

Being Strong When Others Aren't
Building Core Strength
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Well, if you have been around our church for any time you have heard about the four rules of biblical communication. They are taken from Ephesians chapter four verses 25 to 32. And I imagine that there are dozens if not hundreds of people who right now could just stand to your feet and recite the four rules of biblical communication. You know them. You use them in your home and in your life in all sorts of ways. Be honest and keep current. Attack the problem, not the person. And then act, don't react. And I think the reason they have been so helpful to so many of us is bus they are both clearly biblical and also intensely practical. You can find ways to apply them in all sorts of situations throughout the day.

Well, and please think with me about that last one, about act don't react. What is the point of that? Well, we take it from the latter part of that chapter, Ephesians 4:31 and 32. And if you don't have these verses memorized these would be good ones to add to an index card and get memorized right away. But it says this.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.¹

And the idea is based back to the role, act don't react. The idea is that everything in that first verse, verse 31, is a reaction. In other words, somebody did something you didn't like and may very well have been sinful and you allowed that to determine your response. So you reacted by becoming bitter or you became wrathful or angry. You chose to slander that other person. Well, those kinds of decisions don't happen in a vacuum. They are reactions. They are responses to what somebody else already did.

On the other hand, you can choose to act. And you can choose to start a new page in the ledger. You can choose to act kindly and you can choose to act in a tender hearted fashion. You can choose to be forgiving regardless of what the other person did.

The point is you are not letting their choices determine yours. It is getting out ahead of

¹ Ephesians 4:31-32.

the game. It is setting the conditions instead of always being in a reactionary mode. Act, don't react.

Now one of the metaphors that we have historically used around here to picture the difference is that when you react you are being like a thermometer. Whereas when you act you are being like a thermostat. And what does that mean? Well, some people take the position if you are warm to me I will be warm back, but if you are cold to me or if perceive you are being cold to me, I am going to be cold back. That approach to life is what breeds the bitterness and the wrath and the anger and the clamor. It is a reaction. It is letting what they did determine how you are going to respond. It is like a thermometer. You are just going up and down based on the conditions around you at the time. God does not want us to be like that. He wants us to be like a thermostat. He wants us to set the conditions. It doesn't matter what the other person chooses to do. And here is why. You are not a robot. You are not a passive victim. You are not preprogrammed where certain words and actions that come to your life from other somehow preprogram and determine what you are going to do and how you are going to respond. No. You can act biblically regardless of what other people in your life do.

Now if you are trying to connect the dots between what I am talking about right now and the events of this past week for you, I hope you would say it is hard to do that. It is hard to go first. It is hard to stand out in the crowd. It is hard to go against the flow in that particular situation. It is hard to act biblically when you feel like other people aren't.

There is little question about this. That is what God wants us to do. Do you buy that. He wants you to act. That is what God wants us to do and people who learn to do so develop a lifestyle of repent that is incredibly strong.

With that in mind, open your Bible, if you would, to Luke chapter 22. And that is on page 67 of the back section of the Bible under the chair in front of you. So Luke chapter 22 or page 67 in the back section in the Bible under the chair in front of you.

Our church's theme this year is building core strength and the passage that we have referred to over and over this year I imagine you have it memorized by now is Psalm 138:3.

“On the day I called, You answered me; You made me bold with strength in my soul.”²

You are going to need that kind of strength in your soul if you are going to learn how to act biblically regardless of what other people around you might do.

Now remember these three areas of emphasis that I have been mentioning all year long. How are we going to develop core strength or in what areas are we going to especially emphasize that? One, shoring up foundational areas in our walk with Christ and our church ministries that comprise the basis of godliness and effective community service. In other words, we are going to look at the fundamentals. That is what we have been

² Psalm 138:3.

trying to do around here is year is taking an audit, essentially, of how we are functioning as individuals and as a church in the basics. And we are trying to shore them up.

As I said when we were talking about praying earlier this morning, just all of the residential development that is taking place around us, we had better be on our A game, because God is blessing us with some opportunities that are rather unique. When I drove back from Indianapolis last night, as is my habit, I drove by this area that is being developed just south of our church. Houses pop up like mushrooms. It is amazing how quickly all of that is happening and that represents people. It represents opportunities and we have to be the kind of people who are committed to acting biblically so that we are in the best possible position to be a bright light to those that the Lord would be bringing right around us and to accomplish the mission that he has given us. I hope you are passionate about that. I hope you are concerned about that. I hope you come to the church house with expectancy every Lord's day.

And then, secondly, planning and praying for the construction of Faith West. Please tell me you are excited about that. Please tell me you find all sorts of reasons to drive by 1920 Northwestern. And you say, "Well, I live on the east side of town." So what? Go to the west side of town and drive by that building and watch it come out of the ground and be amazed that God would give us the opportunity to do that. Are you? And are you excited about that? I am like a little bit excited that the football team won yesterday. That is good. I am way excited that we have the opportunity as a church family to do this particularly cluster of ministries together. And if we are going to get the job done there, we are going to have to be the kind of the church family that doesn't react. We are going to have to be the kind of people who act biblically.

All right. Aren't you glad for the opportunity to be stretched in the new ministry ways that that will give us?

And then, lastly, preparing for the next round of ministry dreaming. And I am hearing more and more of that. People who are dreaming about this and dreaming about that as though our strategic ministry process kicks off January first. There is all sorts of people that are letting that bubble up already. Good. That is what strong people do for God.

But we are going to have to act biblical together if we are going to get all of that done. The ability and willingness to act instead of reacting, it is crucial to all of that. You have to be willing to go first. That is it. You have to be willing to do what God wants us to do in a given situation even if we feel alone. Everybody else is reacting and God is calling upon me to act.

All right. Now I want to be sure before we even jump into this text and try to develop that idea that if we don't develop this theme this morning of acting biblically even if you have to go first in a haughty fashion, well, I am the only one who lives God in this family or in this neighborhood or at this job. Or I am the only one who make the right choices.

If you know your Bible well you may remember that that particular tendency is what sunk the prophet Elijah into depression. Remember this after Elijah was hiding in a cave he said:

“I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left.”³

Oh, really?

And he had been zealous for the Lord. Good that he had been zealous. But he wasn't the only one. And in a rather dramatic display of the power of God, the Lord then said to him, “I will leave seven thousand in Israel.” In other words, there are 7000 people like you, Elijah. And, yes, in your particular sphere of ministry you are the only one in that setting, but you are not the only one totally. There is all sorts of people in other families. There is all sorts of people in other jobs. There is all sorts of people in other communities who are living in a similar place to you. So I don't want this to turn into some sort of an Elijah like pity party. That would be bad. But I do want to point out that there are times when you are faced with that choice. Am I going to react to the sinful choices that it would appear other people around me are making and just join in that? Or am I going to act biblically even if I feel alone?

Now in this text here that we are going to see, we are going to see a contrast between Jesus and everybody else in the passage. And what we are going to learn is when you choose to act biblically you are choosing to be like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke chapter 22 beginning in verse 39.

And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, and said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

While He was still speaking, behold, a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" When those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" And one of

³ 1 Kings 19:10.

them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, "Stop! No more of this." And He touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber? While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours."

Having arrested Him, they led Him away and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance. After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them. And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too." But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." A little later, another saw him and said, "You are one of them too!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" After about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him and beating Him, and they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, saying, "Prophecy, who is the one who hit You?" And they were saying many other things against Him, blaspheming. When it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council chamber, saying, "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I ask a question, you will not answer. But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND of the power OF GOD." And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am." Then they said, "What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."⁴

We are talking this morning about being strong even when others aren't. And with the time we have remaining let's look at three areas in the Christian life where you might have an opportunity to please God first. And if you find yourself in a situation like this, are you going to be like Christ and seize it? That is the question before the house today.

First of all, pray faithfully even if others are asleep. Think about the solemnity of this hour. We are entering the final days and hours before Jesus is crucified for the sins of man. Now it is instructive that before fulfilling his part in the Father's plan for redemption, he proceeds to the Mount of Olive. And Luke wants to be sure that we

⁴ Luke 22:39-71.

understand that this was Jesus' custom. He had specifically taught his disciples to pray and he had modeled that kind of lifestyle for them many times before. It was his custom. And so he gives them instructions about praying repeatedly.

He says in verse 40:

"Pray that you may not enter into temptation."⁵

And again later in verse 46:

"Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation."⁶

And it is amazing, I think that he doesn't even ask them to pray for him, knowing that he is about to suffer the pain and the agony of the cross and the unimaginable horror of being separated from the holy Father while he is bearing the weight and penalty of the sins of man. It would have been perfectly appropriate to request that they would pray for him, but instead he simply says, "Pray for yourself. You are about to face significant temptation including whether or not you will stand up for me or whether you will deny me," like had predicted back at the Lord's table, or whether you will continue to worry about who is going to be first in the kingdom and who is going not be in charge and who is going to be greatest like they had argued about in the previous passage on the way to the table. So he said you need to dive to your knees and pray.

But what do they do? He came to the disciples in verse four 45 and found them sleeping. See, with some of God's people when you need them the most you find them the least. So what does Jesus do?

Well, my friend aren't going to pray so I am not going to either. Sounds kind of silly even to say it. He went first. There it is. He acted biblically. He went first. And in this text we find him praying honestly:

"Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."⁷

There is authenticity to all of that. It sounds very similar to the prayer that Paul would later make in 2 Corinthians 12 about his thorn in the flesh. It was an authentic prayer. He also prayed intensely. It is amazing what this text says.

"And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground."⁸

⁵ Luke 22:40.

⁶ Luke 22:46.

⁷ Luke 22:42.

⁸ Luke 22:44.

See, the point is he was praying faithfully even when others were asleep. He went first. He acted biblically.

Have you ever been in that situation where you had an opportunity to go first in prayer? Maybe the people around you were arguing and communicating in all sorts of ways that are dishonoring to God, but then you chose to pray even if you were the only one. And I am not talking about doing that in some sort of a self righteous way, like you are better than everybody else. But I am saying sometimes you have to be the one who steps out and goes first. You have to act biblically even when everybody else around appears to be reacting.

Have you ever sat in your home or maybe with another group of people? Listen. Would it be ok if we just paused and prayed right now? This doesn't seem to be heading in a direction that would honor God. Could we just stop right now and pray?

What about when you are out to lunch with your friends or your work associates. Do you pause and pray before you eat?

And you might say, “Well, I wouldn’t want to stand out.”

Do you realize how lame that sounds right now right here at the church house? Because it is lame. That might be one the easiest least threatening ways to take a stand for Christ wit those around you and that is part of the contrast that Luke is setting up in this particular text.

I got my first construction job when I was 18 years old. I had just graduated from high school. I was squeaky clean on my way to Bible college to study to be a pastor and now I am working construction for the summer with a bunch of guys who were all older than me, some a lot older and didn’t appear to love the Lord a whole lot. Now these older guys, I was never into sit down restaurants at that point in my life, but they were all into taking a full lunch and going to some sit down restaurant somewhere and ordering this big pile of mashed potatoes and roast beef and all this. It made me sick to think now we are going to back and work out and why would you do that?

But anyway, these old guys, that is what they—and I say that with great respect, these old guys—but that is just what they wanted to do. And so as was my custom I am sitting there at that table and I would just bow my head and pray for my food. And I wasn’t trying to be all self righteous about it. I wasn’t trying to make a show, but I believe that any provision, including that job was given to me from God and certainly that food was given to me from God and I wasn’t going to put a bite of it in my mouth without bowing my head and praying.

And it was really fascinating that over time those hardened construction workers would not think of putting a fork into the food in their plate until I was done praying for the food. That is just the way it worked. And, again, and I am not saying, “And doesn’t that make me something”? That is not the point. It is not a big deal. It is not a big show. But

sometimes you have to go first. That is it. You have to go first and you will have to decide exactly how to do that. There is times when I will be with a group of people that don't appear to know the Lord and I will just say something at a meal like, you know, I like to pray for my food. Would you mind if I prayed for all of us? I have never had a person say no to that. That is part of what it means to go first. Or sometimes in certain groups I will just pray silently.

And you might say, "Well, I would take some ribbing around the work place if I did that."

So? So what? And I will tell you this. You might be mocked or ridiculed for going first like that. But when one of your coworkers has a loved one who has a bad medical diagnosis, who do you think they are going to quietly seek out to tell and request for prayer? And you may have a marvelous ministry opportunity to go a lot deeper with them in the things of God. Why? Because you were willing to go first and in so doing you acted biblically. Therefore you were like Christ, unlike these sleeping disciples. Isn't that what Daniel did in the Old Testament? He served during the reign of several different foreign kings and he was constantly being promoted because of his character. And that made other people in his life jealous and so in Daniel chapter six a group of his coworkers, the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs. But they could find not ground of accusation or evidence of corruption in as much as he was faithful. And no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. Don't you love that? He went first in ethics at work. And then these men said, "We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God. If we are going to get something on him, it is going to have to be for him being too religious."

Don't you love that? Please tell me that is what you want to be in your job place. And so these guys they talked the king into signing a law that couldn't be revoked by the law of the Medes and Persians that if any person prayed to any one except the king, they would be thrown into the lion's den.

Remember what happened next? Daniel kept going first. Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house. Now in his room chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day praying and giving thanks before his God as he had been doing previously. He had gone first just like Jesus as was his custom.

You say, "What happened to Daniel?"

The answer is he spent the night sleeping on some lions, big fluffy lion pillows. That is exactly what happened to Daniel, because God will protect. God... you understand how soft they would have been. Daniel is pushing these lions around, fluffing up the pillows, smacking them on the stomachs and all that, grabbing them by the ears. You need to come over here, because I want to lay down on you like that. You get over there. You are kind of stinky. And the whole thing. Daniel wasn't in the lion's den. The lions were in

Daniel's den. And that is because when you go first, when you choose to be what God wants you to be, he will protect you and he will use you in ways like never before.

And I would just ask you this morning how are you doing on the issue of being what the Lord wants you to be even if you have to go first? And are you strong enough to love God and serve him even if that makes you stand out from the crowd? Or are there areas that the Holy Spirit of God is using this text right now to help you say, "I have got to make some adjustments, because I have been reacting. I have been letting the perceived sinfulness of somebody else just to suck me into the same sinful responses. And it is time for me to step out. It is time for me to stand up. It is time for me to go first in that particular area of my life."

Well, what does this next section add to our discussion? We should also act biblically even when others are distracted. These next verses are some of the saddest in all of the Bible. Jesus is preparing to die for the sins of man and two of his followers are guilty of epic failure as a precursor to all 12 deserting Christ in one way, shape or form. First there is Judas who is distracted by betrayal.

"While He was still speaking, behold, a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve..."⁹

And as I mentioned as we were reading the text, all four of the gospel writers emphasize the fact that Judas was one of the 12. He walked with the Lord. He had seen the miracles. He had heard the teaching. Then he betrayed Christ. And the Bible doesn't tell us for sure exactly what was going on in Judas' heart. Maybe it was because of greed. Maybe it was because of jealousy. Maybe it was because of unbelief. People are guilty of betrayal for different reasons and often a combination of reasons. But it is amazing. {?}. how did Jesus respond? Did he react sinfully or did he act biblically?

Jesus just asked a simple question.

"Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"¹⁰

No anger. No condemnation, just a simple question to help Judas think about what he was doing. And you might be here today and would say, "You know what? I have been betrayed by somebody." I am sorry if that is true. I really am. But are you thinking about the broad range of possible responses and are you going to select biblical living? Are you going to select to act biblically even if others have betrayed you? It hurts to be gossiped about. But what takes strength is to say, "I am not going to gossip back." It hurts to be sold out like Judas treated Christ. But what takes strength is to respond to that in a way that is measured and is characterized by the Spirit's fruit of self control even when your emotions are raging inside of you and demanding that you take revenge while you have the opportunity to do so.

⁹ Luke 22:47.

¹⁰ Luke 22:48.

Then there was Peter, the one who was distracted by anger. Now it is becoming apparent why Jesus had instructed them to stop and pray in the garden while they had the opportunity to do so. And so Judas comes. When those who were around him saw what was going to happen, they said:

“Lord shall we strike with the sword?”¹¹

And one of them we know is Peter from another gospel writer, struck the slave, a man named Malchus of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

And, by the way, “Boy, Peter, that was good shot. You cut off his ear.”

I don’t believe that for a second. I think that was a good duck on behalf of Malchus or else he would have had his head cut off. And yet there it is. Everybody is now threatening to start a fight right there in the garden of Eden as the post prayer meeting activity. What would you have said if your followers were willing to do that? Stab Judas first. No.

“But Jesus answered and said, ‘Stop! No more of this.’ And He touched his ear and healed him.”¹²

If I were Jesus I would have at least put it on upside down or something, but he puts it right on for sure. And then yet another question. You see this over and over in the text. But he says to them, trying to get them to think.

“Have you come out with swords? While I was with you daily in the temple, you didn’t lay hands on me.”

Everybody in this entire picture is out of control in one way or another and then the Lord is there acting biblically even though he is doing it alone. And I would just ask you this morning. When everybody else has their swords out and you are having some sort of a big fight in the home or in the office or even at the church house or wherever, do you react and get involved in the rest of that? Which side of these verses are you on? A gentle answer turns away wrath. See, that is what a person who acts biblically does, but a harsh word stirs it up.

Or Proverbs 29:8.

“Scorners set a city aflame.”¹³

That is what people who react are like.

“But wise men turn away anger.”¹⁴

¹¹ Luke 22:49.

¹² Luke 22:51.

¹³ Proverbs 29:8.

Or Proverbs 29:22.

“An angry man stirs up strife.”¹⁵

And, by the way, it doesn't always have to be explosive anger. Sometimes it can be internalized anger that is just fermented and turned into bitterness and that person is an angry man or an angry woman. And when they are done with the situation it was already bad and they made it worse because they stir up the strife.

I would just ask you: What impact do you have on a problem after you are done saying your peace? Is it like pouring water on a fire or is it like pouring gasoline on a fire? You act biblically. You might say, “Pastor, this is hard.” Oh, I know it is hard. That is why you need the power of Jesus Christ living inside of you in order to live in this way. Which is why God could use this very message to point out to you that you don't yet have a relationship with him. And you can't do anything but react. Your life is like a wrinkled shirt and you have been trying to iron out the wrinkles without having the iron plugged into the wall. And, friends, let that concept draw you to Christ. And if you have never done so before, I would encourage you to acknowledge your need and place your faith and trust in Christ as Savior and Lord. That is a decision that is made at a point in time. And if you have not yet made that decision I would urge you to make that decision today while you have the opportunity to do so. That is the starting point of being able to act biblically.

Then, thirdly, testify courageously even when others are afraid. We see Peter following at a distance making a soft little choice. Is that happening for you where there reason you are finding it more difficult to act biblically in your life is because you are growing cold to the things of God? Following at a distance.

And then he had these three opportunities. You have this servant girl and he can't even stand up to a servant girl. Woman, I don't know him, he said. Then a little later, another. You are one of them, too. Man, I am not. This is the guy who back at the table said, “If everybody else denies you, I won't.” Really?

And then verses 59 and 60.

“Certainly this man also was with Him.”¹⁶

“But Peter said, ‘Man, I do not know what you are talking about.’”¹⁷

And if you compare this to the other gospel writers, Peter was cussing by this time as he denied his Lord.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Proverbs 29:22.

¹⁶ Luke 22:59.

¹⁷ Luke 22:60.

And you might say, “Well, pastor Viars, why are you so passionate about this?”

Well, it is because I really do believe that our church’s ability to accomplish our mission today and in the days ahead is dependent upon all of us choosing to act biblically like Christ in this text instead of being a group of people who just react sinfully to whatever is happening around us. But also because I want to prevent all of us from going down this trail because of where it leads. What happened to Peter, because he was not willing to stand up? He went out and wept bitterly. There is joy that comes from standing for God. There is joy that comes from acting biblically. There is joy that comes from going first. But the path that chooses just to react sinfully to the apparent sin of others will put you in a position where you will eventually go out and weep bitterly.

So they begin mocking Christ and they ask, “Are you the Son of God?” While everyone else in the process is deserting him, everybody else is running for cover, why should Jesus testify honestly? Well, the true answer is going to have a far worse effect on him than everybody else who has already denied him and run. And the answer is because he was committed to doing the right thing. The answer is because he had faithfully prayed and he said to them, “Yes, I am.”

And I would just ask every person here. Has God been giving the opportunities to stand up and to first? And have you taken those opportunities?

I have had the privilege of seeing where that lifestyle leads. I mentioned I was in Brazil last week. I am working with several of our missionary families. It is an interesting county to visit because 25 years ago when I came to this church our former pastor, pastor Good and his wife along with Dr. Bob Smith and Leona and Randy and Cindy Patton were heading off to Brazil. In fact, I had only been here a few weeks and pastor Good gave me the here is what happens if the plane goes down speech. And I was just a young guy, 27 years old and we are going to Brazil and if kin of a speech.

You know, when pastor Good and Dr. Smith and Randy went on that trip, they were taking a stand for the sufficiency of the Word of God that was very unpopular both in our country and in other countries. And they were willing to go first, not in some sort of a haughty fashion, but they were going to stand for the Word of God.

It was interesting. When I got to Brazil last week I met a number of people who said, “Our first exposure to that kind of biblical truth was 25 years ago when Bill Good and Bob Smith and Randy Patton taught us those truths.”

See, when you choose to go first, when you choose to stand up, it can make a dramatic difference in the life of somebody else. In fact, Brazil, that mission field has been blessed so much by God that they are now as Brazilian churches sending missionaries to other places in the world.

I mentioned I was with Mike and Renee Skavinsky who would be Al and Kim Yoder’s

son-in-law and daughter and they are there for language training in {?}, Brazil to learn Portuguese. That is the language they speak there. To be sent off to Cape Verde in western Africa because they speak Portuguese there. And, as a result of the faithfulness of God's people, people like Al and Kim Yoder, the people who live on a boat, faithful people who are willing to go first, now we are seeing God bless that in all sorts of incredible ways.

Got back Wednesday from Brazil and then Friday and Saturday have had the annual board meetings for the board of men, this counseling group that we support. Sitting there around that table where faithful people and Randy Patton, our long time executive director has announced his retirement. So we are in the process of making a transition. And I mentioned God has given us a great new executive director. I am so excited about that. But there is Randy who has lived faithfully all of his days, many times been willing to go first. There is our Dr. Bob Smith. That was his last {?} board meeting. He has been on that board practically since the inception of the organization, but because of he and Leona's health, he has had to resign in order to transition more of ministry to his home where you would expect a godly man to do. And I sat there and I just looked at those two men and I thought, there is people who are like Christ. There is people who went first and there is people who made a difference with their lives.

May God help us to be just like that? And I imagine that the Lord is going to give us opportunities this week to decide. Are you going to react? Are you just going to join into whatever sinfulness is going on in the room or the situation? Or are you going to be like Jesus? Are you going to choose to act first? I hope when that opportunity comes, we will seize it.