means to dwell with, to inhabit. That's why Isaiah called Jesus Immanuel, which means God dwells or is among us.

So this feast was of such importance that his "brethren" come to him and say, "Okay, Jesus, they want to kill you but you need to go." You say, "Well, why is this such a great temptation?" Because here's what's at stake: if Jesus doesn't go, if he decides, "Do you know what? Not this year. This isn't the time to do it." He was required by Levitical law to go and how can you claim to be sinless if you go against the principles and precepts of God? You see, they are challenging him. They're tempting him saying, "If you really are who you claim to be, then you cannot violate this law. You have to go and they want to kill you, let's see how this one works out." But the temptation wasn't just to "commit a sin" because we see later that Jesus does go, but the temptation had to do with timing. You know, sometimes and we're going to talk more about this in a moment, you can do the right thing at the wrong time, but you can never do the wrong thing at the right time.

So the issue is timing and what we see is a visible demonstration of this. Notice what it says in verse 5, that his brethren did this, those who were speaking to Jesus, because they did not believe in him. Now, this past week I had the privilege, in fact, allow me to say to you, I had the absolute honor of being with our students up in Tennessee at student camp, about 300 of us were up there on the mountains of Tennessee and one of the things that I shared with those students and even the adults that I think is necessary for all of us to hear is what oftentimes we call either the faith pyramid or the worldview pyramid. It goes a little something like this. Have you ever thought about, have you ever questioned, have you ever asked the why does somebody do what they do? Why do some people say what they say? Why do some people act the way they act? And we see their behavior and we hear their words and we question what's really happening down below? Well, this worldview pyramid says this: that your behavior, the actions that you participate in or don't, the words that you speak or don't, that all of our behavior is based on decisions that we make and the decisions that we make are based on the convictions that we hold. That which we deem to be true; that which we deem to be right; that which we deem to be viable; that which we deem to be loathsome, whatever it may be.

So whatever our convictions are lead us to make decisions that results in behavior but all of that is rooted – listen – in what we believe. Understand that your behavior, my behavior, anybody's behavior is simply the tip of the iceberg and when there's a behavior problem, ultimately we have a belief problem. We have a behavior problem taking place here in John 7. We have a group of men coming to a man who is guilty, the only thing Jesus is guilty of is healing people doctors couldn't heal and feed people others couldn't feed. Have you ever thought about that? Jesus' guilt lies in the good he did, the miracles he performed in the people's lives who he changed. So the behavior to want to catch this guy in a proverbial Catch 22 is rooted in their belief. They did not believe in him.

So when we see the temptation, this time of going to the feast of Tabernacles when are those who desire to kill him, what we're seeing on the outside, what we're seeing in the visible is the manifestation of people who did not believe in him in the first place but let's peel away the layers, let's look at the invisible for a moment. You know, one of my favorite statements made years ago, a guy by the name of Luis Palau, a South American evangelist who now lives in the Portland, Oregon area. I've made this statement before and if you're around in the future, I'll probably say it again. It's attributed to him because I heard him say it and it's such a good statement. I'd love to plagiarize this but it's just too good. It's too good. He made this statement, he said, "If we could see with spiritual eyes for one second, it would scare the hell out of us." But here's what he meant: if you could really see what the devil looks like, if you could really see what the throne room of God looks like, there wouldn't be anybody who would choose to reject Jesus. If we could see what it really looks like.

You see, what's happening in this passage is in the visible there are a couple of guys trying to catch him in a proverbial Catch 22; in the visible they're saying, "Hey, Jesus, are you really who you say you are?"; in the visible they're challenging him to "pony up," but what's happening in the invisible? What's happening behind the scenes? You see, what you see are individuals who are operating for the kingdom of darkness. What you see are individuals who do not desire Jesus to be who he's claiming to be and they're doing anything and everything they can to somehow trap him into not being who he is.

A couple of weeks ago I had the privilege of taking one of our teams on a mission trip to Costa Rica, Central America, a wonderful opportunity, in fact, allow me to share with you one of the individuals that our own Allan Jones and others have been working with for years, last week, this is an exciting announcement, last week they had their very first church service with this congregation. They had been working with them for years trying to build up the community and trust and such, their very first service, they had 28 people there. Now, some of you may think, 28 people, that doesn't seem like a lot. In a community of 300? That's an awesome thought, is what that is.

So I just want to give you that awareness, but as we were working down there, one of the things that we did on our "free time" is we went into one of the major cities and we visited a very large, very ornate religious building. In fact, it was representative of the official religion of that country, sponsored by, funded by and promoted by the government. There we were and there were hundreds of people on that afternoon. They were coming in and they were coming out and everything that took place on that campus, everything that took place in that building involved one of two aspects: either A, they were doing or saying something to justify themselves to God; or B, they were paying money to do so. Everybody who stepped foot in that building was either paying money or saying a prayer or something so as to somehow get God's attention to say, "Please pay attention to me!" Let me share with you what that is: that's called religion. Religion is when you do something to try to get God's attention. I want you to hear me clearly: Jesus Christ is not a religionist. You can't do anything to get his attention. In fact, it's relationship. He's done everything to get your attention. Jesus is the one who lived a

sinless life. Jesus is the one who went to the cross and it's Jesus who rose from the dead and said, "Whoever calls upon me will be saved."

So we take our group down to this incredible facility. We went through. We toured it. We observed. And one of the things that we did as a group is we went outside, probably about 100 yards from the front door, and as was scheduled, I sat down with our team and I shared with them what we observed, the history of how it got to where it was and what those expressions that those people were doing, what it meant, and my sole purpose was to share with our group the very obvious difference between religion and a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Well, we make our way out to the steps and some folks have got to go and take a break, whatever it may be, and it probably takes us about 20 minutes to all get settled but I'm telling you, and anybody who was on that trip, they will testify to the validity of this story. About 30 seconds before I started to speak, about 30 seconds before I began to share with them the difference between Jesus and religion, this woman to my right, probably about 50 yards away, started yelling like a foghorn every 3 or 4 seconds. It was completely unintelligible. It was completely obnoxious and I have no idea how she could have that much volume in her lungs. And she would wail and she would scream and she would yell and our group is five feet away from me and they're having a hard time hearing me from this woman.

We go for about 10 or 15 minutes and I'm not making this up, as soon as we got done, she shut up. You tell me that's the physical world? You tell me that's just a coincidence. Let me tell you what that is: when you're 100 yards away from a building and a place that is promoting that somehow you've got to pay money or do something to get God's attention and you talk about the freedom that Jesus Christ brings, I'm going to tell you who shows up and it's the devil himself. He showed up and he tried to show out, but I've got news: the name of Jesus is more powerful than what she was giving on display that day. In other words, when we come to John 7, it looks like a couple of guys just trying to deceive and trick Jesus but what's really happening is what we call spiritual warfare. Behind the scenes the last thing that Satan wants is for Jesus Christ to be honored. The last thing Satan wants is for Jesus Christ to have the attention he well deserves and for people to believe in him.

So when we see this setting, this is a temptation happening and so now we transfer from the temptation to the teaching of Jesus. Beginning in verse 6, Jesus begins, and those of you that have a red letter Bible, you'll see there are red letters here, Jesus begins to communicate to these guys what's happening. He says, "Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hates, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." And here's what Jesus is teaching us, here's what he's sharing with us in light of this temptation: timing is everything. Notice what he says in verse 6, "For my time is not at hand." Jesus made it very clear. Luke 19:10, Matthew 18:11, he said, "I have come to seek and to save that which was lost." Later in John 12 he says, "Would I avoid going to the cross? No, for this is why I have come." But what does he say in verse 6? "My time is not as of yet."

You know, back in the book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament, chapter 3, we have a very famous passage of Scripture, in fact so famous that many decades ago we turned it into a pop song entitled "Turn, Turn, Turn," for every season there is a time. There is a time to be born. There is a time to die. There is a time to dance. Yes, Baptists, it's there. And there is a time to mourn. It's in the Bible, folks, it says there is a time. But here's what I want you to hear: in Ecclesiastes 3 there are 28 "seasons of life" that are referenced, did you know that the moon has 28 faces? You go all the way back into Genesis 1:14 and it says God gave us the sun, God gave us the moon, God gave us the stars for signs and for seasons. Not just winter and fall and spring and summer, for those of you who are like me from Texas, summer and summer part 2. I mean, not just for those seasons but for the – listen – the seasons of life and Jesus was saying here, "There is a time for me to give my life but this is not the time. Oh, it's coming soon but it's not this day."

And one of the things that he's trying to teach us is there are good times in life, there are bad times in life, there are times to celebrate, there are times to mourn. In fact, we discover that life is incredibly seasonal. But then he goes on in verse 7 and says this, "But the world cannot hate you, it always hates me." Here's what's interesting what Jesus is trying to teach us: that even in the seasons of life there's a time to go to the feast, there's the time to wait a few days; there's a time to allow yourself to be put on a cross and there's a time to walk across water. He said but even in the different seasons of life, notice he says there is no season to those who hate him and who despise him.

You know, one thing I've observed as of late, in fact I made a statement to somebody just this morning talking about coming back from student camp, you know, I wish we could have the energy of a young person and the wisdom of an adult and why the Lord didn't allow us to have those at the same time, I'll never know. But as I get older and hopefully I get a little bit wiser, you know, one of the things that I am noticing, in fact I'm seeing it every single day, is that the name of Jesus Christ, the concept of what we know as biblical Christianity is increasingly being more and more despised.

I want you to think about something and let me just kind of think logically with you for a moment. We live in a world that has multiple faith systems and beliefs. I mean, we are the culture that invented the co-exist bumper sticker, right? I mean, we've got multiple faiths, multiple expressions, and yet we're being told that everybody should have their rightful place except Jesus. I mean, college campuses today are spending millions of dollars to build facilities so that various faiths of students can be expressed properly but these same institutions are taking down places that are designed for Christians to practice their faith. Why is it that everybody else is beloved and Jesus is despised? Why is it that everybody else gets a seat at the table and Jesus does not?

You see, it's the same Jesus who later would say, "I'm the way. I'm the truth and the life. Nobody comes to the Father but by me." And what we see in the seasons of life – listen – you may be going through one of those time periods right now where it's just wonderful, and you may be going through a time period and you're saying, "I wish, I hope, it can't

get over soon enough." It doesn't matter if it's good, it doesn't matter if it's bad, it doesn't matter if it's just one of those you've just got to get through it times, that Jesus in your life and Jesus as you believe in will always be despised.

So what's the invisible? He says, "Your time is always but you hate me now." Did you know that every single passage in the Bible that talks about spiritual warfare, about this invisible war between the things of God and the things of Satan, did you know that every one of those passages is written to believers in Jesus? Every one of them. They're not written to the lost world. They're not written to those who doubt. They're not written to those who don't believe. They're only written to those who do believe and therefore it says, "For we fight not against," what? "Flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness. Therefore put on the belt of truth. Put on the breastplate of righteousness. The shield of faith. The sword of the Spirit. The helmet of salvation. And may your feet be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." And what we see is that in all of our endeavors and all of our seasons in life, we need to always understand that whether it's good times or bad times, whether it's a temptation or an opportunity for good or for evil, the name and the person of Jesus is consistently and always despised.

So you've got this temptation that takes place in his life, you've got this teaching that he gives to them, so how does this apply to our life today and tomorrow? What about the temptations of today? How does this affect our lives? Well, let's deal with the issue of timing. You know, timing is important not just in life but in the things of God.

Let me talk about life for a moment. You know, one of the great heroes of football is a man by the name of Vince Lombardi. Vince Lombardi coached the Green Bay Packers to the first two Superbowls. The trophy is named after him, the famous Lombardi trophy. I grew up in baseball and I had a baseball coach who believed in Vince Lombardi time. I don't know if you know about Vince Lombardi time, let me share with you what it means. Vince Lombardi said that if you're 15 minutes early, you're on time. If you're 10 minutes early, you're late. If you're 5 minutes early, don't bother showing. Now, I had a baseball coach that believed in that and for every minute you were late, you had to run a lap around the field before you could get started because our coach said practice starts at 6, you don't get out of the truck at 6. So if you were 9 minutes early and he was there with a stopwatch, you still had to run one lap.

You see, timing is critical not just on this earth but in eternal matters as well. I've got some news for you: you know that God is never late but also he is never early. He's never early and one of the things that we struggle with so much is we wish that God would do what we want him to do yesterday, right? Or if we see something coming down the road we're like, "God, I know it's coming tomorrow, but is there any way we could delay about, hm, never? Is there any way?" And what we discover is that timing is everything.

So let's talk about this from the visible because this affects our everyday real life and we see this pictured in Jesus in John 7, the temptation these guys bring, the teaching that he gives them. Just last night, my wife and I, we went with another couple in our church and we had this great conversation about how in their relationship and in our relationship, that

we each had the opportunity to meet each other before we ever remember meeting each other. In other words, my wife and I met when she was the summer between her senior in high school and her freshman year of college. I was between my sophomore and junior year in college. But as we began to get to know each other, we actually had the opportunity at least three times to meet before we actually met. Now this is significant because one of those times was homecoming my freshman year in college where I stood next to a guy that lived on my hall, my dorm. His date is now my wife. For 30 minutes we talked and I don't remember meeting her.

You say, "Well, how does that all work?" Let me tell you: when God's timing is what God's timing is, it's for no other reason than to protect you. How many times do we say, "God, I wish you would hurry up"? The problem is we're going to be outside of his protection. Sometimes we're saying, "God, I need you to slow down," and God's saying, "No, you don't understand. This is for your protection." Did you know that the first time that my wife and I could have conceivably met, there was a track meet that she was running in at my high school and it just so happens that I was assigned to work that track meet on behalf of my baseball coach. I'm there and so we actually were at the same place at the same time. You say, "Well, why couldn't you have met then?" Can I tell you how good God is? If I had met my wife then, she would have first met me four inches shorter than I am now. Four inches and for some of you are going, "What's the big deal?" To some of us that's a big deal. In other words, whether it was years before or whether it was just a brief amount of time, it took place for 30 minutes, God knew the perfect time for us to meet. How many times are we guilty of trying to get ahead of God? Or maybe sometimes we're just as guilty as being behind and saying, "God, I don't want to go there yet."

So what's the invisible? The Bible makes it very clear in Philippians 1, "He who began a good work in you will do so unto the time of Christ Jesus." What the Lord desires to do in your life according to Jeremiah 29 is not to harm you but to actually benefit you and to bring the blessings of God in your life. So when we get ahead of God and say, "God, I'm tired of waiting on you," we get outside of that protection. When we stay behind and say, "God, I'm not quite there yet," we face the same issue. And what Jesus modeled for us in this passage is that God's timing is perfect no matter what this person says, no matter what that person says and the most important thing we can do is be right on time with God.

You know, God's never late but he's never early. You know, there's one thing, though, one item that I've learned in life, that the timing is always at all times. Do you know what the Bible says? The Bible says that today is the day of salvation. I cannot tell you how many conversations I've had with people, you talk about Jesus, you talk about the reality of our sin and they say, "Well, maybe one day I'll get to that. Or maybe one day when I get through this stage of life, maybe when I'm at this age I'll need to consider that." The problem is the Bible says that today is the day of salvation and maybe you're that person today, maybe with all the excuses and all the concepts and all the ideas and all the education, you've said, "That's fine for these but not for me." Maybe at this time or that time, but the time for salvation is at all times. Don't be tempted to put it off.

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed. You know, maybe you're that person today, maybe you're that individual, maybe you've been in church 1,000 times, maybe this is your first time to ever walk through the doors and maybe today you realized that Jesus really is who he said he was and he has the ability to do what he said he would do. Maybe you're that person today and you realize for the first time that it's not about doing anything, it's not about checking off a box, it's not about joining a bunch of classes or getting a certificate, but it's about a relationship. Don't be tempted to put it off. Don't be tempted to operate on your own time schedule but understand that today is the day of salvation.

If you're that person today, I've got great news for you. No classes, no boxes to check, no t's to cross, just a serious sincere conversation with God. You don't have to have this conversation out loud, in fact you don't even have to say the same things that I might say but maybe your conversation would go a little something like this. "God, today I realized I'm never going to be good enough. I can never do enough to be good enough and I understand today for the first time that's why Jesus is so important. I believe that Jesus loved me so much that he came on my behalf. I believe that Jesus loved me so much he lived a sinless life on my behalf. I believe that Jesus loved me so much that he took my sin to the cross and he rose from the dead three days later because he loved me so much. So right now, God, I realize that I've got a sin problem and doing a bunch of stuff is never going to fix it. God, I've got a lot of problems in life and I don't know all the answers but today I declare that Jesus is the answer to my sin problem. In the best way I know how, I'm asking you to forgive me, I'm asking you to save me, and I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed and our eyes still closed, you know, maybe you're that person today. We'd love to have a conversation with you. We'd love the opportunity just to celebrate with you. In fact, in just a moment I'm going to pray and after I pray we're going to have the opportunity to engage in that conversation. Maybe it's a conversation about Jesus, a conversation about salvation, a conversation about forgiveness, or maybe you're already a believer and you're struggling, maybe you're already a believer and the Lord has shown you some things that you're behind on or you've gotten ahead of, maybe you need to pray with somebody, talk with somebody. We want you to hear very clearly this response time is not for condemnation but for encouragement and celebration.

Lord, as we come to this time of decision, Lord, you have demonstrated your grace for us this morning, Lord, you've given some of us a second chance, in fact, some of us a third chance and some of us, God, maybe we will say we've run out of counting how many number of chances you've given us but today, God, you have reached out your hand in grace and instead of us having to do something, you've said, "I've got this. I did it all for you." Lord, I pray as your hand is extended that we would be willing to grasp, that we would be willing to receive, that we would be willing to embrace and trust that it's not something we've got to do but something you've already done on our behalf. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

I'm going to ask you if you would to stand with me as our team leads us. Any decision, I'll be here at the front.