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Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

March 4, 2018

"What Have You Done?"

John 18:37-38

Prayer: *Father God, I do again thank you and praise you for the blood of Jesus. Lord, that's why we're here, that's why we are able to come together and to be able to stand before you, because of the blood of your Son. And Father, today it's communion Sunday, it's a time that we reflect on that and so I pray in particular that you would give us the grace, the peace, the power and the wisdom to do just that. We pray for the presence of your Holy Spirit guiding us into ever deeper truth about that blood, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, as I just said this is the first Sunday of the month, this is the day that we remember Jesus Christ and his cross. And Jesus on the night before he died, he met with his disciples to celebrate a Passover supper with them, the last one. Matthew 26 describes it. It says: *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for*

this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Jesus took the bread and he took the wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and his blood and then he asked the disciples to eat the bread and drink the cup to symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood. He then asked them to repeat this remembrance on a regular basis and this is what we call the Lord's table. We celebrate it once a month. And the way we do it is we spend some time meditating on the Lord Jesus Christ, we examine ourselves allowing God's Holy Spirit to point out areas in our lives where he's convicting us of sin, we confess our sins, and then we participate in the elements. *John 6:53* says: *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."*

Well we've been working our way through the Gospel of John and so far we're at the 18th chapter, and last time -- that was actually two months ago. Last time we looked at Peter's denial of Christ, actually his three different denials of Christ, and now Jesus just happened to be perfectly positioned so that at the very moment of Peter's third denial which was accompanied by vehement cursing, his eyes, that is Peter's eyes, just happened to meet the eyes of Jesus who had already begun to be mistreated and beaten. Jesus had

superintended the exact time and the exact circumstances so that as he was being abused by his captors and denied by Peter, well then Jesus had the presence of mind to make a rooster crow. And as verse 61 says, it says: *The Lord turned and looked at Peter.* Peter the bold one, Peter the stubborn one, the one who bragged about his loyalty now finds himself staring into the eyes of the very one that he is denying. He was absolutely crushed. The scripture says he went out and he wept bitterly. And after Jesus rose from the dead, we find that he actually cooked breakfast for his disciples and that afterwards he then had a soul-searching confrontation with Peter in which not once, not twice but three times he forgave him and affirmed his love for him. I said back then that it's hard for me to get my head around the fact that the victorious risen King of the universe is serving breakfast to the one who denied even knowing him and he's restoring him fully. So for the rest of Peter's life and ministry he would remember that night and those eyes and he would know from personal experience that our God is a God of mercy and grace and that he chooses broken vessels like Peter to minister that grace through. I mean the sins that Jesus had gone to the cross to pay for included Peter's vehement denials. Jesus had paid that price already and because he had paid that price, Peter was now free. Peter only intended to get a safe distance from Jesus to find out what was happening. It was Jesus who superintended Peter's cowardice with just one look,

and it forever broke his arrogance and his confidence in his own strength in a way that would affect his ministry for the rest of his life.

That's where we were last time. And so we pick up the story right after Peter has denied Jesus. This is *John 18:28*. It says: *Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the Governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the Governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover.* You know sometimes the hypocrisy of what took place that night defies belief, but nonetheless scripture simply records it. These leaders are very concerned about their defilement. They're about to commit the greatest defilement that any human being could ever commit. They were about to take the very Lamb of God, the very lamb that the Passover lamb represented and defile that lamb through the worst form of punishment they could possibly muster. I mean make no mistake about it, they knew precisely what they were after. Israel had capital punishment and so did Rome. Israel's capital punishment was by stoning; Rome's was by crucifixion. They knew that by seeking Rome's form of execution that they would be able to not only subject Jesus to one of the most excruciating punishments there were but also in a way that would publicly defile him by having him stripped while at the same time becoming ceremonially accursed because they knew that

their law stipulated that anyone who was hung on a tree would be considered cursed. *Deuteronomy 21* says: "And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance." See, the religious leaders knew that the cross was in reality the form of a tree, they knew that it was referred to in common parlance as a tree. In fact in the book of Acts we have Peter's response to the Sanhedrin, they're furious with him and they're going to try to get him to stop teaching about this Jesus and his cross. *Acts 5:28* says, describing them: *Saying, "We strictly charge you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us."* But Peter and the apostles answered, *"We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree."* See, the wonder of God's sovereignty is that each and every detail of this process that was instituted by wicked men trying to heap shame and disgrace on Christ was flipped and it was flipped so that what they intended for shame only ended up bringing glory to Christ. I mean their goal was to bring the shame of a curse on Jesus by having him executed on a tree by Rome. Well little did they realize that that was precisely what Christ's intent was as

well, to take the curse of our sin by being hung on a tree. Paul points out how that backfired on them in *Galatians 3:13*. He says: *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us -- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree."* See the religious leaders wanted to label Jesus as accursed and little did they realize that Jesus wanted the very same thing but for different reasons. And scripture just points out without comment the irony of these wicked and profoundly defiled men seeking to avoid defiling themselves by going into the Governor's headquarters. Verse 29 says: *So Pilate went outside to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered him, "If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you."* Now Pilate says why is this man here and the only answer they can give him is because he wouldn't be here if he wasn't guilty. I mean there's a certain level of arrogance here that is necessary. I mean it's necessary because these folks know they have no case. They know this is an innocent man that they're trying to railroad. Verse 31 says: *Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death." This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.*

See what the religious leaders thought they were accomplishing,

that is Jesus's crucifixion, this was something that Jesus himself had long ago chosen. If you remember way back when we were looking at John 12, we saw Jesus there at the very height of his popularity, he's about to enter into Jerusalem and in this huge crowd, this adoring crowd, he proves that he was no victim. He proves that he was not some kind of pawn that was the subject of some political battle between Israel and Rome because at the very height of his popularity before the Jewish leaders ever even thought to plot this out, Jesus specifically tells all those who can hear him exactly the kind of death he was going to die. He said in *John 12:32*: "*And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.*" And to make absolutely certain that Jesus knew precisely what was about to take place, the scripture adds in the very next verse: *He said this to show what kind of death he was going to die.* Little do these religious leaders know that they're just affirming precisely what Jesus had prophesied.

So we pick up our passage at verse 33. It says: *So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"* You know Pilate wants to know one thing about Jesus and one thing only. The thing that really matters to him is are you a threat? I mean he wants to know if Jesus has any trace of the political reactionary that would warrant the

seriousness of the charges that the Jews have brought against him. And by the way, Pilate can't stand these people. They're beyond an annoyance to him. They are an infliction to him and he really can't stand the position that he's now been put in, I mean, he's already had a number of run-ins with Caesar over the way he's managed the Jews and the last thing he needs is another run-in with these people. *"Are you the king of the Jews?" He asks Jesus.* I mean it's a combination of curiosity mixed with irritation and scorn. I mean this Jesus looks nothing like any kind of king or political threat at all. In verse 34 it says: *Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from this world."* What we have here is a dialogue between Jesus and Pilate and there's two vastly different frames of reference in this dialogue. Pilate, he's coming from his frame of reference. He's a politician. He's sizing up what kind of threat this Jesus represents to the Jews, to Rome, and most importantly to himself. And so from his frame of reference, this Jesus, he's a minor player, he's a nobody. He's a potential threat only in that he could only serve to agitate the Jews who could possibly make

trouble for him. Personally Pilate is curious but only because the contrast between Jesus's personal demeanor and the clamor for his execution among the Jews, it makes him wonder what is this fuss all about? Well Pilate in actuality is a conniving coward concerned primarily for his own career and even though this Jesus will invoke in him a little tiny bit of genuine concern, it will never come near the point of Pilate risking anything to save him. See, Pilate's kingdom frame of reference is Rome and the niche he has carved out for himself. I mean he's gotten in trouble before and he knows that Herod the Governor is not somebody to be trusted and the last thing he needs is for Caesar to run out of patience with the way he's managing these Jews, so he looks at Jesus and he sees a bound peasant somewhat roughed up by the Jews but somewhat incapable of actually mattering to him or to Rome. And what Pilate really wants to know is which Jesus am I actually dealing with, I mean, is he a joke, is he a threat, or is he who he really claimed to be?

Jesus's frame of reference is altogether different. You know, I've mentioned before, he's standing there bound in front of Pilate, and as he is standing there bound, he's also directing this high pressure weather system to lower the temperature so that Peter would be in just the right position to lock eyes with him at his third denial. He's also at that same precise moment keeping all of

the planets in our little solar system orbiting exactly as they should. In fact as he's standing there looking disheveled, part of his frame of reference at that very moment includes empowering and overseeing hundreds of trillions of other galaxies, as every one of the stars in the universe he's already numbered and counted by name. Pilate marvels that this so-called king of the Jews couldn't even protect himself from his own people. He says: *"Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?"* I say Pilate, if you only knew.

As the elders begin to distribute the bread, I want to take some time this morning attempting to answer Pilate's question: *"What have you done?"* But before we look at that, we need to examine God's warning about receiving communion unworthily. This is found in *1 Corinthians 11*. It says: *But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord that we would not be condemned with the world.* I say this each time, I say communion is extremely serious business and to enter into it in an unworthy manner is to court disaster. The language that I just read: *"For this reason many*

are weak and sick among you, and many sleep," back then God made people sick and he killed some for receiving communion unworthily. So if you're not absolutely confident that you're a child of the King, if you have not by faith found Christ as your Savior or if you first need to be reconciled by your brother or your sister before you bring this sacrifice to the altar, then don't take the elements when they come to you; just pass them on. I say it all the time, nobody's going to think you're odd or weird or strange; they may in fact think you wise. But also on the other hand I want to point out that we can make the mistake of thinking that you have to be spotlessly perfect in order to receive communion. The enemy loves that. That's the polar opposite. That's the other mistake on the other side. Being a child of the King doesn't mean that we don't sin and that we never fail. It means we recognize that the salvation we've received is a gift, and it's a gift that no one is ever capable of earning by being good. I repeat this quote every time because I hope at some point it will go right into your memories because I think it sums up so well our position before God. It's Dane Ortlund's quote, he says: "In the kingdom of God, the one thing that qualifies you is knowing that you don't qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." You also have to understand that when we fail, because we have the Spirit of God within us, we are aware of the fact that we have sinned because the Holy Spirit convicts us, and so we grieve as

children who know we have a Father who is longing to forgive and cleanse us. God says in *1 John 1:9*: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* So just to establish, being a child of God doesn't mean that you are sinless. What it means is that when you do sin, you have an advocate, you have an advocate with the Father, someone who is speaking on your behalf. *1 John 2:1* says: *My dear children, I write this to you so you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.* And that's the reason why we're able to do this, I mean, it's only because we have Jesus's righteousness and not our own that we are now free to eat from his table. So if you love your Lord, don't deny yourself the privilege that Christ has purchased for you. You know he lived the life that we were supposed to live and then he died the death we all deserved to die in our place so that we would be made worthy of heaven. So we want to take a couple minutes this morning to just kind of meditate on what we've been talking about. We want to ask of Jesus this morning the same question that Pilate asked: *"What have you done?"* Take a moment to think on that.

1 Corinthians the 11th chapter says: For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke

it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." So take, and eat.

Well again, I want to return to answer or attempt to answer Pilate's question: *"What have you done?"* We were talking about frames of reference. In particular Pilate's frame of reference versus Jesus' frame of reference. There's so much that Jesus elected not to say to Pilate about what he has done that I would like to at least take a stab at describing. Jesus, that bound, that beaten peasant was not only the one who was responsible for the temperature that night, he had also created the very ground that Pilate was standing on. *John 1* says: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* He was also the very author and sustainer of life itself. The fact that Pilate had a beating heart was directly because of this peasant that he was questioning. Verse 4 says: *In him was life, and the life was the light of men.* *Colossians 1:16* goes on to say: *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* You know science still doesn't really know what causes all things to hold together, I

mean, even the most basic unit of matter, the atom, is a problem. I mean if you remember from your high school chemistry, the center of the atom, the nucleus contains protons and neutrons and electrons that are orbiting around the outside. Well if you remember neutrons have no charge, we don't worry about them, so to speak, and protons are positively charged and that presents a huge problem on the most elemental level there is. I mean, all of the known stuff in the universe is made out of atoms and all of this stuff really shouldn't stay together because like charges repulse each other, I mean you know you take a magnet, you take the two positive ends and try to get them to stick together, they push each other apart. Well the very atoms that hold every single thing in this universe shouldn't be able to stay together because their nucleus consists of positive charges. It should blow the nuclei apart. That's what's happening on the most basic elemental level there is. It really shouldn't stay together. And so science is constantly searching for the sub atomic answer to the cosmic glue that holds everything in the universe together when in fact the answer is extremely simple, it's verse 17. It says: *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

There's another side to that. It has to do with judgment day. Judgment day has -- there's a description of judgment day in 2 Peter that has to do with Jesus I believe simply relaxing his grip

on the entire universe, I don't know, for a nanosecond whatever, but 2 Peter 3:10 describes it. It says: *The day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.* I don't know if you've ever heard of that before, but that sounds like some type of thermonuclear chaos and I can just picture Christ who has held everything in this universe together from the moment it existed releasing, in some limited way, his grip, and all of the protons and all of the stuff everywhere just coming apart.

See the frame of reference of the beaten Jesus who was facing Pilate included all that he is and all that he gave up to become this absolute nobody who's now facing crucifixion at the hands of this Pilate. I mean Pilate must have thought this Jesus must have been beneath contempt, that he was some kind of momentary blip on the radar that was going to be swallowed up by the bitterness and envy of the Jewish leaders. And you know, if it wasn't for the fact that Pilate had to deal with these people, he was inclined to let Jesus go. But if there was going to be trouble, well then this Jesus was absolutely expendable. See, Pilate saw this as a meeting of the powerful and the powerless. He had no idea that it really was a meeting of a small time two-bit politician and the King of the universe. And all Pilate really, really wants to know is what

Jesus am I dealing with? Is this Jesus a joke? Is he a threat?
Or is he who he claims to be?

As the elders come forward to distribute the cup, I want us to consider Pilate for a minute because Pilate really is every man. I mean his views are the views of the people that we all rub shoulders with, the people we go to work with, the people we go to school with. Pilate's views are the views of our families, our friends and our neighbors. We see the contrast of Pilate with all of his pomp and all of his power staring down at this peasant named Jesus of Nazareth and he asks with a mixture of mockery and incredulity: *"Are you the king of the Jews?"* And yet how many times was Jesus treated the exact same way when he tried to share the gospel with someone? I mean I just speak for myself. I used to love to make jokes and mock the Jesus that people were trying to share with me. I mean I was no different than Pilate, thinking I was the ruler in charge of my own little world and Jesus was this little peasant that I can dismiss with the wave of my hand. It is not that far out of field to consider that many people like Pilate even today still consider Jesus a joke.

As to Jesus as a threat, well Pilate thought Jesus was a nobody, easy to dismiss but only after he made sure that he wasn't a threat to the Jews, to the Romans, and most importantly to himself. To go

back to his conversation with Jesus, this is *John 18:33*, it says: *Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."* See, Pilate wanted to make sure that Jesus' threat was minimal because after all, if Jesus is not a joke then he's got to be in some ways a threat. But you know Jesus never even suggested that he wasn't a threat. In fact he said the exact opposite. In *Luke 14* he said: *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."* Verse 33 he says: *"So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."* And in *Luke 9*, he said: *"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."* See the reason why folks react so negatively upon hearing the gospel is because anyone who doesn't see Jesus as a joke is going to see him as a threat. And the reason is obvious to anyone who takes the time to listen to what Jesus actually said. Jesus doesn't ask us to accept him as anything other than Lord. He

demands that we surrender fully and completely to his lordship and full control over our lives. He said in *John 12:25*: "*Whoever loves his life loses it. And whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.*" That doesn't mean that we do it perfectly but it means that from the moment that grace comes into our life our trajectory changes from earth to heaven, and the kingdom and God's will becomes more and more each and every day our will as well.

Pilate very quickly moved from Jesus as joke to Jesus as potential threat and when he found out that the earthly threat from Jesus was minimal, he had no choice but to address the final possibility, that Jesus was who he claimed to really be. Verse 37 says: *Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world -- to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."* Pilate said to him, "*What is truth?*" Jesus responds to Pilate by simply stating the truth that he is a king, but then he says something that should make every one of us here count our blessings and realize what an incredible privilege we have received. It was a privilege that Pilate never received. Remember what Jesus says here. Jesus says: "*Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.*" See Jesus spoke before about those who listen to his voice. In fact he used

this ability to listen as the dividing line between belief and unbelief saying in *John 10*: "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*" See time and again Jesus referred to those who believed in him as sheep and sheep are those who hear his voice and respond. So Jesus lays out to Pilate his invitation to bear witness to the truth and it's an invitation spurned. Jesus says: "*Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.*" And Pilate says to him, "*What is truth?*" Pilate was one who could not hear. I mean you cannot get near and more privileged a position than to be standing eye to eye with the Lord of the universe, the King of a kingdom far greater than Pilate could ever imagine and yet he could not hear the voice of truth. The other voices, the voices of envy and bitterness and strife and ambition, they all shouted out Jesus's voice because Pilate, as privileged as he thought he was, was not one of his sheep. Of course that raises a question. Where do you think the ability to hear the voice of Jesus comes from? I mean, do you think it's your own personal spiritual sensitivity that gave you the ability to hear what others do not hear or could it be that God chooses to give hearing to those whom he chooses? Well, the answer to that question lies in that statement that Jesus made about sheep. Just

to go back in verse 29, he says: *"My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand."* Jesus speaks of his father and then he adds parenthetically, he says: *"My Father, who has given them to me."* There's an enormity of meaning in those six words. Christ is telling his disciples that those who hear his voice are the sheep who have been given to the Son by the Father as a gift. In fact Jesus told Pilate that he was given to the world as its king and he went on to say: *"For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world -- to bear witness to the truth."* And if you're one of his sheep, that is if you hear his voice, if you are a gift given by the Father to the Son, if you live to imitate Christ, then you should be able to say the exact same thing about who you are and what you're here for. *"For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world -- to bear witness to the truth."* Well Ephesians tells us the reasons why we were chosen and the purpose for which we were born. It says this in *Ephesians 1:3*, it says: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we have should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has*

blessed us in the Beloved. Ephesians tells us, it tells us that we are born chosen by God before the foundation of the world to become holy and blameless. There's only one way you can do that. It's by placing your trust and your faith in what Christ has done for you on the cross. By faith we are made partakers in Christ's perfect nature, and now we are seen by God as holy and blameless because Jesus's perfect righteousness is now by faith our righteousness. There's a reason why God has chosen us but it's not for who we are but for who we are to become, again by the grace of God. And what he is telling us is you exist to bring glory to God. We are to be to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved, and all of this blessing, it all stems from the unique ability to hear what some will never hear. Jesus said: *"I have come into the world -- to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."* See those who hear the voice of God have been uniquely privileged in a way that others who don't hear that voice have not. Pilate was one of them who was not and he found himself staring directly into the face of the one who was the way, the truth and the life itself and all he could say was: *"What is truth?"* How sad to be that close and yet that far away. So this morning I would ask you to consider the privilege that you have been given. If you know Christ, you have met the way, the truth, and the life, and you've heard his voice. So thank God for his wonderful grace. Take a moment to meditate on what you've been

given and pray for the privilege to pass it on.

1 Corinthians 11:25 says: In the same manner He also took the cup after supper saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." So take, and drink.

This is our time for hearts, hands and feet. This is where we attempt to have some practical application of what it means to remember Jesus. And I was just thinking that, you know, part of the big news this past week is that we as a country laid to rest Billy Graham this week. And if there's anything about his life that stands out to me, it was the singleness of purpose that he had. I mean his name became branded. If you think of Mickey Mantle, what do you think of? You think of baseball. You think of Marilyn Monroe, you think, oh, movie star. You hear the name "Billy Graham" and you automatically think of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I mean could there possibly be a more blessed association to have than that? You know it was amazing to hear so many people, believer and unbeliever alike, wondering what kind of reception in heaven Billy Graham was going to get. I mean understand, by his own words Billy Graham was an extremely simple man who knew one thing, he knew that his life was about sharing the good news of the death of Christ for sin. And there were some things that I didn't

agree with him on, some things that he did that I wondered about, but that didn't cover up or hide or diminish what his life stood for. The gospel is what defined him, it's what drove him, it's what empowered his life so much so that the whole world knew it. And we're looking at these words that Jesus spoke about himself but he also speaks to each of us and I think the reason why we admire Billy Graham so much is that he understood those words that Jesus spoke and he put them into practice. Jesus simply said, "*I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth.*" So I want to ask us this morning, can you apply that description to yourself? Does that describe you? When you die will folks say well, you know, he lived to bear witness to the truth. The gospel was the most important thing to him. He lived his life in order to advance the kingdom of God and share the gospel with those folks that he knew or didn't know. And you know if that's not the case, the time to start is right now. The very thing that I say almost all the time for all of us is somewhere, somehow God's got people that he wants you to rub shoulders with that he wants you to share this good news with. So I want to ask us again, take in mind somebody that you might run into, somebody that you know, somebody that you know you're going to run into and start praying for. Start praying for the opportunity. I know people get so tongue tied and terrified that they're going to be stuck looking foolish and not having the right answers. You don't need to worry about that at

all. Like I said all the time, there's not a question that somebody asks that you don't have an immediate answer for and the immediate answer is: "I don't know, but I'll find out." So there's no question that somebody can ask you that's going to leave you stumped. You've got an answer for everything. It's just a matter of whether or not you will have the courage to share the gospel on a regular way, whether it becomes part of your DNA. I mean Billy Graham was every man as well and the right sense of the word as opposed to Pilate and the wrong sense. Every one of us should be like Billy Graham, passionate about sharing the good news with every opportunity that we have. So I want us to pray as we conclude for that individual that God's going to introduce you to in some way in the next couple of weeks, couple of days, couple of hours, couple of minutes and pray that all of us would have that same singleness of purpose to simply bear witness to the truth that empowered Billy Graham and made him so loved. Let's pray.

Father, again I thank you. I thank you for the statement that you made: "I have come into the world to bear witness to the truth," and the greatest truth there is is the one that we are all witness to: Jesus Christ, God become flesh had come into the world, lived perfectly and then offered up his life on the cross for us and by faith we can have his righteousness. Lord, give us this day the ability to share this good news, more importantly the passion and

the heart to share it. May a little bit of what drove Billy Graham drive each of us so that we are praying, thinking, considering, bringing before your throne those people that we want the privilege of sharing that good news with. Give us that desire, give us that ability, give us that courage, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.