



Legacy (Part 4) – A Life Worth Living

Pastor Jerry Gillis – January 29, 2017

I'd like to ask if you would, whether you're on this campus here in the Worship Center, the East Worship Center, or if you're watching us at any of our other campuses, Lockport, Cheektowaga, or online, if you would indulge me for a moment and just close your eyes. I'm going to ask you if you would to just try and remove as much distraction from your mind as you can. And I want to ask you to think about something that we often forget, that we often don't pay as much attention to as we should, and it's this: King Jesus is going to return.

I want you to just sit with that thought for a minute. That he's going to return. We don't know if it will be in our lifetimes or not in our lifetimes, but if were today, what would your life look like to him? Would it be a life of faithfulness and fruitfulness? Would it be a life of only partial faithfulness and minimal fruitfulness? Or would it be a life of unfaithfulness and no fruit? You can open your eyes.

The reason I wanted us to think about that for a moment is because I don't think we think about it often enough. That we don't often enough put that

kind of in the front burner of our mind. And it has everything to do with how our legacy gets played out, because as I told you in the first message of this series, is that we really we need to start from the end. We need to look backwards when we talk about this idea of legacy, because when we keep the end in mind, it actually starts to frame the life that we live. Because ultimately, a legacy worth leaving comes from a life worth living. That's where a legacy worth leaving comes from. It comes from a life that's actually worth living.

You know, I fear sometimes that on occasion, we de-emphasize how much our life and what we do with it, and what we do with everything that we have really matters from a kingdom perspective. Because sometimes we're just busy biding our time and doing our thing, and maybe we check in and check out when it comes to thinking about God. Or we come and we sing and we hear and we're inspired, but we don't really leverage all that we are for the sake of the kingdom of God.

And I'm here to tell you this morning that you're life in the kingdom matters a lot. It matters a ton. What you do with your life and what you do with what you're entrusted with, it matters a lot. That's what the King said.

In fact, we'll see that in Luke chapter 19 in just a moment in the story that we're going to read. But to frame the context of this story, I'd help you by noting that this is a time where Jesus is headed into Jerusalem for the last time. He's going to come into Jerusalem as King, and be celebrated. But very soon, the tide of popular opinion is going to turn against him. And he's going to be crucified there in Jerusalem where he's walking in.

Now, the story that Jesus is getting ready to tell is a story that's actually a corrective. Because what happens after when he's with Zaccheus. You remember the wee little man in the tree, right? Wouldn't you hate to be known for all eternity as the wee little man in the tree, right? There's a song about it and everything. Whatever. Zaccheus was a small guy. He climbed up a tree to see Jesus. He was not well loved by the people that were there because he was a tax collector. But he came to faith in Jesus, believed in Jesus, and his whole household was transformed.

And then, that was on their way to Jerusalem, and as they were making their way there, there were people that thought that when Jesus shows up in Jerusalem, because they know who he is, they know what he's doing, and they understand him to be the Messiah, the Son of God, that he's going to make his grand entrance. And this is going to flip the Roman empire upside down, and he's going to rule on a throne right now, and it's a going to be a great rebellion. And this all is happening right now, this whole kingdom coming is happening right now. And Jesus has to tell them a story to correct them.

Now, the story that he tells, as is some of the stories that he tells, is sometimes based in an historical event that they would be familiar with. And then he kind of takes the story and makes it what he wants it to be for his purposes, but he's just using a template that some people understood.

In this case, it would have been Archelaus, who was the son of Herod the Great. And Archelaus wanted to be the king, so he went to Rome to become the king. And there were some Jews that didn't like the fact that might be

the king, because they didn't like him. They went and they complained. And he didn't end up becoming the king. He had a rulership or another particular area in Antipas. He got rulership over another area. And anyway, he didn't like the people that rebelled against him, so he killed them, and that's just kind of the story. Archelaus was not a good guy.

But, Jesus takes that story, and he's not telling that story again, but he's just reframing it to help people understand something about his return. And I want you to listen to what he says, beginning in Luke chapter 19 verse number 11.

While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. And Jesus said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'

"But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'

"He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

"The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.'

“Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’

“The second came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned five more.’

“His master answered, ‘You take charge of five cities.’

“Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.’

“His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’

In other words, he's kind of calling this guy's bluff.

“Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’

“‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’

“He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away. But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.’”

So he's using this template to tell a story. And it's an interesting story that he tells, because the people think the kingdom of God is coming right then, that it's all happening at at that moment.

But interestingly enough, what Jesus does is he gives them some insight his own life, his own death, his own resurrection, his own return. That's what he's doing in this story, because he's about to walk into Jerusalem, where those of his same people, Israel, are going to reject him as rightful king, even though he is coming in, "blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord." That's what was said on what we call Palm Sunday, right? But his subjects, so to speak, in this kingdom of Israel, would turn against him. No, we don't want him to be king. And they have him put to death. And he goes away. But in his going away, he dies. But he rises from the dead, demonstrating his kingship. And then he ascends to the Father, where he is gone off to a distant country. But he is going to come back, because there are people, his disciples, his servants, that he has entrusted with certain things, the ministry of the gospel, and stuff along that line. And he's entrusted them with that, so that they would be using that, until the time of which he actually returns.

So Jesus is not just in this story, giving us a glimpse of what he's going to do, but he's also giving us a glimpse into our very lives, and why they matter. Because the lives that we live end up determining the legacy that we leave. And he's giving us some insight into a life that's actually worth living.

So, if the legacy that leave only comes from a life that's worth living, what does a life worth living look like? I think Jesus gives us a couple of things in this passage to be able to pay attention to, and here's the first. A life worth living is a life that uses all the King has given until the King returns. It uses all the King has given until the King returns.

Listen again to verses 12 and 13. It says this. Jesus began the story by saying, "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'

So, the story is interesting, because it begins by saying that this person, this one who is going to be the King, is going to go off to a distant country. The idea of that in the ancient world would be to remind us that it wasn't all happening right now. You see, Jesus was trying to help these followers of his realize the kingdom wasn't all coming right this second. So he told them about this nobleman who was going to a distant country. In other words, it's going to be a little while. How long is not said. But it's a distant country.

Remember, they didn't get anywhere really fast back then. They didn't get to take, Jet Blue or Delta to go where they were going. They just walked around in their Jerusalem cruisers, also known as sandals. And that's how they got where they went, right? It was donkey or sandal, and it didn't go very quickly. And when you're going to a distant country, that takes even longer, and an indeterminate amount of time as to how long he's going to be there.

But what he did before he left, is he entrusted to his servants, ten of them, which he gathered together, and he said, for each of you, each of them was going to get a mina. So there were ten minas represented.

Now a mina is just a form of currency in the ancient world. Don't let it freak you out too much. They had like drachmas, they had minas, and they had talents. So drachmas are smaller than minas, minas are smaller than talents. Mina meant maybe about three months wages. That's about what a mina represented. So it wasn't a huge sum, but it was a reasonable sum.

And then nobleman entrusts his servants, each of them, all ten of them, with a mina. In other words, three months wages. But it's not for them, it's for his purposes. Because he's what we expects them to do. He said it very clearly. He said, put this money to work until I come back. He didn't say, consume it all on yourself. He didn't say, hey this is just a little bonus before I leave. He said, put it to work before I come back. So what he expected of them was that they would take his money, and they would put his money to work until he returned.

Now, the story itself is actually about more than money, even though the direct application of the text that Jesus gives us has everything to do with money. But it's actually helping us to understand that everything that we have been given by the King, our lives, our time, our skills and abilities, our resources, that they are gifts that he expects that we will utilize them for his purposes until he returns.

The misnomer is actually this, that we think that it's our time, and our lives, and our money, and our skills and abilities. The truth is that our lives

have been given to us by God. They are God's life given to us. The time that we have is God's gracious gift to us. The skills and abilities that we have is God's gracious gift to us. The resources that we have are from God's own hand, given to us. So everything that we have is actually his own that he has entrusted to us, and his expectation is that we leverage all of that for his purposes until he returns.

So, a life worth living is a life that uses all of that the King has given until the King returns. But it's also this. It's also a life that knows that the King will hold me accountable for His gifts to me. In other words, every thing that he's given to me, he's going to hold me to account for.

In fact, after he tells them, put this money to work until I come back, listen to what he says in verse 14. But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'

"He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

Now listen carefully. When the king checks back in with them, he is not just checking in, going, hey I'm back. Good to see everybody. What's up? No. He's got a specific purpose when he comes back. He says, hey. Those of you that I gave a mina to, I would like now an accounting for what you did with my money. I would like you to account for what you did with it. And then they all step up and start giving an account.

Now it's interesting, because there are ten in the story. He calls ten servants together and gives each of them a mina. But when the accounting time comes, there are only three. Now, that's not because he didn't care about the other seven. It's not any of that. It's because it's a story, it's a parable. And he's giving us three that are representative of the whole. And remember, what happens with the first one. The first one says, sir, I took your mina, and I put it to work like you said. And I got 10 minas more for that. And here's what the master says. The king says, well done, my good servant. Here are 10 cities for you to rule. Whoa! Like, that is so disproportionate, because he actually makes this statement. He said you've been faithful with very little, so I'm going to entrust you to lead 10 cities. It's disproportionate.

You know what he would be saying you have entrusted you with very little you know what he's talking about their? Little scratch. Little moola. Some Benjamins. Whatever you want to call it. Money, in case you're not following this bread trail. Alright? That's what he's talking about in that context. You know what he says about that? It's a little thing. It's a little. It's inconsequential. And you've been faithful with that, and now disproportionately, I'm going to reward you in your faithfulness with having leadership over ten cities in the kingdom. Whoa! Why? Because he had been faithful.

But then there was a second guy. He says, how about you? And he said, well, I put your money to work reasonably well, and I took your mina and I've got five back. And here, the king doesn't commend him necessarily the same way he commended the other one. But he does say, I'm gonna let you

lead five cities. You've been somewhat faithful with what I've asked you to do.

The ten, by the way, that number is an interesting number that Jesus picked up, because in the Scripture itself it has a lot to do with completeness or fullness or doing kind of a full maturity. And so he's kind of reminding us that the first person was completely and totally faithful. And the second person was semi faithful.

And then you get to person three, Mr. Unfaithful. He says, what did you do with the money that I gave you, my money that I entrusted to you? And he says, I wrapped in a cloth and put it under my mattress/ That's the in the Greek. I know you wouldn't have picked that up. That's what it says. Actually, not really. Just made that up. But it's something like that, right? I put it in my dresser. I put it in my mattress. I sat on it. And then he starts to give him this whole business about, I knew you are a hard man, and you reap where you didn't sow. And blah, blah blah. And he said, oh, oh. Really? Really? Because if you really believed that, you probably would have put my money to work. At the very least, you would have put it like in the bank, and got a little bit of interest on it, if you really believed that. So he's calling this guy's bluff. This guy's just, you know, jammering off.

Why did this guy do this? Maybe because of the point of why Jesus is telling us the story. Because maybe he thought, you know what, he's gonna be back really soon. And I don't really have to do anything with this, because he's just going to be back real quickly anyway. I won't have time to do anything, so I'm just going to give it back to him. Maybe he misunderstood

the character of of the king. And maybe he misunderstood the timeframe. And so he's unfaithful.

And so what happens to him is not what you think would happen. This person who took his one mina, the king's one mina and made ten, got ten cities. And this person invested his and got five, and so he ruled five cities. And this one just gave him back the one that he got. And you think, well maybe he gets to rule one city. Nope. Nope. The king takes what he gave him, and takes it from him, and gives it to the one with ten. And everybody's like, well, why'd you do that? He said, because whoever has, more will be entrusted to them. Why? They're faithful. But whoever doesn't, and is unfaithful, even what they have will be taken away from them. It's an extraordinary story.

You know what it reminds me of, too? Because Jesus is giving us a picture into how he's going to govern in his own kingdom, the encouraging part is for those who are faithful, we have the opportunity to rule and reign and lead with him. I don't know what the scope and the domain of that is, but he gives us a picture that we will be entrusted with responsibility. Now what's interesting is that all three of these people are still regarded as servants. They didn't stop being servants. Faithful, semi-faithful, and unfaithful. They're still all servants. So what they did in their faithfulness, or their lack of faithfulness, did not affect their possession of the kingdom. They're still in it. But I'll tell you what it does affect - their position in the kingdom. It doesn't affect their possession of the kingdom, but it does affect their position in the kingdom.

Now that is not to say that every one of us by the way of Jesus comes to the kingdom the same exact way. But Jesus is checking out our faithfulness to him in this life, and is rewarding us accordingly to our faithfulness. Now I don't know what that means fully, but here's what I do believe. I do believe that what God desires, what the King desires for every one of us, every one of us, is that we be found faithful. And he told this story for a very specific purpose that we might be found faithful.

Let me tell you what I want for you. I want for you to be found faithful. That in everything that has been entrusted to you by the King, that you're found faithful. That's what I want for you. Do you know why? Because it's what King Jesus wants for you. I want you when you meet him, to hear the words, well done, faithful servant. I want you to hear that. These are the prayers that I pray for you. This is a part of the call of God on my life. The reason that I preach the gospel every single week of my life, and sometimes more in in the course of time, is because I want to prepare people to meet the King. And we often fail to have an eternal perspective that the King is going to return, and he is going to hold us accountable, not in a begrudging way, but we are going to be held to account for that which we have done with what he has entrusted us. And here's what I want for you. I want you to hear, well done. I want you to do whatever it is going to do in the kingdom, whatever domain of leadership and rulership alongside Christ that he wants to entrust to you, I want you to experience fully. I would be delighted if you are leading my city. I'd be thrilled for you! That's what I pray for you. I pray that you would experience the true riches of what it means to know and follow after Jesus, and be found faithful to him.

I also realize that as a church, that we are kind of the sum of our individual parts, and that when we are found faithful as a church, we will be faithful to what God has called us to in our mission. Now, you and I both know what the mission of the church is. Not just this congregation, with the mission of the church. We know that what God desires is for every man, woman, and child to have an opportunity to see, to hear, to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We know that God's heart. It rises up from the Scripture from beginning to end, that God wants human beings reconciled to himself through the Son of God. This is what God desires.

And so, when we are in a place, that as a church we are following after that heart and that vision, we will be kind of the the sum of all of our individual parts. And when we are faithful, God can do much through us. And I know that I'm going to have to give an account, not only personally for how faithful I've been to Jesus, but also how faithful I've been to lead people to follow Jesus. I get it. I understand that. And I'm glad for it. It's a part of what God's called me to do.

And so, what does it look like for us as a church to faithfully follow after the King? Well, it's going to require all of us to really fully understand what it means to be a disciple, and to be in authentic community, so that we can grow in being a disciple. And to leverage all that we are and all that we have for the sake of his kingdom with a mind on eternity, with a heart set on the things of God, like we've talked about in this series.

But let me offer to you some things for us to think about. I realize that what God has called us to as a local congregation is significant in our region,

maybe even broader than our region. We've been called to put on the helmet and run into some walls. Why? Because God's given us some people, and some resource and opportunity. And I've heard pastor after pastor after pastor in our region say to me, personally say to me, we know that this is the direction God is calling us in this region, but we need you to lead us. Not me, but The Chapel. If The Chapel will lead out, we feel like, we feel empowered and strengthened to be able to do this. That's a big burden sometimes. It's a little frightening to be honest with you. It's a little overwhelming at times. But we have churches and leaders and people that are looking at what we're doing, and they are coming with us. But that's - to much is given, much is required. As part of our responsibility that we have as a congregation. But we are only going to be as faithful as the sum of our individual parts are faithful in all that we have, including our resources, but including the mobilization of our willingness to serve, and to use our gifts and our abilities and our skills and our talents, and all of those things.

So how can we do that as a church? Well, what I'd like to do is I'd like to give you a five year look at a few things. It's not everything, but a few things. I'm not trying to presume upon the Lord. I don't know. I'm living in the tension of knowing that Jesus can return when he wants to return. He's not consulting me. But I also know that we are to work until he returns. We are to put that which he's entrusted to us to work until he returns.

So what might that potentially look like over a five year window? Well, after kind of praying through this for quite some time. In fact, a long time, with our pastoral leaders, our board, when Pastor Darryl was with us, he

was a part of this process as well. We've been praying over this for a long time. I think I can easily summarize it by looking at kind of three barrels. I initially said three buckets, these are much bigger than buckets. These are three barrels. Let me see if I can say it easily.

Here's the first barrel - expand. So, I believe part of what God is calling us to do over these next time frame is going to call us as The Chapel ministry to be able to increase our footprint just a little bit. Let me explain. Got a couple things in the barrel. Can I pull those out? You're wondering what's in the barrel, right?

Here's the first thing it's in a barrel. It's a Regal Theater popcorn bucket. Just what you were thinking. Wow, what vision Jerry. Thank you. Anybody who's watching us at Cheektowaga, this looks pretty familiar. Because at Cheektowaga, they're meeting in the Regal Theater in the Walden Galleria. But what we'd like to see, is we'd like to see them in their own home. And the reason that we would like to see them in their own home is multifaceted. One, if we can get into a facility where they can disciple people and begin to work with people directly, as opposed to being having to be mobile all the time, it helps us in impacting that region significantly. And oh by the way, over the long term, will be a cost savings to what we're doing right now. So, we'd love to be able to do that.

Now you say, well, Jerry do we have any place in mind? Yeah. Yes, we do. And I'm not allowed to talk about it yet. Some of our staff team and our board and our attorney are all like saying, if you do someone's going to run.. there's somebody probably off the side of the stage prepared to tackle

me if I say too much at this point. But we are in negotiation with a place, to see about inhabiting that place. But here's the vision. It's bigger than just us. Because if this place comes to fruition, we would not only be able to meet the needs of our Cheektowaga Campus, we would have some additional space, to maybe be able to bring into that space some churches that are located maybe toward the east side of our city that maybe struggle to find a place. Maybe refugee churches. Maybe some ethnic churches, that maybe could be hosted in that facility alongside of us. You know why? Because we're about every man, woman, and child. And I don't really care if The Chapel gets credit for it. I just want Jesus to be glorified.

So that's what we're working on there. More to come. Because we wouldn't buy that unless a special congregational meeting affirms that, because that's part of how we operate here at our bylaws and stuff/ So you'll hear more about that as that develops. But pray about it.

But then we also felt that God was leading us to expand another campus, maybe in 2018. I'd like to show you where. Niagara Falls. Now, not actually right there. Just to be clear, right? Not actually there in the Niagara River. We're not planning that. But we are looking at some places that are very near there. And I can't say anything yet, because there's nothing to say. And probably we're looking at maybe a 2018 time frame for this. But we sense God leading us in that direction.

By the way, if you haven't picked it up already, The Chapel, because to much is given, much is required, we have not planted other campuses necessarily in places of great affluence. We put them in places of great

need. Cheektowaga, next to the east side of the city. Lockport and Niagara Falls. We've got some friends in Niagara Falls, some other partners in ministry that we look forward to working with the Niagara Falls. But I can tell you. 50,000 people in Niagara Falls and it's a reasonable spiritual ghost town. There's a need in Niagara Falls that is significant, and we feel like God maybe is calling us in that direction to help in that process. We're not the solve. Jesus is the solve. We just want to be a part of reducing the darkness in a place that needs it significantly. Because we're serious about every man, woman and child. This isn't a joke. So that's the expand barrel, alright?

Barrel number two. Partner. You've got the expand barrel, you got the partner barrel. I've got something in here as well. It's our On Mission magazine. Why? Because this is representative, this barrel is representative of our Kingdom Come partnerships. We want to over this time period, this next five years, we want to grow our opportunity to partner with those that we're partnering with outside of ourselves. Because we can't get the job done of every man, woman, and child by ourselves. We have to be able to partner with others to be able to make that happen. So many of you have picked this up, and you see so many the partnerships that we're involved in, but we want to grow that, and expand our opportunity to touch lives.

In fact, something unique is happening right now in our region. It's called the Church Planting Initiative. There are now dozens of churches in Western New York who are coming together and putting resources on the table in a general pool, so that together we can impact our region by

planting new and healthy expressions that have a DNA of desiring to reach every man, woman and child, and partnering with the body of Christ to see that happen. We are now set up to be able to do that in some significant ways/ The Chapel has already been a part of planting or partnering to plant like 25 churches. We actually now have double the number of people worshipping in those churches that we planted or partnered to plant then we even had at The Chapel when I came. It is astounding to me what God has done through so many people who have been mobilized, and given and had vision for these kinds of things. But now we've got this group of churches together working toward planting and saturating our region with the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's significant, and we want to continue to fuel it.

And if you didn't know this, we are also fueling that in the nation. Because of work we're doing with a network called Christ Together, where we are envisioning pastors and leaders in cities across the United States, so that they will get the vision for reaching every man, woman and child in their region, for seeing their city saturated with the gospel of Jesus Christ. And you know that now nationally, you can see it up on the screen, we are in 68 cities nationally now, where people are being envisioned and taking ownership of their area, and seeing about reducing the darkness as they work together as the one body of Christ around one gospel and one mission for the glory of God. This is a part of what we want to continue to fuel.

Things like our Sierra Leone Alliance, where we're making an impact on a country that's extraordinarily significant. In clothing and feeding, in

education, in micro-finance, in fresh water. In all kinds of different avenues, in church planting, all of those things in Sierra Leone. There is a tremendous difference being made. And we want to continue to.. we don't want to take a step back. We want to continue to partner in that regard.

Expand. Partner. The last barrel, release. You want to know what's in here? A box of matches. I like fire. Because here's what we want to do. We want to light something on fire, so that we can light something on fire. Oh, that almost burned me. Not myself! I don't want to light myself on fire. We want to light something on fire so we can light something on fire. We want to light the mortgage note of this place on fire, so that we can leverage lighting this region on fire with our generosity and what frees up our ability to be able to make a significant kingdom impact. Now, the glory of God in all of this, is that God has been faithful to us all along, even with this facility, and we are in a very good debt position right now. It's not crippling our ability to do ministry or any of those kinds of things, and we thank God for that. But if we could erase it, if we could smoke it, we would be able to be extraordinarily generous in our region for the sake of the glory of God.

Expand. Partner. Release. Now, is this going to take some money? Yeah. Uh, yeah. But money's a little thing. It's going to take plenty. It's going to take two or three million more a year, over the next five years, to be able to do all of that, in addition to what we already do. And we're not taking a step back on what we already do. It's going to take that. You say, well that seems like a lot. Money's a little thing.

And by the way, if we were just faithful, wouldn't be an issue at all. Let me explain. If our congregation, let's say we just took a number like ten percent. Just using it as a number. We don't teach here that that's the law, we don't do that. But that was the law in the Old Testament. But the law is reflective of the heart of God. What God was establishing was helping people to understand his heart. That everything is his. His ownership over things. So let's just say principally we talked about that now, even though we're under grace, and grace is never subservient to the law. So when people like say hey man, do you guys have a requirement to give ten percent if I come to The Chapel? No! Absolutely not. You're free to give way more than that if you want to. Please, by all means, feel free. And once you really start to learn lives of generosity, that feels like training wheels. That feels like the basement. Again, we're just talking about one thing here. But if our congregation would just give generally speaking at a ten percent level, based on a very conservative kind of average household income that makes up all of these various zip codes that we come from, it wouldn't take us five years to do this. It would take us closer to two and a half, maybe three. That's it. If we were just faithful. If we were just faithful.

Why do I tell you these things? Because, this is going to require, this kind of vision is going to require everyone. Willing to be mobilized to be used, using their gifts, being a disciple, living in authentic community, leveraging their resources. It's going to require all of who we are aimed in the direction of the kingdom. That's what it's going to require. I'm going to be leading from the front. I'm not going to be saying, hey you guys need to do this. And by the way, none of this actually has anything to do with me.

Doesn't give me a bigger paycheck. It doesn't do any of those kinds of things. And I don't want any of that. What I want is something for you. I want you to hear. well done. I want you to use your life, your skills, your resources, your talents, your time for the sake of the kingdom, so that you have positioned your life from an eternal posture. That's what I want for you.

So, some of us maybe have come to a place where when you were praying earlier in this, or when you were kind of had your eyes closed, and you were reflecting on the return of Jesus, and I was asking you what would he find? Would he find you being fully faithful, or would he find you being semi-faithful with the whole of your life, or would he find you being somewhat unfaithful and unfruitful. And some of you maybe if you gave yourself long enough to think, you might have come to a place where you weren't super happy about where you landed.

And some of you have been stuck in a cycle where you kind of believe that all of your past decisions have now set in stone what your future looks like. But, I want you to understand that after Jesus told this story, he walked straight into Jerusalem, knowing he was going to be rejected as king, and he went to a cross to die for sinful people like me and you, who've all sinned and come short of the glory of God. And then on the third day, he rose again, demonstrating his conquering of sin and hell and death and judgment on our behalf! He conquered those things on our behalf, so that we could be reconciled to the Father, and no longer be in bondage to sin and the kingdom of darkness. And do you know because he conquered, we can conquer? And do you know that his conquering on our behalf means

that we are loved? We are loved with an unfathomable love, that while we were yet sinners, Christ still died for us! And this King that we are talking about, we don't misunderstand his character, because he gave his life for us, so that we might be able to be conquerors along side of him because of his great love!

Listen to how Paul says in Romans chapter 8. He says, "What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I want you to be reminded of that. Let this song be sung over you, and I will close us in just a minute. Let this wash over you.

Amen. Stay standing. We're going to be dismissed in just a second. Couple of things before we go. Remember this. That because of what Jesus has done on our behalf, we can be faithful to him. Because he's not just asking us to be faithful relying on our own strength. He's actually living inside of us, and he will live his life out through us, and that means we can be faithful, because of what he has done on our behalf.

And so, here's what I'm gonna ask you to do. I'm gonna ask you to join me over the course of this week. Myself and many of our staff for setting aside our lunch hour this week from noon to one. And we're going to be praying and fasting. We're gonna we're going to set aside a meal and replace it with seeking God. Because not only are we doing that in terms of what God wants to do in us and through us and with us in our own individual ways, but also in what God wants to do, and how he wants to bring to fruition his doing among us. Because we realize what we're doing and saying no to that food, is we're saying yes to dependence on him. We're just establishing our dependence upon him.

And if you want to join us in doing that at your place of work. If for some physical reason you can't fast, understood. It's not an obligation. You do it if the Lord leads you. But you can pray. You can pray about what God wants for you, what the King wants from you. What does he say to you means a faithful life for you, in whatever way that is. In how you use your gifts, your skills, your resources, your time, your talents, your energy. What does he want from you?

Then be reminded, what we're doing over this five years, this isn't a campaign. There's no cards to fill out. You listen to Jesus and do what he says. I'm going to listen to Jesus and do what he says. And then God's going to do what he's going to do. But I want you to be faithful. And I want to be faithful. Let's pray for one another in that regard, that we would be faithful to him in every way. In every way.

On your way out, you're going to get a card. And on the card it's a reminder of these - expand, partner and release. So that you've got something to take home to kind of remember what those are. And you'll also see the financial breakdown that I told you about as well, over the five-year term. But that's an opportunity for you just to pray and to seek God and see what he wants you to do.

But also I want you to pay attention to your bulletin today. If you didn't get one, you can check with an usher at the Information Center when you leave. Because in there, you've got Monday through Saturday some verses to think on, to ponder, to read, to pray over, to meditate on. And they kind of remind us a little bit about what we've covered during this Legacy series. I'm going to be going through those myself. I'm gonna ask you to do the same. And that we'll just continue to ask the Lord for him to fulfill his desire in our lives.

You know, at the end of the day, we're asking in Western New York, God what do you want? But we believe we've been able to answer that question, because what God desires for every man, every woman, every child, to have the opportunity, based on our witness, to see, to hear, to

respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ. That would be what God wants. Well, what would happen if God got what he wanted through us? I and leveraging my life to find out what that looks like. And I'm asking you to do the same. Because when our eyes are on the kingdom and the King, he will allow us to do more than we ever dreamed or imagined.

So, Father we trust in you. We set our eyes upon you. We know that you have given us by the power of your own Spirit, your life living through us, the ability to live faithfully for you, not in our own power, but the power you have given to us freely, through what Jesus has done on our behalf and his death and his resurrection. And we live in this tension, Lord, acknowledging that Lord Jesus you come, and we pray with the Apostle John, even so come quickly, Lord Jesus. But we also acknowledge that we have been given all that we have to use for your purposes until you return. May we be found faithful. May your people be found faithful, Lord. May I be found faithful. So that we might be about your business, your mission, your kingdom's work with our lives. Because that's what we're made for. It's what we were created to do. We trust you to do this. In Jesus' name, amen.

And for those of you who need to find out more about what Jesus is all about, come by the Fireside Room We'd love to talk to you. God bless you folks. You're dismissed.