



Legacy (Part 1) – Personal Legacy

Pastor Jerry Gillis – January 8, 2017

So if we took the bait from kind of the national narrative that was being foisted upon us through social media and through some other media outlets we would have to conclude that 2016 was a bad year. Now there are some reasons that maybe somebody could argue for that, obviously there was a political circus in 2016 that everybody kind of went, wow, and then obviously there were real things, issues with tensions and terrorism and those kinds of things that happen in our country and our world that were not to be set aside or marginalized. But the main reason that that narrative was being foisted upon us at the end of 2016 was this, that some famous people died and through the course of 2016 a number of famous people died. And so as a result the narrative is that 2016 was a really bad year.

Now you know who some of those folks were, right? They were from all various kind of celebrity walks of life. There were athletes some of which you could probably recognize, right? Muhammed Ali, Jose Fernandez, the pitcher, Arnold Palmer the golfer, Gordie Howe the Hall of Fame hockey player. There were singers like Prince, like Maurice White, David Bowie,

George Michael, Merle Haggard, Glenn Frey. There were other celebrities of various kinds, Morley Safer, Pat Summit, Nancy Reagan, and John Glenn, John Saunders. And there were actors and actresses like Gene Wilder, and Alan Thicke and Alan Rickman and Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds and Zsa Zsa Gabor. So we kind of had this narrative, right that 2016 was a bad year because a number of famous people died.

Now just to pause for just a second, if in fact we were mourning them because of their fame, that's a dangerous thing. Because what it would ultimately communicate to us is that famous lives matter more than regular lives matter. It could potentially even communicate to us if we're not careful that famous lives matter more than our lives matter which means that the purpose of our life should be to be famous. You see where that can take us.

Now this was a great tragedy, all of these deaths were great tragedies to the people that knew them and loved them, their family, their friends, all of those great tragedies. And certainly we can appreciate the loss that we feel based upon the things that they did, their talents, whatever those might have been. But ultimately we have to be careful not to give in to a narrative that has the idea that famous lives matter more than everyday regular lives.

Now I've heard kind of in talking about all those celebrities that passed on in 2016, I've heard it tossed around quite a bit, the idea of their legacy, kind of the legacy that they left and they used that term to describe maybe their body of work, their films or their athletic accomplishments or their

money or their fame or whatever that it's kind of used in that way to describe that. The truth is is that I hope that the idea of legacy is not just attached to the idea of only what we've done or only how famous we are. I hope that it's actually bigger than that. And I'm hoping today that we have a sense, when we look at what we're going to look at today that we pick that up.

You know, I actually mourn the loss of some people in 2016 as well. Friends like Daryl Largis. Men like Kit Burr in our church, faithful servant here who I admire and respect and love. A number of people, there are others. But you know why I mourn their loss? Because of who they were. Not just because they were famous because they weren't. Not just because of what they've done even though they did some great things. What I miss is who they were. And see, what I don't want you to miss is that idea.

You know, there was, I was reading about a decade ago I was reading some American presidential history and I was reading about one president in particular whose historians and biographers and staff talked a lot about how concerned this particular president was with his legacy. He was really concerned about making sure that all of his accomplishments and all those things pointed to his great legacy. But unfortunately for this particular president he was involved in a whole lot of unethical and immoral behavior and as a result he's now known in history for his immoral or his unethical behavior more than he's known for his accomplishments. You see, what he failed to recognize is that who he is overshadowed what he'd done. Even if some of those things were good things.

You see, that's what I don't want you to miss today when we talk about the idea of legacy, I want you to pick this truth up and let it kind of wrap itself around you, your mind and your heart so that when you leave you realize if somebody asks you what was the message about, it was really about this one sentence and here it is: You are the legacy that you leave. That's what I'm talking about today. You are the legacy that you leave. Yeah, you're going to do stuff with your life, that should be a product of who you are. But ultimately when everything is said and done it's you, you are the legacy that you leave. And you have to determine whether or not that legacy is going to be one that leaves your spouse or your sons or your daughters or your nephews or your nieces or any of your other family members or friends that knew you whether or not that is going to be a God-glorifying, Jesus-centered legacy or whether it's not.

Now, when people start thinking about the idea of legacy, usually they're at the end of something. That's when you start thinking about it. I mean, I've thought about it at the end of my high school career actually. I was thinking about my legacy as a student at high school. I was the president of the student body which how that happened is I have no idea. I think it's because I realized you can't run on actual issues when you're a high school student. Like what are you actually going to do. I'm going to work out getting this whole class schedule changed, in fact we're not having classes. It's going to be lunch and PE the entire day, that's just how it's going to be if you elect me as your candidate. You know, so my posters were basically "elect Jerry, he'll be funny". Everybody else is running on platforms like, you know, and everyone knows like, you can't do that, you're just a kid.

Like they're going to do what they want to do and you're just a kid. I don't know why we have student body presidents. You can't do anything. So I just decided to play with it and go "elect me, it'll be fun, we'll have a great time". And I won! I was the president. That should tell you something not only about me but about my high school. Oh, we were embarrassing.

Nonetheless, I won and did nothing, was able to...but here's what I thought. When I graduated I was thinking, what's the legacy I'm going to have left for Sprayberry High School. What am I going to have left, and not graffiti or anything but just what am I going to have left at Sprayberry High School. Some people think about it at the end of their career you start thinking about a legacy that you left relative to what you did. You know, you made an investment in teaching for a long period of time or you built a business or you did whatever, right? Presidents do that, President Obama's doing that right now, he's making speeches that talk about the accomplishments that he's had and the legacy that he wants to have left. And every president does this, it's just what we do. When we come to the end of things we start thinking about that.

But what I want to do when we talk about the idea of legacy today is I don't want us to talk about it just thinking about the end of our, you know, high school graduation or college graduation or the end of our career. I want to run you further. I want to run you past that. To the end of your life. I want you to run to the end of your life, you say Jerry I don't know when that's going to be, neither do I. But I want you to just go there kind of mentally, and I want you to work backwards. And I want you to ask yourself the question, what does your legacy look like for your spouse, for your family,

for your friends. Are you going to leave a legacy that points people to Jesus, or is, at the end of everything, the only thing people are going to actually be able to say, and we know you love your family and people love you and all that stuff, that's wonderful, that's a grace of God that He gives to all of us to be able to love one another, okay?

But at the end of the day, are we really going to be able to say at your funeral, kind of his legacy was he was a good guy. He was a nice neighbor, I borrowed his lawnmower a couple of times. Yeah, she was nice, she was in the block club, that was awesome. Is that it? Like are you good with that? Because you're not made for that. Those are subsets of what you're made for. What you're made for is to leave a legacy so that the name of Jesus is actually on people's lips when they see your life. So that really when they smell you they get the aroma of Christ. That this is ultimately what we are designed for and what we are made for and I'm hoping that we get that sense because when we run ourselves to the end of our lives and start thinking backwards, do you know what it will do? It will sober us. We start, we've got a little bit of a different perspective at that point, it starts to sober us. It'll sober you, it'll sober me.

And I can tell you this, I think it was a part of the perspective of the apostle Paul when he was writing at the end of his life. You see, Paul toward the end of his life and kind of the mid-to late 60's AD wrote two letters, one was the first letter to Timothy and the second was the second letter to Timothy and they are called shockingly, 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy. So the first letter that he wrote to his young protégé Timothy was talking to him

about how the church is supposed to function, how people of God are supposed to function and it's basically instruction.

But when you get to the second letter, and Paul knows that his time is coming, he not only gives instruction which he does, but he also is calling Timothy to be reminded of some things and to remember some things. See, I know that Paul was at the end of his life, because Paul said so in his letter. In fact in 2 Timothy chapter number 4, it says this. Paul says "I'm already being poured out like a drink offering and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

Now when you see that in a letter here's what you have to do. You have to be able to look through the lens of that to understand what he's doing when he's writing to Timothy. He's writing through the lens that he's about to leave. He knows that Nero's persecution is happening, he's imprisoned in Rome, he knows that his time is winding down and he is talking to his young apprentice, protégé, disciple named Timothy and he's telling him some things.

What is it that he's trying to communicate to Timothy? Well, I want you to look at a little bit of it in 2 Timothy chapter 3 beginning in verse number 10. Here's what Paul says. He says, "You Timothy, however, you know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, my faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings-what kind of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly

life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."

You know, when I hear that, it's almost like I see one of those 1970's, for those of you, you're going, some of you are going, what, they had television back then? I know, back in the 70's, so when I was growing, I was born in '69, I barely made '69, October of '69. And so the 70's that's kind of as a little kid what I grew up watching some of those shows, you know, the Brady Bunch, Lone Ranger, all that kind of stuff, right? And they used to do these 70's split-screens, do you remember those, those who are old enough, or those of you who've watched reruns on TV Land? You see these split-screens, right where something's happening on this side and something's happening on this side.

And I can see that in my head when I see the aged apostle who is imprisoned in Rome and I see him on one side and he's writing this letter to his young protégé Timothy. And I see on the other side Timothy reading the letter and reflecting on what the letter has to say. And my mind often kind of goes to like what would Timothy be actually reflecting on as he's reading these words? Like what's going on in his head when he's reading this, because Paul's saying Timothy, you know all about my way of life. You know all about my patience and my love and my endurance. Do you realize that these things that he's talking about generally speaking are about his character, they're about who he is not just what he's done. He's actually asking Timothy to remember him, who he is, not just what he's done. Why? Because you and I, we're the legacy that we leave. We are. And so Paul realizes this at the end of his life and he's asking Timothy to think about

these things and I wonder what was going through Timothy's head. Like I can imagine that Timothy was probably going back to the time where he was first exposed to Paul.

You see, Timothy as a young boy growing up in Lystra to a mother whose name was Eunice and to a grandmother whose name was Lois, I didn't have to do any historical digging, you can read 2 Timothy and find that out. That his mother and his grandmother were Jews who were married to Greeks and so Timothy was half Greek and half Jewish living in a Greek town Lystra, but growing up going to the synagogue where he was learning the Torah and learning about the Covenant God Yahweh. And they would have, from time to time, traveling rabbis because rabbis did travel, they would have traveling rabbis that would come through occasionally and would speak to them in the synagogue.

And one day, a rabbi came through whose name was Saul, or Paul. And he began teaching in the synagogue and sounded uniquely different than many of the other traveling rabbis, the Jewish rabbis that had come through there. Because he began to preach to them about the Messiah and to tell them that Jesus, one who was actually born, who lived and who just died and who rose from the dead, that He was actually the Hope of Israel, the Messiah that they had long waited for, and that He didn't stay dead, but He got up from the dead three days later, and that He is now interceding for us, and that He's coming again. And so he's bringing them this gospel, this good news that Jesus is actually Israel's true Lord, Israel's true Messiah and the world's true Lord, that's what he's telling them.

And guess what happened? Eunice and Lois believed. And so did Timothy. They embraced the truth of the gospel, and it changed them and it transformed them. And so Timothy now is growing a little bit in grace, and this apostle who is there in Lystra, Timothy is impacted by not only hearing what he has to say, but watching his life, his character, how he does what he does.

I'm sure he had to be struck, because there was a man who used to come to the synagogue that you can read about in the book of Acts, a man in Lystra used to come to the synagogue every week who was crippled since birth. He had never been able to walk since being a child so everyone who grew up in that area, they knew who this guy was and he would always be in there, but he was unable to walk. But while Paul was preaching one day, he looked and he saw that this man had faith to be healed and Paul said get up and walk and he did. Do you think Timothy was impacted by that? That kind of faith? I can imagine that he was. I can only imagine that when Timothy saw some of these things he just began to process them in his head and think to himself this is the kind of life that I want to lead.

He saw the people of Lystra, who many of them outside of the synagogue were Greek, they started calling Paul and Barnabas who was traveling with him on that particular journey, they started calling them gods. They were saying Paul is Hermes because he speaks as a god, and Barnabas is Zeus because he acts like a god, because they were healing people and seeing some of this. And they started worshiping them like they were a pagan deity. And Paul and Barnabas were like hey, hey, hey. We're just men.

We're here to tell you about the true God and His Son Jesus. This is the good news that we're bringing to you.

Then you'd have these people that would follow Paul from town to town to try and cause trouble when he was preaching. You can read all about this in Acts. And they would follow him to Lystra while he was preaching and cause all kinds of trouble to the point where he actually, they actually turned the people of Lystra against Paul, and they took him outside of the city and they stoned him, basically to what they thought was death, where he felt like he was laying there dead.

I wonder, by the way, if this was the place where when Paul speaks of this particular time when he's talking about his letter to the Corinthians and he tells them there was a time where he was caught up to the third heaven. I wonder if it was then. Don't know, but possibly because he's basically left for dead outside of Lystra.

But you know what happens? Shortly thereafter he gets up and walks back into town. Hello there! Do you think Timothy is paying attention to this? I imagine that he is. And how Paul is dealing with those persecutions with grace and with patience. These are the things that probably had an impact on Timothy's life.

But then Paul left Lystra, and Timothy's just a young man. But Timothy, while Paul was gone continued to grow in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. You know what he did? He committed himself to the Scriptures and to studying who God is, and committed himself to the message of Paul, the good news of Jesus Christ the Messiah and began to

see that through all of the Scriptures. And over a few years Timothy was growing and people were recognizing that he was excelling in the Scriptures and his maturity and his growth. And guess what happened? Between three and five years later Paul came back into Lystra. And when Paul came back into Lystra, he heard and he saw everything that Timothy had been a part of and how he'd grown in grace. You know what Paul said? Hey, why don't you come with me, Timothy, why don't you travel with me? Why don't you be my disciple? What an incredible honor for this young man Timothy and so Timothy went with him.

And guess what? He got to see a whole lot more, because when he took off with Paul in the second missionary journey, I imagine that Timothy was impacted by the way that Paul was led by God's Spirit. He got to watch that. Like when Paul said I want to go preach the gospel in some of these other parts and so Paul headed north and the Spirit of God said no don't go there, and Paul's like what? Okay. So Paul heads east and the Spirit of God says nope! So he heads south and the Spirit of God said no, no, no. So he heads west, which the only thing there is a sea. And Paul is wanting to share the gospel but how do you do that with the sea? Are there dolphins responding to the gospel of Jesus Christ?

But it was there on the beach that he heard the call from God to go across the sea to Macedonia. They call it the Macedonian Call. And so he goes and God was going to do extraordinary things with him there. In fact, when he gets there to a city called Philippi, Timothy is with him traveling with him and he leads this lady who is very prominent in the community, he leads her to Jesus. Her name was Lydia. And the church started meeting there in

and around her home. She was hosting people who were new believers and those kinds of things.

And then Paul saw a slave girl who would say all kinds of things because she was inhabited by evil spirits and Paul basically said hey, evil spirits, get out, by the authority of Jesus, get out! And they were gone. And then the people who owned her, who were making money on her were angry, and ended up turning everybody against Paul and his traveling companion at the time, Silas who was on this journey with him. Threw him in an Philippian jail. And guess what Paul and Silas did? Sang. Just exactly what you'd think to do if you got thrown in jail, right? They started singing. And the place shakes and it opens up. And the jailer basically thinks okay, I'm dead. Either they're going to kill me or my bosses are going to kill me because I'm supposed to be holding them. Paul says, hey, hey, hey no worries. We're not going anywhere. Even though the jail is busted open we're not going anywhere, we don't want anything bad for you. In fact, we're telling you about Jesus and this man gets saved and his whole family gets saved.

Timothy is around all of this. Do you think it's impacting him? When the persecution starts to happen at Thessalonica and at Berea, and sees how Paul deals with that, his endurance, his patience, his love, his faith, this is impacting Timothy's life. When Paul has to be kind of secretly escorted out and goes to Athens, kind of the centerpiece of the Greek world and he says hey Timothy, I'm going to wait on you in Athens. And then do you think when Timothy got to Athens that it was a collision of worlds for him, because he was half Greek and half Jewish? And now he's in the

centerpiece of Jewish thought where the academy and the university kind of started. You know where people would come, and they would have professors who knew lots of stuff and students would come and say I want to know what you know.

But Timothy, as a Jewish disciple is not just about wanting to know what Paul knows, he wants to be what Paul is. A very different thing. Very different thing that encompasses the whole. You see, all of this impacted Timothy greatly and I'm just wondering if as he's reading, and Paul's saying you know all about my teaching and my way of life and my patience and my love and my endurance and all those things, if that's what's going on in Timothy's mind.

But look again in verse 14 as it continues in that passage. Paul says "But as for you Timothy, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it..." Now I want you to pause right here. Here's what Paul was saying. Paul is saying to Timothy, you're convinced of what you've learned and here's why, because you know those whom you've learned it from. This isn't just theoretical for you. You have to think about it Timothy, think about your mom Eunice, think about your grandmother Lois, you know what you've seen? You've seen the transformation of the gospel in their lives. You're convinced of the gospel because of what you have been able to witness in the lives of people who are following hard after Jesus. Timothy, you think about it in my life, you've witnessed my life, my faith, my love, my patience, my endurance. You've witnessed all of this and it's impacting you and you're convinced of the truth of the gospel because you've seen the reality

of it in my life. You've seen it in the lives of my traveling companions like Silas and others. Paul would usually travel with between seven and fourteen people in all of his missionary journeys. So he's basically saying to Timothy "you continue in what you've learned and have become convinced of because you know those from whom you learned it."

Now, this is both an exhortation to us - listen, stay with me - this is an exhortation to us, but it's also a warning. And I want to help you understand what the warning is. The warning is that if you think that just because someone's famous, that that's the only people that you listen to, then you've made a huge mistake. Because the non-famous people in Timothy's life, like his mom and his grandmother have been transformed by the gospel, and he had watched it happen, and that an effect on him. But you know even in Christian life, we're so obsessed with celebrity culture that we would rather follow a famous blogger or preacher or author rather than be deeply connected to people we know who are actually following Jesus.

I've got a buddy of mine who says funny things from time to time. He's older than me and has been my mentor in some ways. He's in his late 60's - a wonderful man - and he's just a funny dude. All right, he's a one of a kind. He's probably watching right now. That's all I'm going to say. One of a kind. And you know what happens? He said something one time. I asked him what he was reading. This was years ago. I said, man, what are you reading? What do you read? He said, well, I can tell you this. I don't read anything by people that are alive. I was just like, what? What did you just say? Yeah, you heard me. I was like, o.k., I'll take the bait. Why don't you

read anything by people that are alive? He said, because I only read dead people. And I went, o.k., I got that part. So you only read dead people. Why do you only read dead people? Here's what he said: Because I can trust them. And I said, what do you mean by that? And he said, well, they've walked their journey. They've been faithful to Jesus by the testimony of everybody around them. And I can trust what they've got to say. But some of these guys and gals who write some books, they're 30 years old. They don't know anything about life, and they're telling you everything you're supposed to know and believe, but here's the thing - I don't know them. I don't know them. And I don't know if they can be trusted. I thought to myself, huh. Even though you're crabby, that was really wise.

Now don't misunderstand. I do read some people that are still living. But I read mostly dead people now. Dead people who have a testimony of faithfulness to Jesus. Because you know why? So many people now think that they can just turn some preacher on from North Carolina or from Texas or from California and that even if they have some really, really good things to say, here's the ticket though. You don't know them. You don't know them. They're not in your community. They don't live among you. You don't know them. You don't see the operation of the gospel in their lives. They may just be gifted to talk good. By the way - they may be wonderful. I'm not casting dispersion on them in any way - whoever they are. I'm just talking generally speaking. But we make a huge mistake when we think that's the case.

Oh, yeah, I just watched so-and-so from North Carolina or so-and-so from Texas, or so-and-so from California - by the way, I just made those states

up, too. I just watch them online. That's kind of my church. Whaaaatttt???

What? I wish that the apostle Paul was sitting with you because I would love to hear what he would say to that foolishness. Foolishness. That's just crazy thinking. And it's outside the bounds of what Paul was trying to get at here in this context.

In fact, the writer of Hebrews which some would argue was Paul - I'm not so sure that it is - but nonetheless, the writer of Hebrews actually said something interesting in Hebrews chapter 13 verse number 7, listen to what he said: Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. You can't do that with people you don't know. This is not, by the way, just talking about people who do what I do. This is talking about those who are ahead of you (maybe) spiritually, who are walking in front of you spiritually. It doesn't mean they have a platform or any of those kinds of things, right? But you should be able to know them and see the working of the gospel in them. That's exactly what Paul was talking to Timothy about. That should be the case. You should see people that walk with Jesus, that know Jesus, that have been impacted by the gospel and that that can transform you. This isn't just about keeping an arm's length distance so you can sit in your convenience and do nothing with your faith but be inspired by some "good words". This is about iron sharpening iron. This is about bricks being formed one together to build a glorious temple for the glory of God. This is what this is about.

You see, you are the legacy that you leave and the only way you're ever going to get to a place where your legacy is won, that actually makes much

of Jesus, is when you get saturated by the revelation of Him. In fact, that's exactly what Paul was saying. He in fact, pointed Timothy in that direction. Look what he continues to say in verse number 14 through 17. He said as for you, Timothy, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

You see, if you actually want to be a disciple - if you want to leave a legacy that's more than just, ah, they're a pretty good guy or they're a pretty nice gal, but was a legacy where people said, I saw Jesus in them, then you will have to be saturated with the knowledge of God, a revelation of God through His Word. That's the only way. In fact, the Bible actually refers to this. Here's how Paul referenced the Scriptures - as something God breathed out. Now unless you think that God is just blowing smoke or hot air, we would be wise, ladies and gentlemen, to understand that we need to breathe in what God has breathed out so that we can live out what God has breathed out. We've got to breath in what God has breathed out, so that we can live out what God has breathed out.

Now, how in the world can you leave a legacy of Jesus if we do not know and be saturated in His Word? We can't. So I encourage you to make sure that that's a priority in your life, not only personally, individually, but in community as well. I want to give you a couple of practical things before I

finish with you, o.k.? Based upon all we talked about in Paul's instruction to Timothy, in talking about this idea of legacy, I want to give you two things to walk away with that I want you to act on. Here's the first. If you want to leave a legacy of Jesus, you need to get in authentic community with His people. If you actually want to leave a legacy of Jesus, you need to be in authentic community with His people. Let me boil it down for us and be really practical, and maybe so straight forward that it's uncomfortable. And again, if you feel like I'm shaking you, I'll hug you afterwards, all right?

First of all, for instance people that watch us online - I'm looking at you right now. In your pajamas and your coffee, all right? I'm looking right at you. You may be in another state. You may be somewhere in another part of the world, whatever. Here's what I want you to understand: If what we are doing and what you are doing is watching online as a supplement - or maybe watching us on television - if you are doing that as a supplement to your involvement in real flesh and blood community, great! Fantastic. The reason that we stream live is for people that are sick, or people that are homebound, people that are traveling, the weather is super bad - any of those opportunities - it lets you stay connected. But it's not meant to be your single source. You see, you need flesh and blood community. You need iron sharpening iron. This isn't about just listening to one person - even if it's me get up here and talk in ways that you like. That's not what we're set up to do. So that means if you're watching us on television or you're watching us online or whatever, it means you need to be in flesh and blood community somewhere. If that's at The Chapel, wonderful if you're local. If you're in another state, you need to find a local congregation

that preaches the gospel and you need to be vested there. And if you want us to be a supplement to that, wonderful. But we are not a substitute for that.

All right. You're laughing but I've got something for you, too. Those of you that are in a room, that are listening to the sound of my voice in a gathered place - whether that's in this room or the East Worship Center, or if it's in the school building at Lockport, or whether it's in a movie theater in Cheektowaga - you're in a room listening to this as part of The Chapel. I hope you understand that authentic community does not mean that you continue to think about yourself as an attender. Because apparently you think church is about a place or a building. It's not about attending, it's about attachment. You see, this is a living, breathing organism where you and I - we are the Church - and it's not just coming and taking a seat, one time a week where you take a seat and you listen to some inspiration and your worship corporately together. That is right and true and proper and good and should be the case.

But it should also be that you are in some kind of authentic community, in some kind of smaller groups or places of service where your life is impacting other lives, and their lives are impacting yours, as together we are on the journey of Jesus. That should be the case for all of us. And so I don't want you to fall into any of the traps that we all fall into. And if you're not involved in a small group somewhere, I encourage you to be involved in some kind of group. I don't even care what it looks like. I don't care! Just get in something with other believers who want to follow Jesus. That they'll help you and you'll help them. Do that. If that's in a one-on-one

mentoring relationship, great! If that's in a men's group, cool. If that's in a women's group, super. If it's in a couple's, great. I don't care. I'm in a missional... I don't care what you call it! Just do it! Get involved. Do not settle - do not settle, for the fact that this, where we are in all of our places at The Chapel - do not settle for not being connected and not being attached to the body of Christ in some kind of authentic community, in some place of service. Do not settle for just showing up and darkening the door once a week to sit in this place. I glad you have. For some of you it's a first step and I'm thrilled that you do that.

And by the way, I'm not even recommending that you don't do that. We should do that. We shouldn't give up the habit of gathering together for worship. Hebrews tells us that. But it doesn't stop there. It starts here but it doesn't stop here. You don't just come and do church. You are the Church, and that's going to be played out Monday through Saturday more than it will be played out on a Sunday.

So I encourage you. Get into authentic community. But here's the second thing, real practical from what we've learned today. If you want to leave a legacy of Jesus, stop believing the lie that your legacy already has a final chapter. Some of you've bought into that. Here's how: Man, Jerry, I'm not really going to be able to leave a legacy because I struggle with porn. So I can't leave a legacy because I'm all caught up in this porn deal. Or I'll never be able to leave a legacy because my finances are a mess. My financial world's a mess. Made some really bad financial decisions. I'll never really be able to leave a legacy of Jesus. Or I'll never be able to leave a legacy of Jesus. My

marriage is not what it's supposed to be. My dating relationships aren't what they're supposed to be. I'll never be able to do it.

Listen. It may be very true that you made some very poor choices related to what you view and your accountability related to that. You realize how empty it is, but you just, you're stuck. That may be true. Or maybe it's with a substance or an addiction or something like that. It may be true that you've made some terrible financial decisions in your life. That may be true. It may be true that you've made some terrible relational decisions in your world. That may be true. Ladies and gentlemen, as long as Jesus is Lord, there is hope and it doesn't mean the story is over. There can be a different ending chapter to the legacy, where people might be able to say, oh yep it's true. Look at all the stupid stuff that they did. But Jesus got involved, and look what happened when the Gospel got hold of their lives. And when you are in the ground, and people can point to that.

Maybe even, some of you are going - man, it's kind of late for me, I'm like 55, and my life's been crazy and nuts, and I've done stupid stuff. Hey, let me tell you something. Better off that you die at 65, that maybe the 55 years, they might go well, but then for the last 10, they go, look at Jesus. Look at what Jesus did! That is a picture of grace. That is a trophy of grace. That is the story of redemption and renewal. That's what Jesus wants to do, and that's what I hope that you see.

Because you weren't made, at the end of your life to just be somebody who people go, oh yeah they're a pretty nice guy, or yeah she's a pretty nice gal. No! You were made to glorify God through a life centered and saturated in

the revelation of Him through His word, so that when people think of you, they think of your commitment to Jesus and they think of the power of Jesus in your life in terms of what He's done. That's what you are made for! You're actually made for that!

We stop so short sometimes. We're made for this, man! Made for it. This is the destiny of every believer. Do you realize that God in Jesus has predestined us to be formed in the image of His Son. This is what He actually planned before everything ever - that when we give our lives to Jesus, He said my destiny for you is to be formed into the image of my Son so that people will glorify me and see the life that is truly life because Jesus is the only name that we need. It is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and no one comes to the Father except through Him. This is what you were designed for!

Sometimes we just need to lift our heads a little bit to see it. We get so caught up in the everyday mundane of life and we just have to lift our heads and be able to see it. But let me tell you the last chapter's not written yet. And I don't care if you've got struggles and you've got mess and you've got brokenness, who doesn't? Welcome to humanity! Everybody's got that. But the goal isn't to revel in it. It's to be healed of it by the One who can change everything! You see, you need Jesus! I need Jesus. Way more than you think you do! I need Jesus way more than you think I need Him! Some of you think, you're a pastor. Man, you just need a little bit of Jesus. I need a lot of Jesus, man. I've done some bad stuff. Man, you need a little bit of Jesus. Really? I need all of Jesus. We all need Jesus. I want you to be

reminded of that in a different vehicle, and then I'm going to finish in just a minute so pay attention.

Amen. I'm going to dismiss you in just a second so just stay with me for a minute. Some of us need to realize that we are the legacy that we leave. You are. I am. At the end of our days there's going to be some things that they talk about maybe that we've done or haven't done, but what is going to overshadow all those things is who we are, who we were. This is what Paul was communicating to Timothy, and I believe that Timothy was doing was because he knew Paul, he was actually having to imitate Paul for a little while so that he could ultimately imitate Jesus. We need to give that latitude to people around us. That our lives should be such that people could actually imitate our way of living, our way of serving, and it gets them to Jesus not to us.

And so I want you to respond in whatever way that Jesus has called you to respond. If you're somebody who needs to plug in to authentic community, you need to get in some kind of group or some kind of connection or whatever, then please go by the Information Center. They're ready to tell you how do to that. Or go by the Welcome Center, anything. Just do that. And maybe you're wrestling with various addictions. If you've got with alcohol or anything like that, we've got our Set Free ministry. We'd love to connect you to that. If you're dealing with sexual brokenness, we've got our pathway to purity ministry and we can connect you to that. Your financial world's a mess - we've got opportunities to help you with that. Your marriage is a mess - we've got things that could help you with that. But you're going to have to step out. You're going to have to do something.

You can't just sit idly by. Because if you want a legacy of Jesus, then we're going to have to find our way into one another's lives so these things can happen and we step out of the darkness and into the light and just go ahead and say this is where I want to live.

You see my dream, ladies and gentlemen, for this place - my dream is that every single believer in Jesus is being disciple and is discipling someone. Everybody. Because that is the core of how we'll get at the mission of God. That's how we'll do it. That ultimately this is about the people of God living out the reality of God in the places that they go and the places where they are. Not just about what we say or do one time a week gathered in one place. So please do whatever the Spirit asks you.

And if you've never come to a place of receiving Jesus and having your life transformed, your sins forgiven, and being made new - we'd love for you to come by the Fireside Room and talk to one of our pastors, one of our prayer partners. Maybe you're here and you're struggling with some areas in your life. You're a believer but you've been wrestling with some areas and you want just somebody to pray for you. Come by the Fireside Room. Let them pray for you. That'd be novel. Let a brother or sister in Christ pray for you. You might be shocked at what Jesus would want to do.

So Father, we trust You for what You're going to do in the lives of people. These are Your people, not my people. They're your people. You're the Head of Your Church. This is Your Church. These are Your people. We are Your people. Holy Spirit, I pray You would do in Your peoples' life what You want to do in their lives so that You may be made much of, Jesus. And

that their lives would leave legacy in the world of You. We were made for this. Help us to live in that reality. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Love you folks. Have a great week.