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Everything We Hope for is Fulfilled in Him Hebrews 12:1-4

December 16, 2007- 11 AM -- Dr. David H. McKinley

[Dr. McKinley, message, Everything We Hope for is Fulfilled in Him]

And all we can say is hallelujah, giving praise to the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and our Savior!

After the Messiah was written and Handel's Messiah was performed in 1843 ah... King George II stood during the presentation of the "Hallelujah Chorus", and when he stood, of course, everyone stood with him and it became a great tradition when people hear that "Hallelujah Chorus". Some have suggested that maybe he had a cramp in his leg and needed to stand, and others have said that ah... possibly he thought because his hearing was dull that it was the National Anthem and he needed to stand. But I think that he, like every person who considers the Christ, rulers and all others, realize that you can only stand in amazement, awe and honor when you see who Christ is and what He has done. And we say hallelujah to His name, and we honor and praise His name today. Amen? [Amen] Amen.

Take your Bible and open with me to the book of Hebrews chapter 12... Hebrews chapter 12. We've been talking together about a simply but significant phrase during this Christmas season; simply this: Looking to Jesus. In fact, in just a moment I'm going to give you a cue and I'm going to count on you to read that phrase out loud with me. But I want to begin reading in Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 1. The Bible says:

1) *Therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus [looking to Jesus]...*

That's it! I want you to say it with me.

1) *... looking to Jesus because He is the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

And then the writer continues to tell us why he wants us to look to Jesus. He says:

2) *Consider Him who endured such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. 4) For your struggle against sin you have not resisted to the point of shedding of blood.*

The writer of the book of Hebrews says you know, it is a common thing for us to become weary and fainthearted. It's easy for us to be discouraged and to be disappointed. And there's a simple secret in life to maintaining

hope, confidence, joy and focus in life, and it all has to do with looking to Jesus.

Now, of course, when we come to the Christmas season we so often think of Christmas as being a season of ... of hopes and dreams fulfilled. But how many of you would be honest today, and maybe it was even in a very shallow way, how many of you would say I've at least had one Christmas where I was disappointed? How many of you would say I didn't get something I wanted for Christmas? What is it? Okay. Many of us would say yeah. Thank you for being honest.

I have to say I had a Christmas like that. Now when I stop to think about Christmases in my life... in my past, so many of them were very positive, very enjoyable, very memorable in a good way. But I always can remember a Christmas in my childhood when I had this truck that had been sold at the Texaco stations all over the country. Now imagine this; they're selling toys for kids at Texaco! They were doing a lot of other things at Texaco in those days but they don't do that today. But in that day they had this promotion and I remember that I wanted this truck more than anything else.

And I'll never forget the Christmas morning when I got this gift out from under the tree. It was to me from my mom and dad. And I started opening this present and it was that truck and I was so excited and so thrilled that this truck that I'd wanted and believed was going to be the greatest experience of life at that point I was holding in my hands. When I suddenly realized that I had this truck but there was one problem. I'm looking at my dad's face, I'm looking at the box and the box says "batteries not included." [laughter] Well, needless to say, I started crying.

My dad's face was ashen as he realized what had happened and my mom immediately lost her joy and glared at my father. And ah... You know... you know how that goes. And so there we were disappointed on Christmas morning. All this time, all this waiting.

Now I know today we've got all kinds of different power sources for toys and all of that, but in that day and in that time if you didn't have your batteries, you weren't going to get to enjoy what you got for Christmas. There was nowhere to get the batteries. There was a loss of power, there was a disappointment that was assured.

And yet as we go through life we realize that not just on Christmas but many other days in life, we often struggle with disappointment. Disappointments and weariness and faintheartedness that comes because life is not what we hoped and dreamed that it would be. And many times we come to Christmas with hopes that somehow as we go through this season, as we start a new year, that there can be a new beginning in life, and there can be a new focus in life.

But you know no matter what you get this Christmas... no matter what you do this Christmas... no matter who you're with or what you see this Christmas,

if you miss the simple truth that Christmas is about Christ and looking to Him, I can assure that you're going to be disappointed. Not just in Christmas, but in life. But what we can understand today from this passage of Scripture is that when we look to Jesus all of our hopes, all of our dreams, all of our needs are going to be fulfilled in Him.

Now we've been looking at this little passage together and focusing on various aspects of the life and the ministry of Christ. The Bible tells us that we are to look to Jesus because He's the founder of our faith. And in the first week of this series, we talked about the fact that everything we believe begins with Jesus. He's the founder; He's the creator; He's the pioneer.

Last week we talked together about the fact that Jesus is not only the founder but that He is the perfecter of our faith, and that there is a perfect completion of salvation in Christ. And that everything that we need is found in Him. All of my deficiencies, all of my sins, all of my guilt, all of my past, my present, my future is ultimately found in the... in Christ and in what He has done for me!

But today we want to look at the third and one of the most important aspects of anything we can discuss about this person of Christ at Christmas, and that is that we look to Him not only as the founder and the perfecter of our faith, but the Bible says:

2)... who for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame, (and listen to this phrase) He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

He is founder, He is perfecter and He is ruler! And when we speak of Christ as our ruler, we simply say that everything that we hope for is going to be fulfilled in Christ.

Now you can have times of life and Christmases and other seasons that can be marked by disappointment. I want you to know that in Christ you will never be disappointed because the hope and dream of the entire world... of all of the nations is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, and this is the Christ that we worship at Christmas.

Yes, we look back to the manger and to the humility and the humanity of Christ, but Christmas is incomplete if we do not look ahead to this realization... that this Christ came, died, was buried, rose, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God! And it when we see this Christ as ruler that we complete the celebration in our hearts.

Now from a technical standpoint, the phrase "is seated" in the original language is in the perfect tense. That means that it is something that has happened and has results that continue. And when the Bible says that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, it is indicating that there are current and present results to be realized, to be embraced, and

to be experienced when we recognize that Christ... this Christ is now enthroned in heaven. I love what Bible commentator John MacArthur says; he says: "This depicts a victorious Savior, not a defeated martyr." Yes, we see the Christ in the humility and humanity of the manger. Yes, we see Him dying on the cross, being a martyr, but more than a martyr, the Savior of our sins! But we must see this Christ! The one who is now seated on the throne of God and we must realize that He is the source of victory, and that He is ruling and reigning and is engaged in my life and in your life... the things of today and the things that are yet to come.

So what is Christ doing in heaven? If He is there and if He is indeed on the throne, what is His ongoing ministry to the church and to our lives? What is the promise of... of this Christ? Well, the Bible says that as we look back to what He has done, and look ahead to what He is doing even now today, that there is strength and there is confidence and courage in life. I like how J.D. Philips wrote it in his little translation: Hebrews 12:3, He said:

3) *Think constantly of Him, enduring all that sinful men could say against Him and you will not lose your purpose or your courage.*

You won't be discouraged; you won't be disappointed; you won't be defeated if you look at what Christ has done and what Christ is doing for you today.

So here's what I want us to do. With the remaining time that we have today, I want us to talk about Christ enthroned, and what does it mean when we say that Christ is enthroned today? When we move from the manger to heaven, when we look at where Christ is and what Christ is doing for us today, what is the response that is prompted and demanded in our lives?

Certainly we look back to Christmas to see that God's love is expressed in His Son, Jesus Christ. But in that Christ came and expressed the love of the Father, and accomplished the work of salvation for us, this same Christ now demands a response! And what is the response that is demanded when we see Christ enthroned?

Well, let me mention several responses, and the first is reverence... reverence. We need to move from the sentimental peerings at the manger to a sharp focus of who this Christ is and that He rules and He reigns today. If you fastforward from the book of Hebrews over to the book of Revelation and to the scene of heaven that's described in Revelation chapter 4 and verse 1, you immediately see a throne. And those gathered around a throne and all of the worship that's going on in the throne room of heaven. But the Bible tells us that there's a chorus that is echoing there in heaven and the throne of God, and it is this: Revelation chapter 4 and verse 11:

11) *Worthy are You, O Lord and God, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they existed and were created."*

This Jesus that we worship at Christmas is the founder, the Creator, the one who is to be worshiped! And when we talk about reverence, we talk about worship because worship is the activity of eternity! And all of eternity is going to be spent worshipping this Christ who is now risen and seated on the throne.

Now why is that so important? Well, because we have in our day tended to toss out that word *reverence*. In many ways the word *reverence* kinda like Model T Ford... it's just something from antiquity that's put away. And in fact to the contrary, we live in a world that is an irreverent world. There's a lot of fun, there's a lot of effort, there's a lot of intentionality to people who seek irreverence in this world, because they do not honor the Lord Jesus Christ, our heavenly Father.

And so the Bible speaks of the fact that we live in a world where there is hostility. In fact that's even mentioned in this text... that Jesus endured hostility. And we do understand that there are opposing views of the Christ when we come to Christmas.

I still am amazed every year at how one person can file a complaint in our criminal justice sy..... system against hundreds and thousands of people who are expressing publicly their faith and their freedom during this Christmas time of year, and yet one person, because they are offended, can prohibit the... the rights and the freedoms that so many... To simply acknowledge something that has happened in history. But it's true. The conflict continues. And it's even being fuelled today by some latter day prophets who are preaching a revival of the spirit of atheism in this world and in our age.

If you're not aware, you should be aware of the fact that two of the best selling books that have had the greatest longevity on national best-seller lists this year have been books that have been written by very outspoken and very hostile atheists. Their names are Richard Dawkins who wrote the book The God Delusion and Christopher Hitchens who wrote the book god Is Not Great; How Religion Poisons Everything. And these new and later prophets have come along to fuel, especially in a young generation, a spirit of anti-God and anti-faith, and have tried to say that man and intelligence can overcome the reality of his conscience.

You see, the Bible tells us that God has marked our conscience. We can't deny God. We try to deny God, but we can't do it. Why? Our very consciences are marked. But we live in a world today that has so exalted reason and human intelligence that many today have simply said there is no God, and are now becoming proponents of not only the acceptance, but as though it were, the declaration of this doctrine.

Of course, it's a very common issue right now in our culture with the release of a new movie entitled the Golden Compass. It's a movie that's going to have a lot of financial backing, it's a movie that's going to have a lot of profile. Some of the finest actors and actresses in Hollywood are

involved in this movie. It's a very well made movie. But interestingly enough, this movie is actually based on a series of writings by a man by the name of Philip Pullman who's kind of presented himself as the anti-C.S. Lewis. You know that C. S. Lewis wrote the chronicles of Narnia, and you'll remember that it was a major blockbuster movie and success as some of the imagery of the Christian faith and of the Christ were presented in those movies.

But I would have to say that this new movie is actually just the opposite. In fact, Philip Pullman once said, "I do not profess any religion. I don't think it's possible that there is a God. I have great difficulty in understanding what is meant by the word *spiritual* or *spirituality*." In an interview with the Sidney Morning Herald, Pullman left little doubt about his purpose in writing, and he said, "My books are all about killing God." What an interesting and what a bold and brash statement.

I want you to know I don't believe if someone sees this movie that it means that they're automatically an atheist or that somehow their faith is going to be shattered. Our God is much greater than anything that can be put out of Hollywood. [extended applause] But I say that to say to you... that there is a new spirit of irreverence in this world of those who deny Christ, of those who would try to shun and to scold any who would confess faith in Christ.

And yet the Bible stands 2000 years of scrutiny and history, making the declaration that Jesus Christ is Lord and the demand is if this Jesus who was born in the manger is indeed the Son of God and the Savior of the world, then we must bow in reverence and worship His name! Paul said it this way [Philippians 2:9-11]: 9) *Therefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him the name that is above every name; 10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11) and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.*"

You can call on the name of Jesus and be saved today; that is the hope and the promise of Christmas! Or you can deny Christ, but you will confess Christ because the Bible makes it clear; Jesus Christ is Lord. Blaise Pascal said it this way: "If there is no God and you bet your life that there is, you've lost nothing. But if there is a God and you bet your life there is not, you have made an eternal [strike] mistake."

Hear me today! This Jesus who is born in Bethlehem is seated on the throne of heaven, and today, if you hear His voice don't harden your heart. Come to Him in reverence! Come to Him in worship! Be like the writer of the song: "Joy to the world, the Lord has come! Let earth receive her King./ Let every heart prepare Him room; /" Is there room in your heart for Jesus? Open your heart to Him. Christ enthroned, demands reverence.

But there's something else that Christ enthroned demands in response, and that assurance. I live my life with an amazing assurance that because

Christ has come, died, risen, and is seated in heaven that I don't have to fear the future, and I don't have to fear death. I talked about this last week and the saving work of Christ. That I can't help but remember again and again that when we gather in this season of the year, one of the heartaches... one of the disappointments of Christmas is that some have loved ones who have stepped out of their circle of life, who have gone before them into heaven. And it's so easy for the reality of death to overshadow the joy of a celebration like Christmas.

But I want you to know that Christmas is an amazing time to celebrate, even through tears of grief, because we have this assurance: Jesus is seated in heaven. Listen to what He said [John 14:1-3]: 1) *Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.* 2) *In my Father's house are many rooms, if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you.* 3) *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again that... and will take you to Myself, that where I am there you may be also."*

You see, seeing that Christ is enthroned makes me understand that I have assurance. I have the assurance of today and of tomorrow. I have the assurance that there is a better place, not in the creativity of my mind, but in the very work and handiwork of God, because Christ has gone to prepare a place for us. Jesus came to earth that we might go to heaven and that is the hope of Christmas that will be fulfilled.

So Christ enthroned demands the response of reverence. It demands response of assurance for to believe Him is to believe what He has promised. And then Christ enthroned brings confidence... confidence.

Don't you need confidence in your life? Don't you struggle with confidence? I mean this world erodes our confidence. We struggle to be confident in the decisions that we make. We struggle with confidence about plans and ... and about the future. We struggle with confidence in the realm of our finances and... and in so many other areas of life. We struggle as we go through life with... with confidence of our appearance and how we look.

I was just reading a few days ago that Americans... 2.3 million Americans receive Botox injections. (Boy, it's quiet in here) [laughter] at an average of \$399 per injection. (Somebody said, "Boy, somebody got a deal I didn't get!") Nearly 8.7 million people had some form of cosmetic procedure done at the cost of \$9.4 billion. We struggle... we want to look good, we want to be good, but we constantly struggle with confidence.

Now I said to you last week, we confess publicly at this church. How many of you had a Botox... naw, I'm teasing. You don't have to answer that. [big laughter] How many of you know somebody who has? Don't look at them; just look at me and hold your hand up, okay? [laughter]

All kinds of things erode our confidence in life. And many of them much deeper than skin deep.

Can I share with you that one of the great truths of knowing Christ is enthroned is the confidence that there's never a time, a place, or a moment that I have a need or a deficiency in my life that I cannot come to Him and find Him complete and sufficient in all of these things. The Bible says in the book of Hebrews... this book we're preaching from... chapter 4, beginning in verse 13:

13) And no creature is hidden from His sight; that all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. 14) And since then we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. Let us hold fast our confession, 15) for we do not have a High Priest who's unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16) Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

What is your need today? What is your deficiency today? Where are you losing your confidence today? May I say to you that Christ is enthroned and that demands that we come to Him in faith and find Him sufficient for every need! He sees, He knows, He cares about you.

But there's something else that is demanded, and that is not only reverence and assurance and confidence, but service. If Christ is indeed the King and He rules and He reigns, then all of my life is about living in service to the Lord Jesus Christ. It's all about being His servant and making serving Him my life mission. When we talk about a ruling Christ, we're not talking about just some sort of an empty observance, that we gather and say, "Yes, Jesus is ruling in heaven and nod to that and I acknowledge that." No, we're talking about living a life of engaged obedience to Christ! And because this Christ is enthroned, I want to live out my obedience to Him every day.

That begins by following Christ in baptism. We began this service by seeing these 30 in this hour follow Christ in baptism. Why does that matter? Because baptism marks you as a follower of Jesus Christ. It says: My life is not my own! I belong to Christ; I live my life for Him! Not perfectly. Certainly we struggle, certainly we battle, certainly we are engaged in the conflicts of this life. But from the very beginning Jesus said [John 14:15], "*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*" And Jesus commanded every follower to follow Him in baptism. And baptism is a beautiful picture of surrender, and it's the beginning of Christian service.

Have you started your service for Christ? Have you acknowledged that your life is about serving Him and honoring Him and living for Him? I'm sad to say far too many Christians are like spiritual mannequins. We come to church and we have our place on the pew and we look right and we look appropriate, but there's not life fusing through us when we leave this place! We're not just to be mannequins who just have an association with the Gospel; we're to become living, human beings who carry the life of

Christ in us and through us to a world that needs to know Him. And we serve the Lord Jesus Christ. It's all about seeing my service to Christ as being a part of my spiritual devotion.

There's something else that we see, and that is that Christ enthroned means and demands that I understand there's power through deliverance. Deliverance! Not only does He call me to serve Him, but I have His promise of deliverance. In the book of Jude, verses 24 and 25, the Bible says:

24) Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and present you blameless in the presence of His glory with great joy, 25) To the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be majesty... glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time, now and forever. AMEN

This Jesus is able to deliver you. And because He is exalted, and because He is enthroned, there is a promise of deliverance, that you can be set free from habits and hang-ups! You can be... you can have a breakthrough in your life to victory in Jesus Christ because He is on the throne, and His power is now living in you. Paul said [Colossians 1:27], "It's Christ in you that is the hope of glory." And Christ not only came from heaven to earth to take us to heaven, but He comes to live in our lives here! The Christ of Bethlehem is born in us when we are born again, and we have the life of Christ that can deliver us with power and in glory.

So Christ... Christ enthroned means reverence; it means assurance, it means confidence, it means service, it means deliverance; it means providence. It means that because of who He is and what He knows and what He sees, that He is ruling and reigning even when the circumstances of life may seem different. This Jesus is King and He is in control.

It's not just slang to say Jesus rules. In fact I think you could add to your expression "Merry Christmas" that little praise. "Merry Christmas, oh and Jesus rules!" because He does. He is on His throne! He is the source of God's government.

In fact the Prophet Isaiah said it this way [Isaiah 9:6-7]:

6) For unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulders. His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. 7) Of the increase of His government and of His peace there shall be no end, on the throne of David, and of His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from this time forth, and forevermore.

Jesus rules, and He is the overseer; and therefore, while life may not make sense to me and I don't understand things that happen in my life or yours, this same Jesus who has gone into heaven, is seated in heaven and is ruling and reigning even in the circumstances of your life.

That's again why the hymnwriter... the writer of the beautiful Christmas carol *Joy to the World* said, "He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove;/ The glory of His righteousness, and wonders of His love, the wonders of His love."

And I can tell you that even when you go through things that you don't understand and that you would just as soon bypass in life, you can always prove the wonders of His love because of His providence in your life.

One final thing that we see about this enthroned Christ and that is that Christ enthroned demands patience... patience. One of the hardest qualities and characteristics for us to ever embrace in life, something that we're not really accustomed to and don't value often, but it is a part of how we live everyday right now. This Christ who came, the Bible says, is coming again. And the patience of our faith is a patience that looks to Christ and looks for Christ to come again.

That means that as I live my life forward, I live every day looking for and waiting for the day when I will see Jesus Christ. Life is filled with disappointments and inequities and injustices, but when we see Jesus Christ, all of our hopes and all of our dreams will be fulfilled in Him. That's why Peter said, in 1 Peter chapter 1, "*Though you have not seen Him, you love Him and you look for Him when He will fulfill every need in your life.*"

Our Christ brings us patience... patience to endure, patience to persevere, patience to continue to engage the conflicts of this life for the glories of our quest. But this patience also means not only that for us, but that God is patient on His throne, waiting and wanting some to come to Him. Second Peter 3:9 says: "*The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promises as some count slowness, but is patient toward you... toward you, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*"

I want to ask you, have you come to this Christ? Have you come to repentance because, ladies and gentlemen, according to the prophetic voice of the Scripture, not only was it prophesied that Christ would come and He did, not only was it prophesied that Christ would die, and He did, not only was it prophesied that Christ would rise and He did, but that this same Jesus will come again, and I want to ask you, have you confessed Him as your Lord and Savior? He's waiting for you.

I don't know when the day will come. I don't know when the hour will come, but I know that the Bible says that there's going to come a day when the last person in the last place in the last moment is going to say yes to Jesus and the Father's going to say, it's all over. And I pray that you will not miss Jesus, that you will not... that you will remember the importance of looking to Him.

Have you looked to Him? Have you confessed Him? Have you trusted Him? Are do you just come near Christmas but somehow really miss the real message and the real meaning of Christmas?

Tomorrow, December 17, will mark the 104 anniversary of Orville and Wilbur Wrights first flight in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. In 1903 Orville was willing to get on that plane and after five attempts was finally able to become airborne for a total of 12 seconds. It was a marvel in human history and obviously has changed all of our lives. Many of you have been on a flight somewhere this past week; somewhere around the nation or around the world.

And on that day when that flight was made, while Orville was landing the plane, Wilbur very quickly went over to the telegraph office and tried to get a message off to his sister, Katherine. And this is the message that he sent; He said, "We have flown for 12 seconds. We will be home for Christmas." Katherine was thrilled to receive the good news and to hear of the accomplishment! And so she immediately took the telegram that she received and went over to the local newspaper editor and told him about what had happened with her brothers and that they were going to be coming home for Christmas. She wanted him to do an interview, to have the exclusive with her brothers. So 2 days later on the sixth page of the paper the editor printed his story and it simply said this: "Wright Brothers will be home for Christmas." He completely missed the flight. He completely missed the story! He knew about Christmas; he didn't know about the fact that these men had just changed the world.

You may know about Christmas. You may have a lot of traditions, you may have a lot of things that you know and do, but may I say to you that if you miss the Christ of Christmas, you miss what it's all about. It's like waking up on Christmas morning and realizing there are no batteries. You live your life finding things but having no fulfillment, wanting power but having none, because it's only when you see that this Christ is the one who is founder of our faith, the perfecter of our faith, and the ruler who is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, that you by looking to Him and confessing Him can have [tap] your [tap] life [tap] transformed [tap].

Has that happened to you? Do you know this message? Is it your message? The Bible says, "Look to Me and be saved, all you, for I am God and there is no other. All the ends of the earth. Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is no other." Have you turned to Him? Have you looked to Him? My challenge to you this Christmas is look to this Jesus.

Father, thank You today for the call and the challenge of Your word. Thank You, Lord, for the reality of what Christ has done for each and every one of us [music begins]. And Lord, I just pray in this moment that we would not just come and be here and give some sense of acknowledgment to Christ without coming, surrendering unto Jesus. And I pray that right now there would be those who would look to You, who would trust in You, who would

confess You to them. Father, I thank You that Your Spirit uses Your Word and that you move and work in moments like this to change our lives for eternity. And I pray that here and now in this moment that men and women and boys and girls would say yes to Jesus, and say, "Lord, I bow before You. I confess that You are my Savior and my Lord." For it is in Jesus' name we pray. Amen

I invite you to look up and as you look up I want to ask you to stand with me. And as you stand I want to ask that no one be leaving. Please don't distract... take away from this moment. This moment is the moment of decision. This moment is the moment that can change a life. And today before we walk away from this place, we're extending an invitation to say come and follow Christ today. Come and worship the Lord Jesus Christ. Give Him your heart; give Him your life; give Him the greatest gift of all. "Lord, here I am. I am Yours."

If you're there in the balcony, you don't need to make your way out or down here. We have ministers who are standing right there in the balcony, behind those of you in the front section, below those of you in the upper section. And if today you want to know Christ, today you look to Christ, today you want to be baptized at the next occasion that we do that, if today you need a church home... a church family, I'm just going to ask you go and speak with one of our pastors there and say, "today I'm coming to present myself as a Christ follower, as someone who wants to be a part of this family.

If you're here on the lower floor, in the balcony, or in the terrace our pastor and ministers are going to be standing here at the front; and we're standing here, waiting for you, praying for you, believing that God is going to move in your life today. That you would say yes to Jesus Christ.

And so don't let the size of this crowd intimidate you. Don't let the fact that you're in the middle of a row... say, "Well, maybe another time." Just say excuse me to the person next to you. Most of our people today would just walk with you, if you told them you wanted somebody to go with you because we believe that this Jesus saves! And His hands are extended to you. His love is poured out to you. He has a plan and a purpose for your life. And right now I want to ask you to come and to give your heart to Jesus.

Come right now. Those of you who need a church home, you lead the way. Come and follow Jesus.