

## Sunday Sermon AM 6-18

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We as a church family have just made a declaration that the Gospel is simple but, adults, let's be honest this morning, we love to make simple things incredibly complicated. This last week, we had the privilege on our campus of hosting vacation Bible school. The simplest and greatest of all weeks in the church calendar where those who have such a simple faith remind us of how complex ours often gets. For those of you that were not a part of it, I took part as you saw on the video, as a part of one of our skits in our children's ministry and there was a young boy by the name of Buzz and I played his dad. But kids, even though we were in costume, kids knew who we were and on one of the first days part of the skit was that I took off in a spaceship. We had a four year old young person come to us the next day, come to us and say, "Taylor, who's gonna preach to us Sunday if Pastor Jeff's in space?" The reason that's important to hear is we're about to read a story about walking on water and it takes the same childlike faith to grasp what Jesus is trying to get across to us today. Let's pray that the simple Gospel will be received simply today.

Let's pray.

*Lord, as we come to this time, Lord, we're the ones guilty of making everything complicated. God, we're the ones guilty of throwing in more pieces to the puzzle than need be there. So God, I pray that somehow supernaturally that you would take your word and as it is applied to our heart, strip away all the layers, strip away all of the extras and, God, may we just see the simple simple Gospel message today. Lord, we confess we are the ones that make everything difficult. You're the one that makes everything clear. So God, that is our desire today, that we would experience the simple clearness of your word today. Help us, O God, to have the faith of a child. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

This morning, I want to encourage you actually to open to two places in your Bible, the Gospel of John 6 and the Gospel of Matthew 14. Now, if you're a first time guest or visitor with us, we're systematically walking through the Gospel of John and today in chapter 6 we come to probably the most famous miracle in the ministry of Jesus, the famous walking on water. And as we discussed last week when Jesus broke the bread and multiplied it and fed the 5,000 men plus their wives and children, we discussed that the Gospel of John only has 7% of what the other three Gospels contain yet the feeding of the 5,000 is in all four Gospels. Today, we come to another story, another miracle that is in

three of the four Gospels, not just in the Gospel of John alone, and it's the story of Jesus walking on water and it's one of those stories that no matter how churched we've been in life, we know this story, at least we know the idiom that goes with it of walking on water.

How many times have you been asked to do something, maybe at work or by a family member and it's just too overwhelming and you say to them, "What do you think, I can walk on water?" You know, it's one of those statements in our culture when we want to brag on somebody and say, "But they might be able to walk on water." It's a statement we use to speak of the miraculous. It's a statement we use of the infusion of the supernatural into the natural and yet today what we're going to discover is that Jesus Christ was not the only one who walked on water. In fact, that's why we're going to go to the Gospel of Matthew in just a moment because in the account in the Gospel of John it's only Jesus walking on the water, but what we discover is that Simon Peter also walked on the water and today we're going to look at the subject matter: how do we, proverbially speaking, how do we walk on water? Because outside of God himself, Jesus Christ, only one other human being has ever walked on water. There were 11 men who stayed in the boat and there was one who was willing to go out on the Sea of Galilee and we're going to discover today how we also in our lives can "walk on water."

Beginning in John 6:15, it says,

15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. 16 And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, 17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. 18 And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. 19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs [that's 3 or 4 miles], they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. 20 But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. 21 Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

Now if you would turn back to Matthew 14 and I want to see kind of some color commentary here because the Gospel of John account leaves out the interaction between Jesus and Peter. Beginning in verse 22 of Matthew 14, it says,

22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. 23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. 24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. 27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer;

it is I; be not afraid. 28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be you, bid me come unto you on the water. 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O you of little faith, wherefore didst you doubt?

In this story we have the only other person other than Jesus Christ who ever walked on water and today I want to discover what are the lessons or what are the things, the principles that Peter had to allow in his life that if we'll allow them in our lives we can have the same type experience.

The first thing is this: Peter was willing to quit. You say, "Quit? Aren't we supposed to talk about the opposite of quitting?" Work with me a moment. Look in John 6:15, it says that Jesus sent them into a ship because they would make him king. Now, one of the beauties that we have with hindsight being 20/20 is we see that Jesus coming to humanity is twofold: His first coming where he was crowned with thorns, his second coming where he will be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords. His first coming where he would be as a lamb that bleeds and a suffering servant, his second coming where he comes to reign forevermore. And one of the things the crowd was doing is they were trying to circumvent the message of the cross. They were trying to get him to a throne rather than see him on Calvary. And the thing that we see with the disciples, the things we see with Jesus encouraging them, is they quit – listen – they quit listening to the masses. Over 20,000 people if you include the men, the women and the children, had been fed by Jesus and according to verse 15 they wanted him to be king. In other words, take over the Romans, rule them now, we don't need to worry about all that sacrifice stuff. We just want power and control. The disciples, Peter particularly, was incredibly outnumbered but they quit listening to them.

Let me challenge you, if you're ever going to "walk on water," you're going to have to quit listening to what the masses say. You're going to have quit listening to the "cultural opinion." You're going to have to quit listening to all the jargon that we're bombarded with every day. And allow me to share with you something that you may not know: it is not sinful to sit in silence. It's not sinful. In fact, I read just this week that if you're married, you're a married couple, the average person in a marital relationship checks their phone over 150 times a day. We cannot stand silence. But what do we get? All we get are people's opinions. All we get are all these ideas and the majority of the ideas that we're exposed to are completely contrary to the message of Jesus. Jesus was the only one who said, "Get in the boat," everybody else said, "Here, stay here. We want him to be a king."

You say, "Well, how do you quit?" You see, here's the problem because every January 1<sup>st</sup> we say we're going to quit overeating, every January 1<sup>st</sup> we say we're going to quit being lazy and we're really good at trying to quit but not successful at quitting because we focus on that which needs to be stopped. If you've ever struggled with any kind of addiction or any kind of struggle in life or you just want to change a habit or behavior in life, the more

you focus on quitting it, the less likely you are to actually quit it. Allow me to illustrate. It's real simple: right here, right now, do not think of the number five. Don't think about five. What are you doing? You're thinking about not thinking about five which makes you think about five. Versus think on four. When you concentrate on thinking on four versus not thinking on five, you're actually successful and the thing we understand is the way they quit listening to the masses is not only were they willing to be in a time of silence, they were willing to spend time with Jesus and until we allow that to happen in our lives where we remove ourselves not by saying, "I quit. I stop. I don't want to," but by saying, "I need to have some silence with Jesus. I need a few moments every day just to hear from him," that's the only way we can quit listening to all this world is peddling.

But the second thing that the disciples and in particular Peter did, is they obeyed. Notice it said in both passages Jesus constrained them. Jesus urged them. Jesus said, "I want you to get in the boat, go to the other side. I'm going to take care of these folks and then I'm going to go up and I'll meet you there." What's important about this aspect of obedience is that it went contrary to everything they knew.

Notice what the Bible says about the storm that brews. There was a wind that began to gust. The night was dark and they were tossed to and fro on the sea. You understand that all of these individuals, in particular Peter himself, were fishermen by trade. James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, we know that they left their father's fishing business to come and follow Jesus so not only were they fishermen by trade, some of them were multigenerational fishermen and I am not a good fishermen but there's one thing I do know, that people who are good at fishing know the water that they're fishing. For example, there have been times where I've gone out with friends fishing and it looks like a beautiful day to me, a perfect day to catch fish, and they'll say, "We're not going out today. It's a bad day to fish." I'll look out and say, "But it looks good to me." Sometimes we go out and I say, "This is horrible fishing weather." They say, "Oh, this is perfect." These men had grown up and every day of their lives had fished the Sea of Galilee, some of their dads had fished it, their granddads, their great granddads. Don't you know they knew there was a storm coming? They knew it. They had felt the wind before. They had seen the whitecapping on the waves. They knew that trouble lie ahead and they got in the boat anyway.

You know, some of the greatest hindrances to you obeying what Jesus wants you to do in life is your education and your experience. Sometimes we've gotten so smart we've gotten dumb because we've learned everything that humanity has told us to know and to believe and trust and they say, "Don't go out there. The waves are starting to pick up. The wind is starting to swirl." Jesus says, "Get in the boat and go. I'll meet you on the other side." Notice, none of them say, "Well, in my experience or my dad and my granddad told me once there's a big storm that looked just like this. Jesus, I don't think we ought to get out on the water." But what did they do? He constrained them and they went. If you're ever going to "walk on water," you've got to quit listening to what the world is selling and you've got to be willing to do what Jesus tells you to do even if it appears to go against your experience or your education.

Third thing: they were willing to toil. Notice it says that they're here in the boat, they've gone about three or four miles and they're exhausted. In fact, the Gospel of Matthew account says it's in the fourth watch. Let me give you kind of a picture here. As far as time or chronology is concerned, Jesus goes up on the mountain before it is dark, in fact it says evening was approaching and basically what we can discern here is that's about six o'clock at night. The way the Jewish clock worked is that from 6 PM to 9 PM was the first watch, 9 PM to midnight, second watch, midnight to 3 AM, third watch, 3 AM to 6 AM was the fourth watch. We know that they got in the boat before it was dark so at least by 6 PM. It says that when Jesus came, according to the Gospel of Matthew, it was on the fourth watch which means they had been in that boat for no less than nine hours and potentially up to 12. You say, "Why is that so significant?" Because they're toiling, their exhaustion to do what Jesus asked them to do, first and foremost took place in the dark. They weren't able to see what was going on around them. All they could do was hear the elements, feel the elements, and keep pressing on.

Some years ago, I had the opportunity to do something I rarely do and just for pleasure read a fiction book just for no other reason than just to read for fun. In doing so, I read kind of this thriller type of a story. It was about some kind of covert operation, research project, scientific thriller. And in doing so, the way this story was written, by the way it was a fictitious story, it was written about this secret top laboratory that these researchers had and it was underground in this massive structure and the way that you entered into this secret laboratory, this is the fiction book, is that you entered a keypad, it was biometrically monitored, and when you did so, the door would open and the light from the hallway would shine into the room. It would just illuminate about three or four feet of a piece of carpet that went about 100 feet to this secret laboratory. I know what you're thinking: well, that's not a big deal. You just let your eyes adjust, dilate a little bit, see the carpet and walk to the second door. The problem was in this story that the second door would not open unless the first door had been completely closed and locked. The only way to get to that place of understanding and research was you had to be willing to take step after step after step in complete pitch dark.

Is that not how it sometimes feels when we're following Jesus? He tells us something and we get excited about it and all of a sudden there is no more illumination, there is no more light, it's just darkness all around and you and I live in a world that's filled with darkness and flooded with darkness. These guys had been rowing their boat for at least nine hours in complete darkness. They didn't live in a day of flashlights, because of the storm most likely the moon would have been hidden behind the clouds. They were simply having to trust that when Jesus said, "Get in the boat and head that way," that eventually the boat would get where Jesus said it would get.

And they toiled and they struggled. You know they had to be destitute. Why? Because it normally took them – listen – between maybe two and three hours to get across the entire Sea of Galilee. They had been rowing at least nine hours and they're about halfway across. Do you know how exhausting that would be? Do you know how tiring that would be? Do you know how frustrating that would be? Here Jesus is saying, "Go and I'll meet you on the other side," you've been doing this for almost 12 hours and you're not even

halfway there. Can I give you a little secret from the book of Daniel, chapter 10? Do you know what the devil, Satan, wants to do in your life? He wants you to give up, quit and give up. He wants you just to stop. We think, "Well, if Jesus said it, it's going to happen by next week." Not necessarily. "Jesus said it, it's going to happen in my life. He sent me in this direction. It's going to come to fruition in the next two weeks." It may be 20 years. You see, oftentimes when Jesus tells us to do something, he does not give us the time frame, he just says, "I'll meet you," listen, "on the other side." He didn't say it would be by morning. He didn't say what chronological time period was attached. He just said, "Get in the boat. Start rowing."

They quit listening to the world, they listened to Jesus in spite of what their experience and their education said and they kept on rowing even when they were physically, mentally, emotionally and probably spiritually exhausted. Why is that critical? Because nobody, Simon Peter in particular, walked on water until they got to that point.

And that's where we pick up the story in Matthew 14. They're exhausted, they're worn out and Jesus shows up walking on the water. Now, for those of you that are of a scientific mind, I did my research this week and I have found out that it is actually scientifically possible for a human being to walk on water. Here's the problem with it: that in order for a human being to walk across water, your foot has to hit at a certain angle at a certain pressure point every step you take across the body of water. It has to be absolutely perfect every time. Secondly, you have to average 67 miles an hour while you're doing it. I mean, imagine this story in a fleshly perspective and they saw, vroom, Jesus, there he went. I mean, he would have covered the entire four miles from the coast to where they were in just a matter of moments. It would have been like the first century Flash, so to speak. It was, fttt, there he went. And yet when he comes, they're having a casual conversation? They're fearful and go, "Who are you? What's going on here?" And I love what Peter says in Matthew 14, he says, "Jesus, if that's you, call me to come." And all Jesus said was, "Come."

So why is it that Peter walked on the water and nobody else did? Why is it that statistically so few of us experience the miraculous and experience the supernatural and really experience God moving in our lives? Why was he the one that got out of the boat? Why did everybody else stay put? Well, not only had he quit listening to the masses, not only had he obeyed what God told him to do, Jesus, God in flesh, not only had he been willing to toil through the night, he was willing to take a risk. Boy, we love to talk about taking risks but risk is tough. You understand that to that point not only had he gone against his experience, not only had he gone against his fisherman education on the Sea of Galilee, he was about to do something no human being had done since or had done before.

Do you know what crept in? I know what crept in, it's called fear. Do you know what fear does? It paralyzes you. Eleven of them were paralyzed in the boat and one said, "I'll come." Do you know what 2 Timothy 1:7 says? We have not been given the spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind and it's the power of God, it's the compelling love of God, it's the sound mind that God gives us that allows us to take the risk to say, "Okay,

Jesus, I'll go there. Jesus, I'll do that. I'll be that. I'll go there. I'll be a part of that." You see, fear paralyzes us and we're so naturally inclined to stay in the boat because we've never done this before, I've never seen this before, I've never experienced this. There is nobody I can call. I mean, it's not like Peter could turn around and say, "Uh, Bartholomew, how did this work when you did it last week?" He didn't have access to that. He had to completely trust in the power of God in this particular situation.

But I think even more than that, what he had to risk was being a fraud. You say, "What do you mean, being a fraud?" Peter was the loud mouth of the group. Peter was the one who was always opening his mouth, always proclaiming, "Oh, Jesus, I'll be there. If everybody else bails, I'll be your guy." Peter was always the one who verbalized his affection for and his fancy for the things that Jesus was telling him to do and yet here he says, "Alright, Jesus, if it's you, tell me to come, I'm there." And all of a sudden what does Jesus say? "Come on, boy, let's go." If he doesn't go, he's an absolute fraud. As they say back in Texas, "All hat, no cattle." For the rest of you, that means, "All bite, no bark." In other words, you talk a big talk but when it comes to action, you hardly follow through.

You know, we're good at talking, aren't we? We're good at saying, "Well, if I was there, I would have walked on water. If I was there, I would have done this. Oh, if Jesus called me to do this, boy, I'd be the first one to sign up." It's easy to say that when there is not a ledger in front of you to put your name on. And yet here is Peter who has always been verbalizing his affection for and his desire for the things of God and he says, "If you tell me to, I'm there." If he doesn't step out on water, he's an absolute fraud. Do you know what he had to risk? His reputation. Boy, we love to preserve our reputation, don't we? Because we have created a persona that people believe we are but oftentimes down deep we know we are not.

He wouldn't be traveling 67 miles per hour, he would be stepping on water in the middle of a storm at the deepest part of the sea in total pitch darkness. Yet he took a risk and when he took that risk doing what Jesus asked him to do, what happened? He did not sink until he lost his focus. You see, if we're going to walk on water, we've got to quit listening to the masses, we've got to just simply do what the Lord asks us to do, whatever that is, we've got to be willing to toil for who knows how long until his timetable is fulfilled, we've got to be willing to take a risk. Maybe nobody else has been there, maybe nobody else has been willing to do that, maybe nobody else I know agrees with me but God told me to and it says it in his word. Last but not least, we've got to focus on Jesus. Notice that everything was fine in Peter's life until he took his eyes off Jesus. In fact the Bible says that when he looked at the sea, he began to sink. The only means of the miracle in his life, the only means of the supernatural in his life, is when his eyes were focused on Jesus.

Now, some of you may be aware that in our home we have a multitude of mouths to feed. My wife Tracy and I, we have three boys and then we have two girls, both of them have four legs, we have two girl dogs. My joke is we had three boys and we had to buy our girls, but we also have a guinea pig and a cat but we have a Meyers' family zoo basically,

but as a part of our family, my wife Tracy and I have always had a Boston terrier as a pet. Now, you know there's an old adage that you have dogs that look like you. If you don't know what a Boston terrier looks like, they're short, squatty, muscular, hyper, ugly dogs. The shoe might just fit if you think about it. I think the only difference is Boston terriers have these huge ears and I've got little bitty ears but other than that it's pretty similar.

But the first little Boston terrier that we had when we were newlyweds, his name was Rocky, and Rocky was a BC dog, before children. In other words, we spent way too much time training him because we didn't have kids to distract us and such and so he was incredible on verbal commands. In fact, there were about 25-30 verbal commands we could give little Rocky and he would do them, but the one of which he excelled at, in fact he was the best at, is if you told him to stay, he would stay. I mean, he wouldn't move for anything. You could throw treats out, you could throw raw meat out, he would not leave until you gave him the command to leave.

Well, I mentioned Boston terriers are little short, squatty, muscular, hyper things, big ears, but they also have these big bulging eyes and Rocky had the biggest eyes of any of the Boston terriers that we've ever owned and those big eyes, he had this amazing ability, he could keep one eye straight and make the other turn like this.

Well, I had a good friend of mine, he was a youth pastor, I did a lot of youth camps for him back in the day and, you know, youth pastors are just this side of crazy. I used to be one so I can say that. And this friend of mine would come over and we would never do this when Tracy was around because she wouldn't approve of it and probably won't now that she hears about it but that's all good. We would get little Rocky and we would get him to sit in our living room and this friend of mine and I, we would get kind of hip-to-hip and the little dog looking at us and we'd say, "Okay, on the count of three, take a step." One, two, three and we'd all take a step but both of us in each direction and that little dog would go, "Urp," like that. We'd say, "Okay, on the count of three, take one more step." "Urp." By the time we hit the edges of the room, that poor dog is going, I mean, his eyes are just... He had this unbelievable ability to take one eye 90 degrees this way and the other one 90 degrees that way and he wouldn't move because he was good at what he did.

You can't do that. You and I do not have the ability – listen – to have one eye on Jesus and one eye on the world. We can't do it. In fact, what we discover in Peter's life is his eyes were on Jesus and everything is great, as soon as they went to the water, everything fell apart. And so what we see is the focus, he had to have his eyes focused but it's even more than his eyes, he had to have his ears focused on Jesus and this is where it's going to get real personal for a bit for many of you because here's Peter, he's finally walking on water. Maybe you've had one of those moments, maybe you've had one of those experiences in life where you find yourself maybe on a mission trip or an endeavor, a part of a ministry or even just reaching to somebody and investing in their life that nobody knows about. You've done exactly, you've gotten out of your comfort zone, you've taken a risk and you say, "Okay, Jesus, this is all for you," and you hear absolute silence.



I want you to think about that for a moment. When Simon Peter gets out on the water, everybody in the boat, all 11 of them should have been cheering him on. They should have been going, "Way to go, Peter! Atta boy! Go get 'em! Walk on that water!" What did he get? According to what is in Scripture, absolutely nothing. But I've been around church folks long enough to know somebody said, "This guy's lost his mind." Because, listen, those who doubted, those who questioned, those who were critical of who Jesus was, none of them were in the boat. The only people in the boat were the ones who claimed to love Jesus. The only ones in the boat were the ones who fed the 5,000 with Jesus. The only ones in the boat were the ones who he called out, sent them 2 by 2, saw miracles and deliverance and mighty things by the hand of God. As an old dear friend of mine who has recently passed away said, "The army of the Lord is the only army that shoots its own in the back," meaning, "Oh, you go and take that risk and I'm just going to sit back quietly. Let's see how this one is going to play out." None of them were willing to go out. None of them were willing to take the risk. None of them were willing to encourage and most likely had a critical spirit.

You know, when you get serious about doing the things God has called you to do, you're going to get criticism but do you know who oftentimes that criticism comes from? Religious people. Do you understand that in the Old Testament when the prophets spoke, when they said, "Thus saith the Lord," do you know who the most vocal opponent was? The priests. When Jesus spoke truth, do you know who the most vocal opponent was? The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes, the religious people and oftentimes the person who should encourage you, the person who should say, "Atta boy! Go get 'em! Live on for Jesus!" but doesn't or maybe even criticizes is the very person who should be out on the water with you but is staying back in the boat.

You say, "Why do they stay back in the boat?" I'm going to tell you why: it was comfortable and it was theirs and it was familiar. You see, that's what religion does. Religion says, "That's what we do." Religion says, "This is what I'm used to." Religion says this is comfortable. But a relationship with Jesus says, "Hey, there's some water, let's go walking on it." A relationship with Jesus says, "Nobody else has ever done this, but I'm willing." A relationship with Jesus says, "Alright, I'm gonna leave my comfort zone. I'm gonna leave all the people who I trust and respect who are keeping silent and I'm just gonna do what Jesus did." You see, the reason so few people walk on water is because most of us can't take our eyes off the world and we listen to what the world has to offer, whether they are of the world or "of a religious nature."

Do you want to walk on water? Quit listening to everybody else. Do what Jesus tells you to do. Hang in there. Be willing to take a risk and don't take your eyes off of him, nor your ears because he's the only one who can actually get you on the water.

Let's pray with our heads bowed and our eyes closed. You know, maybe you're that person here today, maybe you're here as a guest, maybe you're here for the first time, maybe even the thousandth time, but maybe today you realized that you spent your entire life listening to all the wrong voices, that you've listened to friends, you've listened to colleagues, you've listened to co-workers, maybe you've even listened to family and all of

those voices have said, "Don't mess with Jesus." All those voices have said, "Ah, you don't need to read that old book known as the Bible." All those voices have said, "Don't you know people in church, they're all hypocrites." But maybe today is the day that you listen to the only voice that matters, the voice of Jesus who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no one can come to the Father but by me." The voice of Jesus who made it very simple that he came to seek and to save that which was lost. Maybe today is the day that you listen to his voice and not the others.

If you're in that position today, let me just encourage you. You don't have to sign up for some set of classes or read a series or volumes of books, in fact all you really need to do is just have a very sincere serious conversation with God. You don't have to have this conversation out loud, you don't even have to say the same words that I would say but maybe that conversation would go a little something like this, "God, today I just want to confess what you already know. I've been listening to the wrong voices but today I'm ready to listen to yours. Lord, today I believe that Jesus loved me so much that he was willing to be born on my behalf. Lord, I believe you loved me so much that Jesus was willing to live a sinless life on my behalf. Lord, I believe you loved me so much, I believe that Jesus was willing to go to the cross and raise from the dead so I could be forgiven of my sins and saved for all of eternity. God, today I don't know all the answers to all the world's problems but I do know that Jesus is the answer to my sin problem and I'm asking you to save me. I'm asking you to forgive me. In the best way I know how, I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads bowed and eyes closed, in a few moments we'd love the opportunity to have a conversation with you. Maybe you're that person who had that conversation with God today. We'd love to celebrate that with you. Or maybe you're that individual who knows you've been forgiven, know that you're saved but that voice of obedience of following through baptism, you struggle with that one because you've listened to what others have said and not what God has said. Or maybe there's a multitude of other decisions. We would just love the opportunity to celebrate with you, have a conversation with you, whatever that decision may be.

Let's pray.

*Lord, as we come to this time of decision, thank you that from our perspective and in our flesh when you had every reason in the world to discard us, to give up on us and to quit us, you did just the opposite. You were willing to shed your blood for us. God, we come knowing we are not worthy, knowing that we are not justified in our own behavior but knowing that we're only forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ. Help us, O God, whatever that decision is today that we would simply just trust you in it. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

This morning I'm going to ask if you'll stand with me as our team leads us. Whatever decision, I'll be here at the front.