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Services for healing. Now I think everyone of us if I polled the crowd both here on campus and those that are watching online, I think everyone of us would agree that God is still in the healing business. However in the book of James 5, it gives very specific instructions about this business of particularly asking the Lord to heal an ailment. Now the question multi-level was why do we not have a service for healing? Have we gotten too good for it? Let's walk through this James passage because I think it gives us specific instructions for what or what we, the body of Christ, are to do.

Now this is in James 5. I'm going to begin in verse 13. It says, "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you?" That's what this question is in reference to, "let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Now I actually want to address the question in reverse because it asks why do we not have a healing service, have we gotten too good for it, what do these passages mean?

There are no places in scripture for what we might call a "healing service." There are places in scripture like James 5 where believers gather together for the purpose of praying for healing. Now the thing that I want you to notice that I think is of the utmost importance in verse 14: who calls the prayer meeting? Does the pastor call for a prayer service? Do the deacons call for a prayer service? The person who is sick calls for the prayer service. So the person who has an ailment, the person who is sick calls and it says calls the elders, calls those that are mature in their faith, calls those that they trust as they have walked with the Lord for years and years and years, and they're to gather around and it says they're to anoint them with oil.

Now all throughout scripture oil is representative of the Holy Spirit. The oil is not the item that brings the healing. In fact, one of the things that I've shared with people having been a part of numerous of these type of prayer gatherings is that when you gather around somebody and you put oil on their head, you are doing something that in the world's eyes is utterly foolish. You're making yourself a fool for the Lord's sake and you're saying, "God, we trust in your power, your authority, and your sovereignty so much that we're

just going to do it the way you told us to do it and pray that you will move as you said that you would move."

Now the next thing I want to ask is this: whose faith is on trial, the person who's sick or the persons who are praying? Because how many times have you heard when it comes to "healing" someone who is sick being prayed over, they didn't get well, and someone has said, "You didn't have enough faith." Whose faith is on trial in this passage? The ones who are doing the praying. The picture that you get is the person who is sick has prayed until they cannot pray anymore, and so they call the elders, they call those that they respect to gather them and to surround them to pray over them.

Now I've been a part of situations all throughout my Christian life where these type of events have been called for various circumstances. One of my favorite ones was actually was at a youth camp years ago. I was the camp pastor and there was a young man who was struggling with an issue and he came to me and his dad was there as a counselor and they came and said, "Do you believe James 5?" And I said, "Well, yeah, it's in the Bible. I believe it. What are you talking about?" He said, "Well, my son," and then his son began to talk about how he had this issue, an ailment in his life, and said, "I truly, I would ask you, do you think that you would be willing to pray over me like James 5 says?" I said, "Well, absolutely."

So I turned to a dear friend of mine that was the recreation director at the camp that week, he was organizing all the games, and I said, "We've got this young man and he wants to pray, you know, do you have any oil to pray over him?" He said, "I don't." He said, "Jeff, I tell you what, go to the kitchen, grab some Crisco, that'll work." And so we slapped some Crisco on this young boy and we prayed over him. Now does that not sound foolish in the world's eyes? But whose faith was on trial? It was our faith to pray for. In fact, those that have been involved in prior times such as this, I tell them, "If you're going to be the prayer-er, you'd better fast and pray before you pray because the one who's being prayed for, they're exhausted, they're worn out, they've exhausted themselves."

So on this question and we could go a lot of different roads, I think probably the most important road and this may scare some of you and that's okay, is let me tell you about my road. Several years ago, it was a Christmas Eve service where I was having the privilege of baptizing several dozen individuals on a Christmas Eve service, and I was baptizing and baptizing and baptizing and all of a sudden this young man went down and when he went down, my shoulder popped and when it popped it didn't go back. I couldn't raise my arm for several days. I couldn't lift anything. It was just shot. I don't have any other words to describe it. It was awful. It was swelling up. I was uncomfortable. I went to a dear friend of mine who was a sports chiropractor. He looked at it, we had an MRI taken of it. I got reference to a highly esteemed orthopedic surgeon in the area who specialized with baseball players, working on arms and knees and such.

So I go into this guy's office for a consultation, actually I wrote it on a piece of paper, and the question was how did you injure your arm? To which I put I was baptizing somebody because that's how it happened, right? So I meet the orthopedic for the very first time in

person and he says, "Mr. Meyers, you didn't hurt your arm baptizing anybody." I said, "No, trust me, I got video. It was on TV. I've got proof of it." He said, "No, I talked to my uncle and I talked to a cousin, they're both Baptist preachers, and unless you were baptizing a Mack truck, you didn't do this baptizing anybody." And I said, "Okay." And he took my MRI and he put it up on the screen and he circled my shoulder. He said, "Mr. Meyers, do you know what that is up there?" I said, "No, sir." He said, "That's 40 years of stupid looking right at you." And he began to tell me the things that I had done physically to my body and he'd never met me before. He could tell. He was such a good medical doctor, he could tell, he told me what position I played in baseball. He said, "You were a second baseman, weren't you?" I said, "How do you know?" And he pointed to the MRI. He said, "Because second basemen get this injury, and this injury." He said, "You did power lifting." He began to go through everything. He said, "I know what you've been doing." And he said, "And it wasn't baptizing anybody." He said, "You were 99% broken and he broke the last percent. That's what happened."

That day his consultation to me, he said, "You need reconstructive shoulder surgery." He was honest with me. He said, "It's probably a 50% chance it's going to work. It's going to take six months of rehabilitation. It's going to be painful. It's going to be awful." And here's what he said, "If you ever want to play ball with your boys again, you're going to have to do it." I said, "What?" He said, "If you ever want to be able to lift more than five pounds again, you're going to have to do it."

Tracy and I drove home from his clinic toward our house and I was tearing up because I knew the pain that was coming, I knew all that was about to happen, and she looked at me and I jokingly call my wife sometimes the Holy Spirit in a dress, she looked at me and she said, "Jeff, I'm going to ask you a question." I said, "Sure." She said, "A guy walks into your office and says what has happened to him is the same thing that's happened to you. What's the first thing you're going to ask him?" I said, "I'm going to ask him have you prayed about this?" And she said, "Have you?" I said, "Um, you heard what the doctor said." And she said, "I cannot believe with all the times that you've gathered around people to pray for them, that you haven't considered having people pray for you."

I went back to a group of men that I highly respected and trusted spiritually, the elders of the church. I shared with them the situation. We scheduled a time a week later. I said, "Guys, don't show up just because it's on the calendar. I want you praying, I want you fasting before you show up because it's not me on trial, it's you guys that are on trial." That day they surrounded me, they did exactly what the Bible says. They didn't use Crisco but they used oil and they prayed over me and they prayed over my shoulder. My shoulder has not been reconstructed. I was never under the scalpel and I've got video proof two hours ago I threw a baseball through the window of an old van at the car bash. Yes, that was a lot of fun, by the way. I can play ball with my boys. I can lift more than five pounds and the reason is because of James 5, a group of men gathered around me and they believed that God could heal me.

Now what that orthopedic incredibly gifted? Absolutely. Does God use doctors? Of course he does. Does he use medicine? My dad's a pharmacist, what do you think I'm

going to say? But there are times according to James 5 that you gather around and you ask God to intervene supernaturally. Now I'm going to pick on us. I don't think we utilize James 5 enough. It's not about getting on stage and throwing wheelchairs off like we've seen videos of. That's not what this is. It says you gather together, you call. I cannot tell you how many times I've known people who have been sick, they've had ailments, they've had struggles, and I have begged them, "Please, call us to come pray for you." Well, you can't just show up. You can't just say, "Hey, knock, knock, we're here to pray over you." That's not what James 5 says. The faith of the one who is sick has to trust in the faith of those that are praying and it says the fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Now you know what sometimes I say, just because it's Baptist it's not always Bible, and sometimes when it's Bible it's not Baptist. That's not Baptist but that's Bible is what that is. And so to whomever asked the question and whomever does follow-up questions, why do we not have a healing service? Because the Bible doesn't call for a healing service, the Bible calls for the service of healing when those who are sick call for those to pray over them. And let me say unequivocally, I give you an open invitation, if you want folks to come and pray over you and do what James 5 says, you call me and I know a few folks and we'll show up and we'll pray for you. There is no greater joy than seeing God do the supernatural in people's lives. I know that's not real Baptist, but that's Bible and this arm right here is living proof because people surrounded me, they prayed over me, and I didn't have surgery and it's doing what the doctor said it would never do.

Follow-up questions, thoughts, concerns? Yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Well, yes, the laying of hands, the anointing of the oil, it's a symbolic action. Nothing special about the hands or the oil as much as we're saying, "Okay, God, we're yielding to you."

[unintelligible]

Oh, it's a blessing.

[unintelligible]

There you go.

[unintelligible]

Now let me say something real quick. James 5 does not guarantee that everybody you pray over will be healed because we still have death. There comes a time where we receive a permanent healing versus a temporal healing. But oh, the testimony to the goodness and the grace and the healing of the Lord. And I don't think, particularly in the Western world, we don't read James 5 enough. By the way, again, let me say this: I am

very thankful for the medical profession. I do go to doctors. I do go to the pharmacist when I'm sick. I do go get a prescription. However I think one of the things that we fail to do is we as Westerners tend to not lean toward the supernatural and always lean toward the natural. Sometimes God wants to intervene supernaturally and we have to call on him to do so as he has laid out.

Any other thoughts, concerns, questions, what-abouts? And Baptists said, "No, we're not going there." Okay, sounds good. By the way, there's actual video proof of me throwing the baseball so it did work.

It says biblically is there anything wrong with someone referring to themselves as a prophet in today's society? I've heard of other denominations referring to teachers as prophets and was wondering if this is a biblically sound principle.

Okay, let's begin in the book of Ephesians 4, then we're going to go to Hebrews 1. So Ephesians 4. To the church of Ephesus. The church at Ephesus, Ephesians 4 gives us some instruction on what I will call the offices of the church. Now understand there is a difference between an office and a spiritual gift. When you get to 1 Corinthians 12, it talks about the spiritual gift of prophecy. Here we're talking about the office of a prophet, okay? So very two distinct different things.

Ephesians 4:11, it says, "And he," and this is the Lord obviously, "he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Now it says that there are five distinct offices that are given to the church for the edifying and the growing of what we know as the body of Christ.

Now let's go through them in order. He gave some apostles. Now by the way, before I get into this discussion, if you watch "Christian television," there are many a people who will come on and claim to be Apostle So-and-so or Prophet So-and-so, or whatever, alright? Now it doesn't matter what you want to call yourself, the question is what does the Bible say that the Lord is doing? An apostle is someone who saw the risen Lord and his ministry with their own eyes. With all due respect to anybody who is on your television station, there is nobody today who is an apostle. In fact, there is an apostolic test. Test 1: let them get bit by a venomous snake without any serum and see if they live. It's at the end of the gospel of Mark 16. It talks about the apostles, that that would happen. It also says they'll drink a poisonous drink and they will not die. It's interesting that when I've had this conversation in a small group, I've offered them venomous snakes and poisonous drink and nobody will partake. Do you not remember the Apostle Paul in the book of Acts had a snake, venomous, bite him? Remember what he did? I believe it was Acts 26, he shook it off and said, "Hey, I'm going to go back to preaching." And they were like, "What happened there?"

The Lord talked about those specific apostolic signs. They were witnesses to the ministry and to the resurrection. Remember what the Apostle Paul said about himself, he was the apostle called out of due time. He saw the risen Lord not during the 40 days of his

ministry post-resurrection, he saw the risen Lord in Acts 9. Remember he saw him on the road to Damascus. He actually had, in fact, the book of 2 Corinthians, half of it is the Apostle Paul defending his apostolic status to his testimony and what he saw. So therefore today I would claim that apostles no matter whether one calls themselves or not is not an office of the contemporary church, obviously the first century church.

So the next one goes to prophets. Now there's a difference between the gift of prophecy and the office of a prophet so the way I want to answer this is in the book of Hebrews 1, again, not what we necessarily want to hear or like to hear or want to say, but what does the Bible say. In the book of Hebrews 1, beginning in verse 1, it says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the," who? "Prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Interesting that according to Hebrews 1:1, the office of the prophet is not necessary nor valid now because of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Now I know what some of you are thinking, "Well, what about the New Testament? I mean, after all, there is prophecy within the New Testament? There's apostolic gifts in the New Testament?" Yes, but what you see, in my opinion and I believe biblically defended, is you see the offices of apostle and prophet dying out with that first generation of believers; now that we have the scriptures come into fruition, there is no longer the need for the prophet or the apostle because we now have the word of God that instructs us. We no longer have to go down and see what does Isaiah need to say about this, because we have what the prophets the Lord has given us and what they say.

Now there is the spiritual gift of prophecy. You say, "Now what is that?" Well, basically that's found in 1 Corinthians 12. It means that you have this innate spiritual gift from God that you're able to discern what's coming down the road, but you don't have the ability to say, "Thus saith the Lord." There's a big difference. There's the gift of prophecy, then there's the office of the prophet.

Now why is this important for you and I today? Because in the last couple hundred years there have been some major, significant, religious movements here on this continent that have created entire groups of religious fervor because of a prophet who said they had a new revelation, oh, in specific, another testament of Jesus Christ. Same thing. Now so here's what we can do. If what I'm saying is true according to Hebrews 1 and Ephesians 4, if what I'm saying is true, then those who would claim to be a prophet of God, the office of prophet, are disqualified with what we know as the full fruition of the word of God.

Let's go backwards in time. So we take a man, and I'm just going to call names tonight, take a man by the name of Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith who initiated what we know as Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints or the Mormon Church, called himself a prophet. In fact, the Mormon Church today has a group of prophets that speak unto their people even when Hebrews 1 says we don't need the prophets anymore. Let me be more specific. In the sixth century AD, there was a man who called himself a prophet by the name of

Mohammad. According to Hebrews 1:1, we don't have or need the office of prophet anymore. Notice what happens when these individuals claim to speak on behalf of God when the Bible says you're not ordained to do so: they create false faiths and belief systems that lead people astray.

So to the question I would say that the office of prophet is no longer a valid office, but the gift of prophecy is still a spiritual gift of whom the Lord can give to whom he desires, when he desires.

Any other prophet questions or prophecy issues? Boy, the meatloaf sank hard tonight. That's alright. Oh, yes, sir.

[unintelligible]

Those are good words. Yeah.

[unintelligible]

Alright, so Galatians... Okay, what was addressed back there and I want to thank you for alluding to that. Galatians 1:8, he says when he thinks of these "groups," he thinks of Galatians 1:8 where the Apostle Paul says that if anybody has given to you or shared with you or spoken to you another gospel, even if it came by a messenger, an angel, let them be accursed. In other words, have nothing to do with them. They're teaching a false gospel, a false teaching. Then you go into 2 Corinthians 11 which you, sir, alluded to, where it says marvel not that Satan himself disguises himself as an angel of light, deceiving humanity. In other words, he always comes in a form that you think is the right answer but it ends up being the wrong answer. The gospel, the different gospel, they use, here's the problem with these groups, they use the same words but different definitions. Gospel just means good news, okay, but what we're saying it was another gospel. It was not the message of Jesus Christ alone, it's a different communication.

Is that where you were headed with those two passages? Thank you, thank you, thank you for bringing those up. But usually they come by somebody who claims to be a prophet.

Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Oo, the question is: is this how the Antichrist will deceive? I'm glad you went there. Let's go to Revelation. Come on, let's have some fun tonight. Go to Revelation 13. By the way and I'm sure many of you are aware of this, that the term or the word Antichrist is not found in the book of Revelation. It's found in the book of 1 John but the term "beast" or "the beast" is, which we can see in context is a complete reference to this Antichrist character.

What we see...by the way, we're not going to dissect all of Revelation 13 tonight, but what we're going to see is that we know of a biblical, a godly Triune or Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You're going to see that when you get to Revelation 13, you also find a satanic trinity. There is the beast, there is another beast, and there is the false prophet. And so there's a lot of interaction here. They're all working together. The reason I bring that up is because we're going to see all those names utilized in this passage.

Now when you get to verse 12 of Revelation, well, we'll go back into verse 11. It says, "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live." That passage in reference to the activity of the Antichrist says he has a deadly wound that was healed. As we're in Passion Week this week, does that not sound familiar that you have a death and a resurrection or a resuscitation in that case? You have miracles. You have signs. You have wonders. You have the supernatural. I think one of the great deceptions of the enemy is that the Antichrist is going to show up in a red suit, horns and tail. I'm going to tell you what he's going to do, he's going to show up probably in a suit, possibly even carrying a Bible, because the greatest deception is not the opposite of, it's the almost.

For example, in Genesis 2:16, the Lord gives this statement to humanity about the garden of Eden. He says, "You shall eat freely of every tree of the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die." When you get to Genesis 3 when the serpent communicates specifically to Eve, he says, "You shall eat of every tree of the garden except for the tree of knowledge of good and evil." He leaves out one word, the word is "freely." Isn't that interesting? He promises us freedom but he steals our freedom. The commission that God gave in English, the commission that God gave humanity in Genesis 2:16 was 10 words in length. Satan's reproduction of it was 9 words in length. The greatest lies are 90% true and that's what you're going to see from the Antichrist which, by the way, Antichrist doesn't mean opposite of Christ, it means not Christ.

I believe that the Antichrist figure when he arrives one day will say he is the Christ, he will be received as a messiah figure, he will be a man of peace at first, he will be a man of signs and wonders, he will be a man of supernatural activity, but then according to Matthew 24:15 and Daniel 9, there's coming a time where he goes into the temple and he commits the abomination of desolation and he reveals his true identity, and that's when in Matthew 24 Jesus says, "When this happens, run for the hills." This is bad, okay?

So to your point, it is a false gospel, it is to your point, sir, it is a manipulated gospel because he's bringing good news of peace and healing and miracles but he's not doing it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, he's doing it in his own name, and they worship him



and his image. It's not pointing to the Lord, it's pointing to himself and so when this character arrives one day in the future, I believe personally, this is just my opinion based on this passage and 2 Thessalonians 2, I think he will be received as a messiah figure. You know, I cannot imagine this vile, grotesque, inhumane type individual winning the affection of the world. So what does the world want nowadays? The world wants peace, right? According to Daniel 9 he promises peace. What does the world want? The world wants something supernatural. It says he's going to do something. It even says he brings things from heaven. What do we do every year? We spend billions of dollars looking to the heavens because we think somebody out there has more answers than us here.

Now I don't know what that's going to look like one day, but I think he comes with a messiah-type attitude. In fact, let's think about when Jesus arrived at what we know his First Coming. The number 1 criticism to Jesus was he did not fulfill their expectations of a political economic ruler. So what do you think the Antichrist is going to be? A political economic ruler until he turns on humanity and shows his true colors.

So I'm glad you brought that out. I think this is the disguise of the Antichrist and he will utilize religion as an aspect because it says he goes into the temple. So if he's willing to go into the temple, he's willing to exercise some type of religious endeavor. In fact, you read more on this character, this is interesting in chapter 13, I told you we weren't going to dissect it but this is interesting in today's culture, it also says he will not desire women. Now isn't that interesting because nowadays we're told that that's okay and it's natural and it's celebrated and we should celebrate it. A hundred years ago people would have said, "What?" Today, you take an individual who promises peace, prosperity, does some supernatural activity and happens not to have an affection for women, and he'll be on the cover of every magazine in the world and everybody will say, "Bow down to that." Isn't it interesting how the world is playing into the hands of what the scriptures say is going to happen.

Does that help out with the Antichrist question? Anybody else on this one? Nobody? Somebody? Nope, nope, going once, going twice. People are quiet tonight.

Here we go, back to the database. Oh boy, do babies who die grow up in heaven or are they immediately grown up when they reach Jesus?

This is a fabulous, fabulous question on so many different fronts. 1. Let me address the question or the issue of babies in general. When you get to 2 Samuel 7, you have a situation where King David and Bathsheba, the woman who he had an illicit relationship with, would later become his wife and bear whom we know as Solomon, there is a child that is born to them. When that child is born, it dies seven days later. King David makes this statement, he said, "He cannot come to where I am but one day I will go where he is." So King David inspired by the Holy Spirit made it very clear that the death of that child did not prevent his eternity, particularly in relationship to his relationship with the Lord.

But the question on the table is: do babies when death occurs, does that child enter what we know as heaven as seven days of age and grows up? What is the process here? Alright, go to the book of 1 John 3. This is a great question and I'm going to actually answer it from the opposite perspective. 1 John 3:2, it says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him," that's Jesus, "for we shall see him as he is." That verse says that one day when we are in that glorified state, when we're in the presence of the Lord, we shall be as he is. Now there's all kinds of debate about what does that mean because Jesus was about 33 years of age, we're going to be about 33 years of age. I'm not going to get that specific but here's what I am going to say is that Jesus in his resurrected body was not seven days of age, and he was not 70 years of age. Let's be honest with ourselves, we've known a lot of individuals who have lived a very long, fruitful, physical life who pass away at age, let's just take my wife's great-aunt, at age 101. I don't think she wants to be 101 for all of eternity. In other words, what we see in 1 John 3:2 is I believe there's ample evidence that the physical resurrected body of Jesus in its stature and estate is a good picture of the stature and estate of what we know ourselves to be when we are in his presence for all of eternity. In other words, the day that I breathe my last breath, there are some individuals who have already, they're already residents of heaven who are dear friends of mine and who have already passed to be with the Lord.

Let me go through a list. My grandfather was in his 60s. He was a very ill cardiac patient when he passed away. I'm not going to be looking for an older man with gray hair. I have a dear friend of mine that died in his 40s of a severe cancer issue. I'm not going to be looking for someone who can hardly breathe in a bed. And what I mean by that is our decrepit state on the backside we don't expect for all of eternity. At the same time, I think on the front side when we're dealing with children, there is not a physical maturation growth process mentioned in heaven, you just are as he is. No matter what age or stage we enter therein, I think the picture is that you are as he is because it says we will be as he is.

So if you do subscribe that babies have to "grow up" in heaven, then older people would have to retract in age in heaven. You can't have one side without having the other. I believe that no matter what age or stage you are when you breathe your last breath or the Lord takes you home, you will be as he is. And by the way, in his resurrected body, he walked through walls. He was in one place one moment and another place the next. And this is the best part, he was still eating fish. So we still get to eat. That means heaven has a place for Baptists. We're there. We're going to eat. It's going to be good.

Any other questions about babies? Yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

Ah, how does that apply to a miscarried baby? Wonderful question because we have to address the question when does life begin. Again, does life begin when the umbilical cord is cut? Does life begin when there is a gender that can be attributed at about week 14? I think scripturally we could defend that life begins at what we know as conception. And

so therefore I would say that even, yes, in that scenario you have the hope, you and anybody else, that that child that was within a womb is as David said with the Lord because it is still a creation and a child of God even if the world will not put that label on it. The world won't even put that label on newborns nowadays, you know, so who cares what the world says. But again, I believe... Now by the way, here's what's interesting about what King David said. In Hebrew tradition, Jewish tradition, they did not name a baby until after 40 days. Now why is that important? Because when David said, "My child, I will go to where he is," that was before he was named which means he was circumventing this tradition of it's not really a child until day 40. The Lord circumvented it.

Does that help at all? And so I've known several people who have celebrated the home-going of their children that were lost in the womb because it is a child and it is a creation of God and therefore is life.

I saw another hand, I thought, maybe, did I not? Oh, yes, ma'am.

[unintelligible]

The movie and the book is called "Heave Is For Real."

[unintelligible]

Right.

[unintelligible]

Correct.

[unintelligible]

Right. So this brings up a great question. People who write books about going to heaven. With all due respect to these individuals, there is no biblical evidence that as you were on earth is as you are in heaven. 2. Why would God give a five year old more insight than he gave the Apostle Paul? It makes for a great bestseller, however I struggle with the biblical fidelity of the observation, if that makes sense.

Now I would attest there is biblical truth to that which was a child or that which was in the womb being in the presence of the Lord, but not in infant state, elderly state. The problem with this is, and I know I've got to go across campus, here's the problem: we're really good at wanting heaven to be like earth on steroids as we remember them. Well, I understand that I'm not as old as some of you in the room but I'm now a decade past what Jesus was as far as his physical age, and if the Lord came to me right now and said for all of eternity you can be 33 again, I would jump in a heartbeat. I don't want to go the direction I'm going and I don't want to be there for all of eternity because I've got a lot of bum parts, if that makes sense, and some of y'all got more bum parts than I do. And at the

same time, that seven day old baby of King David, it just doesn't work biblically though it may work in literature, if that makes sense. I'm not trying to be overly critical but I do have to question if the Apostle Paul, the Apostle John, and the others whom the Lord gave scripture, why didn't he give them the information that supposedly everybody now is receiving, if that makes sense. And some of it which is in stark contrast to what scripture says.

Mike King, are you anywhere in the room? There's Mike King. For those of you who do not know, my friend who pictures Samson after a bad hair day, Mike King. Truth is truth, right, brother? It is what it is. Yeah, both of us, by the way, I'm sure many of y'all know this, both of our, I guess our hair status above the shoulders is because of our wives. You shaved your head because of Vacation Bible School and she said keep it shaved. I grew a beard because of youth camp and she said keep the beard. So this was not our choice.

[unintelligible]

But you know the truth, if momma happy, everybody happy. If daddy's happy, nobody cares.

Mike King. Okay, so y'all have been tossing these little softballs to Jeff and everything so give me something real, okay? Give me some hard questions. I'm just kidding. That's not...we're not going to do that. I don't want that.

So Jeff explained to you, I'm sure, that he's going over to meet with our students. They're having an event over in the parking lot. Somehow they think that it's fun to smash a car. I guess it is. I remember back in high school days that we used to have those things for pep rallies and so forth, Kathy was a cheerleader and that's a side note. I bet a lot of you did not know that she was a cheerleader in high school. She's this quiet, mild-mannered Kathy was a cheerleader in high school. So anyway.

So anyway, so I'm going to kind of wrap everything up. Let me ask: did you do your prayer time at the beginning? Okay, that's what I wanted to be sure and do. So let's do that and then I want to share with you a couple of things and then we'll wrap this thing up, okay? So look at your circle of concerns. Let me update you on a couple of things here. I actually made it to the hospital late today, I usually try to get there about midday or whatever, and didn't make it today. So Wayne L. is at home and so is Renee W. So that's a good thing. Had a great visit with Bill and Amber M. this afternoon. Keep them in your prayers and you see our list at Arbor Springs and the folks that are there, folks at home that we want to continue to remember in our prayers to lift them up to you, to the Lord as well, our out of town folks. We've had births in our church family and then on the back on sympathy we've had folks who have passed away, and then on the back we always remember those who are serving in the military and also who are serving the Lord in various capacities as missionaries or planting churches, whatever the Lord has called them to do in that capacity.

So we want to pray for those folks but I want to ask you to pray for a process that is underway in our church. You've heard bits and pieces about it. I want to just give you another little bit and piece about what is coming this time next year. We will be very much involved in a process of something called a common experience and a common expression, okay? That is kind of a fancy word with what in the world does that mean? It means that what we want to do in our church is we want to have something that brings us together that all of us are experiencing. We have lots of different worship services. We have lots of different Bible studies on Sunday morning. We have events like our youth, our students are experiencing tonight. We have this in here. We've got [unintelligible]. All of that. We wanted to do something that would kind of pull everybody together and give them a common experience and so we are working our way, we're working a plan that we will be doing Master Life together as a body during this time next year, and you're going to hear a lot about that. But I wanted to put that out on your table, not physically your table but in your mind and I want you to begin to think about that as to what God could do in our church if we had just a boatload of people, not just a Master Life class but what would it look like if we had just a ton of people who were going through Master Life and letting God begin to impact their life with what it looks like to be a disciple and what it looks like to be Spirit-led, to just know that we're walking in the Spirit. How would that impact your life individually? How would that impact our church life here as a body of Christ here at First Baptist?

We are extremely excited about this. I can't wait. We've already got teams together who are in the planning stages of this. You may know that some of you know this but some of you do not know that we as a staff are going through Master Life together right now. There are some of us who have been through Master Life 4, 5, or 6 times. I was part of that group back in the early '80s, not at this church but in [unintelligible] when Master Life was just beginning to get off the ground. I've got my certificate from when I went through at First Baptist [unintelligible]. Jean Hill was at church. She and Amy and their family were in our church at that time, went through it there, got my certificate of being a leader, led groups there, led groups here. But I'm going through Master Life fresh right now. Man, it's cool. It is just really cool. God is speaking to me, challenging me, and encouraging me during this process that we're going through as a staff.

So, one, be praying for us as we are about halfway through, a little over halfway through, and then we will begin to unroll, unveil, and roll out the different plans for getting other folks involved in this process. So make that a matter of prayer. I really would encourage you to do that because it's going to be really really good as a part of that.

Do you have a special prayer request? Just lift your hand. You may not want to share that but just lift your hand if you've got a special prayer request you'd like for us to be praying with you about tonight. Cool. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Well, let's pray and then we will be dismissed, okay?

*God, thank you. Thank you for the privilege of being together on this campus this evening. Thank you for the privilege of being able to dive into your word, to be able to*

*explore and to ask questions and to know that the truth, the answers are going to be contained within your word, Father. Thank you for Jeff and his leadership to point us into scripture to find the answers about scripture. You've revealed yourself there, Father, and I thank you for that. Thank you for the privilege of being in relationship. Thank you for being in a relationship as a church in this place that we call First Baptist, Opelika. Thank you for brothers and sisters who are on the same journey, Father, and I pray that you would help us to wrap our arms around each other that we might lock arms and hearts together as we continue this journey. I pray for the experiences that we will have as we move forward with the Master Life plan of being involved in discipling, intentional discipleship, Father. I pray that you would challenge our hearts with all of that.*

*I pray, God, that you would be with each of these prayer requests that we've mentioned this evening. There are a host of folks on the sheet that we have before us. There are folks who have lifted their hands in this room this evening saying that they have a special request. I pray that you would be with them. You know the need. You know exactly what each person is experiencing right now, Lord, that may be a challenge in their hearts. I pray for our families in our church and I pray for marriages in our church, and I pray for individuals in our church that you would infuse each heart and life with your Holy Spirit to affect your will and purpose, Father. We don't know what that is, but we submit ourselves to your authority, we submit ourselves to your sovereignty, and I pray that you would help us to remove self from this whole process and that we might just simply center our minds, open our hearts, open our arms to whatever you want to do in our lives. God, may you be magnified as you heal, as you encourage, as you challenge, as you walk hand-in-hand with people, Father, through life transitions, whatever that may look like. Again, Father, may you receive honor and glory for all that takes place.*

*We love you, Father, we thank you for the privilege that will be ours this coming Sunday when we celebrate together the resurrection of our Lord Jesus and, Lord, we pray that you would receive all the honor and glory that is due to you as we worship together this coming Sunday. May we honor you with our lives throughout the rest of this week. In Christ's name. Amen.*

God bless. See you Sunday morning.