

What's Most Important

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I just want to break from our series on Judges to consider what's most important. Really, the topic that I am going to speak on today will be the driver behind your spiritual life, your spiritual maturity and it ought to be that which we ascribe to and really strive for. 1 Corinthians is a unique book. It's a book that at times is difficult to understand. Let me lock my computer here so I can see my notes. But we shouldn't let that be a discouragement to us and thank the Lord, we have the presence of his Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 13. I apologize I normally do this. I've got to do it where it doesn't go to sleep on me because if it goes to sleep on me then I have to keep unlocking it. So. Alright. Very good. Now we're good. There we go.

Let's stand together, if you would, and we're going to read the whole chapter rather so it's 13 verses. 1 Corinthians 13 and I enjoy getting to read with you so I hope that you will read with me today and we'll read all 13 verses together starting in verse 1 and going all the way to the end of the chapter. 1 Corinthians 13, let's start in verse number 1 and if you would, read it with me, alright, if you can and then we'll pray and go from there. Starting in verse 1, ready?

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. 4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put

away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13 And now abide faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Let's pray.

Father, I ask that, I want to thank you for your abundant blessings and, Lord, I want to thank you, Lord, even in spite of the fact that we don't acknowledge them or even recognize them, Father, that, Lord, it is as your word says it is of your mercy that we are not consumed. Lord, if you were left to us, if it were left to our own devices, it would certainly be just a royal mess. Father, I thank you that because of your grace and mercy, Lord, that we are certainly recipients of more than we ever deserve. Lord, we are not, Lord, having to suffer what we so rightfully deserve over and over. Lord, I just thank you again for Jesus Christ. Lord, it has just become so present to me today how wonderful he is and, Lord, I pray that we would just dwell on his glory, we would dwell, Lord, on who Christ is and what he has done and even what he is doing and is going to do, Lord, in the future. Thank you Father, that there is not one thing that happens that you are not aware of. There is not one thing that happens in our lives that you have not allowed to happen for our growth and betterment and to become more like Jesus. Lord, I pray that we would as Brother Paul instructed, that we would walk worthy of what we have been called to be and who we are called to follow. Lord, we need your help and grace to do that. I pray as we consider this chapter, very familiar, Lord, nothing new but, Lord, I pray it would be a timely reminder of, Lord, what is most important. We ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

You can be seated.

What matters most to you? Have you ever questioned yourself about that? What is most important? A lot of things vie for our attention, don't they? A lot of things vie for the top seat or top place in our hearts and minds and it's easy to allow the wrong things to begin to matter most. You say, "Pastor, you know, theoretically, mentally, this is what is most important." We all know, right? If I were to ask anyone here today, "Who should be the one we love the most?" And we'd all say the Lord but while it's easy to say and it's the right thing to think, is it really the case in our lives, right? That's what it really boils down to. We are very good at talking the talk and it's very difficult rather not to be trite, but to walk the walk. It's a challenge to really put into action what we know to be right and throughout Scripture we see men, Christians much better than ourselves, facing that same struggle. I think of the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 7 and his conflict that he described, "the things I would I don't do," you know, so on and so forth. It's not anything that's, it's a struggle that we all face and we all should expect to face and, boy, hasn't God been so good to us? He has given us so much more than we have ever deserved. Think of it: he has provided for us a means of salvation that will save the vilest sinner. There are a lot of vile sinners, are there not? You and I included amongst them at one time or another and thank the Lord that's not our identity anymore. We are saints and what a blessing that is to know that I am no longer, certainly I sin, but I am not a sinner. I am a saint saved by

the grace of God. We have to have that mindset that we are different because of what Christ has done for us. The fact that throughout Scripture don't we have just a multitude of precious promises that the Lord says he'll do? Some conditional, some unconditional but the fact of it is that we know we have confidence that he stands by those promises. There is no falseness in what he has to say but rather truth.

As part of being saved, when you get saved, the Lord gives you spiritual gifts to use for the edification of the body of Christ, for his service, and it is for his glory in the kingdom work. Go with me there in 1 Corinthians 13, go to chapter 12 and look at verse 7. The Bible says, "But the manifestation of the Spirit," are you there? 1 Corinthians 12:7, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." The Spirit of God is not given to us as our own personal rabbit's foot, if you want to call it that, for our own personal gain but rather that we might see God's will, his glory manifested while we do or strive to do his kingdom work. Every spiritual gift has its place within the body. Indeed, they all serve to edify the body. They serve to glorify the Lord and what an exciting, what an amazing thing that every member of Faith Baptist Church has a role. Now, whether you're filling that role or not is another matter but you have a role. You have a gift that God has given you and he has given it to you for his glory and for the edification of the body so that we might bring glory to God as a church and 1 Corinthians 12 through 14 is talking about those gifts that God has given in the church.

Now, some of the gifts found here are blown way out of proportion in some circles. They look to tongues and prophecy or healing rather as the most important but that is not. What matters most is what we find, the gift we find, in 1 Corinthians 13. Other gifts like giving and the gifts of helps are not nearly given enough attention, right? We all want to be looked at as someone wonderful but rather, it is a blessing. Don't ever feel that your talents are wasted when you help or bless another brother or sister in Christ. There is a great ministry to be had in that gift of helps, that gift of encouragement, that gift of giving of yourself, of your time. I don't know about you but as I grow older, I realize how valuable time is. You realize, your money is simply a representation of your time, right? They pay you by the hour. My job pays me a salary and they say in exchange for 50 hours of your time, we're going to give you so many dollars. So really money is simply a representation in a very basic form of time, certainly effort and other things but time. If I don't give my time to my job, they will not pay me a check. Well, they might do it for a while but after a while they'll start saying, "Do you know what? You need to find another place." Indeed, time is valuable and the giving of time. Don't look down and say, "Well," and it's hard to get that but let's go on. I'm digressing here.

The gift that I believe contains the most divine power is the gift of his love working through us. Think about this: the love of God was placed within us when we were saved by his grace. Listen to the Scripture, Romans 5:5, "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." God's love is placed into you when you got saved. Number 2: his love working in us and displayed one to another is the greatest testimony we have to a lost world. By this, all men shall know that you are my disciples if you have love one to another," John 13:35. When we walk in love one toward another, we are walking in obedience to the

Lord. John 13:34, Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Lastly, when we walk in love one for another, we prove that we are saved by his grace. You realize that don't you? People say, "How do I know that I am saved?" What is your attitude towards other believers? Is there a heart of love because that is only given by God. The Bible says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." You realize that, right? Your love for Christian brothers and sisters is the greatest, one of the greatest indicators or assurances you can have of your salvation. We know, we know that we have passed from what? Death unto life. I know that I'm saved because of the love I have for the brethren. It's unexplainable, inexplicable, right? It's God given. Listen to this now: "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." Are you young people listening to me? Is there anything more applicable than within our home, Andrew. Andrew says, "I'm a Christian, Dad. I love the Lord." Do you love your brother? Ah, man, that's where the rubber meets the road, doesn't it? It can't get any more real than that, can you, David? Are you listening to me? Do you want to know, David, that you are saved? You'll see that God will give you a love for others and that is not from yourself but rather is from him.

One of the problems within the church of Corinth is that they were fixated on every other gift, nearly every other spiritual gift in existence but they were not walking in love one toward another. They had a real problem. Indeed, the Corinthians loved the flashy gifts. They loved the gifts of tongues, of prophecy, healings. I mean, boy, that is exciting to have the gift to be able to speak in a tongue unknown to you for the furtherance of the Gospel, for the edification of the church. That's amazing. I know people say they have it. I don't think we've seen it. To have been there on that day in what Acts chapter 2 speaks of, to see those unlearned, ignorant men speak in the languages of those foreign-born Jewish people and to share with them the Gospel. The gift of healing. I know you have the healers on television. That's not healing, alright? If you want to know if someone's truly a healer sent from God then I ask the question, "Why don't you just go to the hospitals and old age homes and heal some folks there? Why do they have to come to your conference and give money and buy books?" It's because they are not healing under the power of God. They are healing for filthy lucre's sake if you really want to know the truth.

The church at Corinth was fascinated with those gifts but God was more interested in them coming to the place where they loved each other like he loves them. This is the kind of message, I know I preached it before but it never goes out of style, so to speak. It's always applicable. There is always room for improvement. Chapters 12 through 14 of 1 Corinthians is written to combat the problems that existed in Corinth related to the spiritual gifts that God had given them and their usage within the church. A lot of times we'll look at 12, 13 and 14 as stand-alone chapters but they're not. They're very closely coupled together. Chapter 12 talks about the spiritual gifts and how they were given to us and why they are beneficial to the whole body. Chapter 13 talks about the body of Christ being strengthened and blessed when individuals use the gifts they've been given by the Lord. And just as an aside, you say, "I don't know what my gift is." You ought to spend time considering, "Lord, what gift do I have and how may I best use it for your glory within the context of the New Testament Church you have placed me in?" And if you're

not part of a New Testament church, you need to be. It's scriptural, alright? I don't think you can argue. God has not called any Christian to be a Lone Ranger Christian. He's called you to submit to the authority. People just want to be footloose and fancy free. Maybe a little Canadian slipped in, you know. I thought I'd be talking more Texan but I haven't. I haven't been infected. Anyway. Some of you that have been coming here a long time know that when I first got here it was pretty bad but you guys have civilized me. Anyway, no, I'm teasing.

A lot of Christians are out that way and they're just sort of, "Eh, you know, I do what I do. I do what I want to do." Certainly there is liberty to do as God called you to do but God has given you a New Testament church to be a part of and that ought to be an exciting thing. I'm thankful for our church. I'm thankful. Even in the hard times. I am thankful for our church. You ought to be so thankful for the brothers and sisters that God has placed you with to be a part of, to grow together, to struggle together, right? To rejoice together because we are all after the same thing or we all ought to be. What a blessing. Chapter 12 talks about how that is to be used.

Chapter 14 deals with the misuse of sign gifts. Now, I believe and I believe the Bible teaches that some of the gifts were given as signs. Signs for what? To sum it up very quickly: tongues, healings, you'll see them mentioned in the last chapter of Mark, were given to authenticate the message that God had given the apostles. The apostles were just that, they were witnesses, eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ himself. The Bible had yet not been given in its completeness and so what did God do? God in his infinite wisdom gave the ability for these apostles and early Christians to perform these sign gifts so that they might authenticate, that it might be authenticated what they were saying. Why did Jesus do miracles? So that they would see what? That he truly was Messiah; that he was one sent from what? God. You know, the truth of it is that the Bible says that it is the wicked who desire a sign, desire a miracle, and it troubles me, Christians, "Well, I need a sign." No, you need to put faith in God's word. You need to believe God's word. You are pursuing after signs, that is a dangerous route. The devil is not he even transformed into an angel of light, my friends? That's why the Bible says we need to try the spirits. "Oh, I'll be so careful." Boy, isn't it a blessing we have a Bible? We can trust it, we can have faith in it and we can follow it and we can be assured that things will turn out as God intended them to turn out.

Chapter 13 is right in the middle of these two chapters. So chapter 12 describes the gifts, the use of them, chapter 14 rebukes, to some degree, the abuse of the sign gifts. Chapter 13 is sandwiched in between. Chapter 13 follows closely, of course, on the heels of chapter 12 which verse 31 says, what? "But covet earnestly the best gifts." He says, "If there is anything, desire," and that word "covet" is unique because you often think of covetousness as sin, right? The Bible says it's sin but that's the attitude we ought to have toward these best gifts. "I want them badly." God says that there is nothing wrong with desiring the best gifts if you don't have them. "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." What Paul is saying is that, do you know what? There's a better way. You know, it's not wrong to desire the best gifts. It's not wrong to

want to see yourself used by God but he says there's even something more excellent than that.

What matters most? What is most important? What is most important or what matters most is not whether you possess some flashy gift or not. What matters most is not how smart you are. What matters most is not how wealthy or how popular or how famous or how well liked you are. What matters most is not what you think of yourself in your own mind, what matters most is how well you love. What matters most is that you learn to love like Jesus loved. Now, that's a challenge. That's a high bar to shoot for, is it not? What matters most? What is most important? Well, we're going to talk about that, so let's take a few moments and I don't know if I'll get all the way through. If we don't, we'll finish it up tonight.

Let's look at the first part there. Let's consider charity and let's consider the distinction of charity or love as we know it. In verses 1-3, love is very distinct and the Bible does a contrast here, alright? In verses 1-3, there are three contrast that we find. Number 1: charity, scriptural love, God's Christlike love is higher than the sensational. You might be a great speaker, you might be someone that is able to communicate and is sensational in their abilities but it is rather, listen to me now, that is no substitute for love. The whole idea of these verses is that love is distinct from and is superior to anything that we can do. Are you listening to me? Let me say that again: love, Christlike love, is distinct from and superior to anything we can be or do. Are you hearing me? We focus a lot on what we do and who we are and what we do becomes who we are, right? Someone will say, "Who are you?" I'm a pastor. "Why?" Because I do pastoral things. I perform the office of a pastor or I could say, "I'm a software engineer," because part of the time I develop software. Brother Matt can say, "I am a technical support agent for the phone company." That's not really who you are. Love is superior to all that, right? Indeed, and that's what is trying to be brought across here. If what we do and who we are is not infused with and carried out with Christlike love, then it is a colossal waste of time. I hate wasting time. Well, let me go back, usually I hate wasting time. There are days when I just like to sit there. Yesterday was one of them. We did a bunch of little chores and I just sat in my lazy chair and I wasted time. It was great but generally speaking, I don't like to waste time. My wife is a great example of someone who hates to waste time. She always has to be busy. I think it's the two pots of coffee she drinks in the morning.

Infused with Christlike love, that's exactly what you're doing. Have you ever done something that you thought, "Man, this is really going to be profitable. This is really going to make a difference," and in the end it didn't really matter? I hate wasting effort. I'd rather just not do it. I'm that kind of guy. If it's not really going to matter, then I'm not going to do it. Now, the point being is that if what we do for Christ and even what we do for one another is not done with Christlike love, it is a waste of time. You might as well not have done it. Sensational. Indeed, there is no, being talented is no substitute for love. We can have some great speaker get up here and man, just lay it all out and boy, just a buffet of words and you can say, "Ah, that was wonderful." But if it was not done with Christlike love, it's a waste. Indeed, no matter how great your oratory or how beautiful

your speech, how brilliant your rhetoric, without love you are simply as the Bible describes you in here verse 1, a clanging piece of metal.

Now, the Bible uses "sounding brass" or "tinkling cymbal." Sounding brass was that type of brass instrument used to call people to worship in heathen temples and Paul uses it, it's generally understood that the reference here to sounding brass and tinkling cymbals were the instruments used in the worship of the heathen gods. So I don't know about you, but personally, sometimes I'll be driving along and do you ever get something in your car and it's just something, bing, bing, bing? I don't know about you, I've got to stop and find out. I will tear the car apart trying to find what is the noise and it just drives me crazy. Now, more appropriately, there wouldn't be a whole lot of enjoyment so Rachel, thank the Lord, she's got a lot of talent with the piano but let's say Rachel also had the talent to play the cymbals and she said, "You know Pastor, I'd like to come and do a special and I'm going to bring in these big brass cymbals in and I'm just going to play 'Jesus Loves Me' on them." (cymbal playing) You'd say, "Thank you, Rachel. That was wonderful," and we'd all have our ears have to go see the doctor after we're done, right? Right, not a whole lot there and the fact of it is, the illustration that Paul is using is that when we do things, even if we're able to speak with flowery words, if it's not done with a heart of Christlike love and out of Christlike love, it is like that cymbal just clashing over and over and over and over again. It's just meaningless noise. There is no distinctiveness to it. It doesn't make a difference. It's just loud and annoying. I hope that as your preacher I'm not loud and annoying. I'm sure sometimes you say, "Pastor, I don't know if you have much Christlike love because you were pretty loud and I was pretty annoyed." Anyway. But all joking aside, it's the truth. If I don't get up here with a heart of Christlike love for you and for the Lord, then all my preaching is in vain. That is humbling. That is concerning because like I said, I don't want to waste my time. I don't want to waste my breath. I'd rather not do it.

So we have a choice, either choose not to have that heart of Christlike love and not do what we're supposed to do because it's simply going to be a waste of time or the right choice is what? Love like Christ loves. Have that charity the Bible speaks of so that, you know what? When we preach, when we speak, when we talk to others, it is not a waste of time. It's effective. It's powerful. You see, a great oratory can move a person's emotions. Great rhetoric can transform or actually, you know, cause a person to really think. A great speech can move a person's will but only great love can move a heart. Great oratory can move one to tears but think about this: only love can move one to Jesus. The bottom line is this. As I said before, these instruments that Paul speaks of where the same ones used in that heathen worship, therefore, the person who exercises his tongue in a spiritual fashion but does not do so with the love of God is no better than a heathen worshiper, right? Think about this because all the excitement of that heathen worship, what are they worshiping? A god made up in their minds. It had no effect. It made no difference. And when we worship, when we do the work of God and we do not have a Christlike heart and have the love of Christ that drives us and constrains us and comforts us, then guess what? We might as well be shoulder-to-shoulder with those heathen worshipers because all we're doing is for naught. That's humbling.

Number 2: love is higher than that which is sensational. It is higher, verse 2, than that of the spectacular. Verse 2 says, "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries," that's an amazing claim. "There is nothing that is a mystery to me. I know it all." Some people think that but, hyperbole, right? "And all knowledge; and though I have all faith." He says, "Even though I have so much faith so that if I said to a mountain, move, it would move, if I did it without Christlike love, it is nothing." It is nothing. Verse 3, love is higher than the sensational, the spectacular but as well, the sacrificial. We can give away all that you own and people would applaud you because that's just not done. You could even give up your body on the altar of martyrdom, that's what verse 3 is saying. Look at verse 3. We read it but look at it again, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." The point that is being made here is that, I mean, the greatest gift you could give someone is to give your life, right? You think that the greatest sacrifice one could give for Christ is that of one's life physically so for his glory and his honor. Thousands and tens of thousands before us have done just that and we look to them as heroes, right? People today are doing it over in China, over in other countries, in the Muslim countries. Christians are being killed by the thousands for their faith and it's admirable. I pray that if it ever came to that that I would have the grace to do so but if you did that and you didn't do it because of Christ, you weren't driven by Christlike love and you didn't do it for a love of Christ and a love of others, it would mean nothing.

What is the emphasis? When love is absent, number 1: a Christian is no better than a heathen. What you're doing, all these empty, right? You're coming here today was just an empty exercise in futility if you did not come because you love the Lord and you're not driven by Christlike love. Number 2: the Christian is nothing and we can expect nothing if things aren't done through Christlike love. Regardless of what others may think of you and your abilities and your talents, your gifts, if you don't have Christlike love, it's all a waste of time. It's all a waste of time. All you can do pales in comparison, the contrast is being shown here, right? That without Christlike love, without charity, all that you and I do is for naught.

Now, I'm not going to have time to get to it this morning but the next verses talk about and describe love and the characteristics of love and we'll get to that tonight but I want to challenge you with this. Are you listening to me? Children, are you listening? David? We get wrapped up in the busyness of schedules and in being busy for the Lord and I'm not saying that's a bad thing but we bypass that which is most important which is we are consumed by our love for Christ which is manifested in our love for the brethren and is the driver, the primary motivator behind all that we do. Do you want to know why you grow tired doing right? Because you're not motivated by the right things. Do you know why you get tired of coming to church? Do you know why you get tired of ministering? Do you know why you get tired of being a godly father and a godly mother and having family? Do you know why you grow tiresome of that and why you grow weary? It's because your motivator is wrong. It's either selfish or there's something else that is motivating you to be a good father because if you're not, your wife is going to give you grief about it, right? And people at church are going to think you're a poor person, right? Mamas, if you are not a godly mother, oh boy, all the blogging mamas, all these

mammas online blogging about that their kid has the sniffles and they blog about it. All you ladies sit there and you're like, "Oh, they are so wonderful. They must be such godly mothers." If you are not that way then they are you going to think ill of you. That is the wrong motivation. Are you hearing me? The reason you raise your kids for the Lord, parents, is not so that the pastor pats you on the back and says, "Oh, you are doing such a good job." That's the wrong motivation and you'll soon grow tired of it. If you dress Christlike, if you dress in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord but you're not doing it for the right motivation, there will come a time where you'll probably go away from that manner of dress or that manner of living, right? Because it's not done out of love for the Lord. Are you listening to me? Your motivation must be examined. My motivations must be examined constantly and regularly because it's so easy to allow them to slip and if I don't do what I do primarily because I love Jesus more than anything else and that's what he wants me to do because I want to show him that I love him and I'm going to do it and I do this, I serve others because I love them and I love the Lord and I'm not doing it for recognition, I'm not doing it out of guilt. Are you listening to me? We do that a lot, don't we? We're guilted into serving. We're guilted into ministry. We're guilted. You will grow weary in well doing and you will quit. I've been there. I've been there in this ministry, especially early in my ministry where, you know, I did things because I wanted to be accepted by people I respected and looked up to. I wanted people to think I did something with my life and those years I spent in Bible college and the calling God had upon my life wasn't a waste and wasn't a farce and I soon discovered that that is a thin sheet of ice and you too quickly fall in and are destroyed. But when Jesus and his love and your love for him drives you and motivates you, nothing can take you off track because you're not doing it for anybody else. You're doing it for him because you love him. And when you serve others because you love them, guess what? They can spite you, they can misuse you and you can be unappreciated or under-appreciated but guess what? You're doing it not because you're looking for appreciation, not because you're looking for recognition, because you love them.

I mean, the best thing that we can look at is with our children. I love my kids. It's natural. It's what God has placed in my heart and that's natural, right? It's unnatural not to love your kids. And so what I do for them I do because I love them. I bought Andrew gifts for his birthday not because I have to, not because people are going to ask me, "Did you buy Andrew gifts?" No, because I love Andrew. I want him to have nice things. I want him to be able to enjoy his birthday and I want to enjoy it with him. I hated that I couldn't be there that day. The truth of it is, even if Andrew didn't appreciate it, I would still buy him gifts because I love him. I may not enjoy it as much, right?

I know the message this morning is very simple but isn't it the little things that spoil the vine? Isn't it the simple things that we so often get wrong? It's these foundational things, these seminal truths that if we don't hold on to and say, "Do you know what? I'm driven, I'm motivated because I love Jesus and I love my brothers and sisters in Christ. I love my wife. I love my husband. That's what drives me. That's what motivates me." Then guess what? It's all for naught and it's all a waste. I don't want to be on that side of things.

If you are doing stuff at this church because of guilt, your motivation is wrong. I want to tell you, just honestly, I try not to make you feel guilty. I've been in churches where if you're not there, you know, I want everybody to be faithful. I want everybody to be what they're supposed to be. I really work hard and there are times that I want to make you feel bad. Really, I do. I try and I'm sure I'm not always successful. I really try not to make you feel bad. I understand things come up, you know, look at myself. I'm traveling every week and I'm not able to be here on Wednesdays. I understand, things come up. My point is this: if you're driven to be here because you feel guilty, you're wasting your time. What I'm saying is not to stop coming, I'm saying get your motivation right because guess what? You're going to be eager to be here because you love the Lord and this is where the Lord has put you. Do you know what? I want to obey Jesus. I want to show him I love him. Do you see my point? Mama's, raise your children for the Lord. Sister Amanda, I know you could feel guilty. You know, if I don't homeschool, we're going to feel guilty. No, you need to do it because you love the Lord first and foremost and you want to raise this little girl for Jesus. Are you hearing me? Brother Robert, I know when Cole is at school there are times that it's hard and you could say, "Well, it's what the Lord has led us to do," and do you know what? You've got to do God's will but in the end it's got to be done because you love the Lord and that's what has to drive you. That's what has to motivate you. That's what has just got to be the engine that pulls you along.

So I'm done. Stepping back, what is your motivation? If it's not out of Christlike love, if what you do for others is not because you love them because Christ has loved you and he has commanded you to love your brothers and sisters, then it's wrong and it's a waste. So get me for being propelled by recognition and the want recognition. I want to demonstrate to you that it all begins with Jesus and we just need to grab a hold of that. Repent.

Dear heavenly Father, we stand before you this day humbled by your word. Lord, again as it has done its job it's a mirror and, Lord, we have looked into it this morning and, Lord, I think in many cases I hope in every case, we have found things wanting. I know in my life, Lord, there are things that are wanting. My motivations aren't always right. Lord, sometimes I'm driven out of guilt. Sometimes I'm driven out of a sense of duty. Sometimes I'm driven because of what people might think or say or because I want people to think I'm somebody wonderful. Father, all of that is garbage. Help me to serve you, to serve my family, to serve others because I love you and I love them. And I love them because you love me and because you love them, I want to love them like you do.

Lord, I pray for others in here that might feel the same way, Lord, and your Holy Spirit is at work in their heart this very morning. May the principles of your word not stray too far from our minds as we leave this place. Satan waits right outside this door, maybe even is standing here with us, plucking the seeds of your word from our mind to rob us of this fruit. Build a hedge about us, Father. May we seal it. May we deal with it. And may we not allow the distractions of the rest of this day to rob us of this truth.

I pray for anyone in here that is lost without Christ including our young people. Help them to see the beauty and the wonder of your love that while we were yet sinners, you

died, you sent Jesus Christ and he died for us. What love. I pray they might come to know the love of Christ sooner rather than later. I pray you would just bless us now, Father, as we go our separate ways and may we honor you in word, deed and thought. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

That was one point of a three point message so come back tonight and we'll do the last two, amen? Anything before we go today? Alright, Lord bless you. Please, I covet your prayers as I travel. They are 12-14 hour days and the time zone is two hours different. It just makes it and I'm not crying for...just pray for me if you would, amen? I'm a big boy but I could use your prayers. Let's be dismissed. Lord bless you now.