

**PBC20070905CS**

**THE NAZARETH PROJECT**  
**Answering Your Call**

**Ephesians 4:1-3**

September 5, 2007- Wednesday, 6:30PM - Dr. David H. McKinley

**[Dr. McKinley, message, Answering Your Call]**

... because of His love that ah... [Cell phone sounds off] I knew this would happen to me someday in life. [laughter] Excuse me.

[Answers phone] Hello? [laughter] I am just a little bit busy. I'm standing in front of a large group of people just about ready to speak. Okay, well thanks for the reminder.

That was one of our associates reminding that ah... we've sent our boxes up north and ah... when you leave tonight they're going to be standing there with offering plates so you wouldn't want to miss the offering. He just wanted to remind me that we need to be ready for that tonight. That's okay, you can laugh about it. It's good. The Lord loves a cheerful giver. [laughter]

You never know when these things are going to go off, do you? I'm telling you. How many of you answer calls like that every day? How many of you just right in the middle of doing something and you're like... How many of you just stop everything and take that out? Do you? Yeah? How many of you have dropped calls in the middle of that, too. Okay, I have that problem, too, pretty regularly.

You know it seems that on a recurring basis in all of our lives that we get phone calls that interrupt the course and the path of life, and many times become a redirection in the course of the day. Ah... Sometimes those calls can change what we're doing, what we're thinking. They not only change what we're doing that day; they may change the week, or depending on the nature of the call, it can change the course of your life. It could be a call about a new job, it could be a call about a... something that's happened, a tragedy in your life or your family. Certainly a call can change everything in life.

And I have to tell you tonight, I set that call up because the guy who called me is actually sitting right over here. I had him call me because I wanted to make that point to you tonight that calls change everything. And no call compares to the call that is on your life and that is on my life as followers of Jesus Christ.

I don't know if you know this or if you're aware of this but God has called you. God is calling you, and He has put a calling on your life and a calling on my life so that each of us would be the people, and would live

for the purpose for which He has called us. The Apostle Paul clearly knew this. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 1... I want you to read this verse with me. Open your own Bible and get it with me. But I have it here on the screen. The Bible says this:

*1) I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner (read it out loud with me) worthy of the calling to which you have been called, (let me continue...) 2) with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another, 3) eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Paul says clearly that God is calling and that God has called. And the question for you and the question for me tonight is simply this: Am I answering or have I answered God's call. This isn't something that Paul simply said here; it's something that he said in another place, in the book of Philippians, chapter 3 and verse 14. He said:

*14) I press toward the goal of the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Literally he was saying who we are and what we do and how we live as followers of Jesus Christ have everything to do... it has everything to do with God's call upon your life and upon my life. I am speaking to a group of called people tonight. That is, if you fit one other criteria. That criteria is 1 Peter 2 and verse 9. The Bible says in 1 Peter 2 and verse 9 that God had called us to:

*9)... proclaim the excellences of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

When we were without Christ, the Bible says we lived in darkness. But once we come to Christ, we no longer live in darkness, but we've been called to walk in light. And so all of the Christian faith and all of Christian living is about answering God's call... understanding that there's a call and answering that call in our lives. So what does that call mean and what is that call on my life?

Well, I like to think of it as the Nazareth project. I am called to be a part of something that I like to think of as the Nazareth project. You say, now what on earth is he talking about? What is the Nazareth project? Well, let me just quickly show you tonight that the Nazareth project is something that is revealed in the Scripture. What I'm talking to you about for you and for me is something that God has revealed to us in His Word. It's not something that I've made up or something that I've established; it's something that God has clearly put forth in His Word.

You know that Jesus Christ in His earthly dwelling, lived in a little town called Nazareth. He lived in the home of a carpenter whose name was Joseph. And while we don't have any artifacts... anything that Jesus built that we know of, although there are obviously people who say they see Him on

buildings and have seen Him recently in a fence post. I don't know if you've seen or read about that in the news, but it's been there. Although we don't have anything that Jesus built... that is in the form of some sort of structure, Jesus, the Son of a carpenter clearly came here to build something.

There was a project that He initiated; there was a project that He commenced; there is a project that He is involved in today. And the Master Carpenter from Nazareth has invited us to be a part of that project. Matthew chapter 16, and verse 18... If you'll turn back from the book of Ephesians where we started to the Gospel of Matthew 16, and verse 18, you learn about this Nazareth project, and this is what it is.

Jesus is having a discussion with some of His disciples about who people say that He is and... and what peoples' opinion may be of Him. But then He looked at Peter and He said:

15) *"Peter, who do you say that I am?"* 16) *And Peter looked at Jesus Christ and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

And Jesus responded to that confession, Jesus responded to that confession in the life of Peter and he said this:

18) *... "I tell you, Peter, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my (Say it) church [church]. I will build my (Say it) church [church]."*

Who are we? We are the church. Jesus said:

18) *"On this rock... on this foundation I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."*

Jesus made it very clear from the very outset that He had come to planet earth to do something and to build something. What He came to do was to take us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. And what He came to build was what is known as His church, the church of Jesus Christ. And the Master Builder has put you and me into that plan.

Now the world flaunts marble and steel, the world flaunts all of its buildings and all of its edifice that have been erected. And while Jesus did not come to build a physical structure, though I know we call this building a church, when we talk about the church, this is just the gathering... this is the meeting house for the church. The church is the people. And what the church is, is the church is the gathering together... a fusion of hearts and minds and energies to fulfill God's redemptive plan in this world.

In fact did you know the very word church means "those who are called out"? Did you know that's what church means? The Greek word *ekklesia* that makes up church means *ek-* out, and *kaleo* which means to call. And when we speak

of the church, we're speaking of those whom God has called out and those whom God has called together for His specific purpose.

So when we become a part of the church... when we are born into the family of God, we begin to answer the call of God. But this sense of living out the call and answering the call is a part of the daily journey and the daily process of life. And what God is doing in the church is gathering people to fulfill His mission and His purpose in all of the world.

For this reason William Temple said: "The Christian church is the one organization in the world that exists for the pure benefit of non-members. (ha) It's something that God has called and is still calling. It's not about you and me; it's about the work that God is doing in the world. We've been gathered to be a part of that but we're still carrying it on." Someone else has said this: "The church exists for the double purpose of gathering in and sending out... gathering in and sending out." And that's what God is doing in the church.

So to be a part of the church is not to be a part of a club; it's not to be a part of just an organization. The purpose of the church is not just for the privileges of its members. Now there are many benefits to being in and a part of the church... the fellowship that we share, the caring, the love, the friendship. But we're not in the church just for what it can do for us; we're in the church because of what God has called the church to do. And God has a plan for His church. And Jesus said, "I will build My church." That is the Nazareth project; that the Carpenter of Nazareth is building His church. It is revealed in the Scripture.

And not only is it seen in the words of Jesus there, but that's been the whole thrust of what Paul is talking about in the book of Ephesians. So go back to the book of Ephesians and let's get back to the text where we started, chapter 4, tonight. And if we look back at the 2 verses preceding the passage I read to you tonight, this is what it says; chapter 3, beginning in verse 20:

*20) Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working within (who? Do you see that? There's power working in us and God is able to do abundantly beyond anything that we think) ... according to the power that is working in us, 21) to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. (And all the church said) Amen. [Amen]*

This is what God is doing. God is calling out and calling together a group of people in order that God may gain glory in and through His church. And the call of God on your life and the call of God on my life is that we would no longer live according to the former manner of life, but that all of life is to be lived for the glory of God. Everything I am... everything I do is to be about God's glory. And as I understand it, that is as much true for us today in the twenty-first century as it was for the church in the first century because the Bible specifically says here "to Him be glory in

the church in Christ Jesus throughout all generations." All... a-l-l. Not just a generation or some generations. All generations!

And our generation, and this generation that I speak to tonight is here for the purpose that we might live and live out the glory of God in all things. So God gets glory in you and in me when we do what He has called us to do and called us out from and called us into. And things are good and there is glory when things do what they're supposed to do.

If there's ever a time that there's no glory, it's when something doesn't do what it's supposed to do. That's true with your car, isn't it? Is there any moment in the world like getting in your car, being ready to go, turning the ignition and it doesn't turn over and it doesn't come on. I mean that is when your car loses all of its glory. I don't care how much you paid for it. I don't care how nice the interior is. I don't care how fast the engine is. When the car doesn't do what the car is made to do, there's no glory in the car!

How about your computer? I mean, you talk about a way for your day to go from glory to the absolute grind and frustration! It's when you get ready to do something on your computer or log on to a site on the internet and suddenly it doesn't work or suddenly something happens.

I don't know about you but one of the most frustrating things in my life... I think I have finally figured out what the answer is. But have you ever had that thing in your life where you're typing along on your computer using your word processor and somehow you hit that button that starts eating all the text there next to you... And every time you try to type something else it just keeps eating the text in front. That is frustrating! Now again, I think I finally learned what to do about that, but every now and then that will happen to me, and I'd be in the middle of writing something or preparing something and I mean, I'd just be so frustrated because there is a loss of glory when something doesn't do what it's made to do! Right?

What about your toilet? [laughter] Enough said about that subject, right? I mean when it doesn't do what it's made to do, there's a problem there, right?

What about the ATM machine? How many times have you driven up to get some money out and they say, "Sorry, this machine is temporarily out of service." I mean, I need some money, right? There's nothing like losing glory when something doesn't do what it's supposed to do.

And yet the Bible says that Jesus Christ, the Son of the carpenter of Nazareth, is building something. He's involved in a project called the church and what He wants in and through the church is that the church would be for His glory. And in Ephesians chapter 4 what we have is an outline of how we individually and how we collectively as the church can fulfill God's purpose and bring glory to God as a people that are planned for His purpose.

Alan Hirsch has said, "When the church is in mission, it is the true church. The church itself is not only a product of that mission, but it is obligated and destined to extend it by whatever means possible. The mission of God flows directly through every believer and every community of faith that adheres to Jesus. To obstruct this is to block God's purposes in and through His people."

God has revealed a purpose for His church and because we collectively make up a local assembly of the body of Christ, the church, it's so important that we understand the Nazareth project that has been revealed in the Scripture, and that we embrace it for the glory of God.

If you come in the doors right over here by the chapel and you walk past our chapel, you'll notice there's a cornerstone on that building. And you know what that cornerstone says set on that building? It says what we just read in Ephesians chapter 3. *"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."* It's all about His glory.

But if that's going to be true in us and through us, then that takes me to the second thing that we have to understand about this Nazareth project, and that is not only that it has been revealed in the Scriptures, but that the Nazareth project is revolutionary in our lives. It changes my life. It changes who I am. It changes how I live. And to understand that the Carpenter of Nazareth is doing a project to which I have now been invited and involved, brings me to a completely different perspective in life. God has expectations for you.

Has anybody every told you that? That God has expectations for you? I know that we all like to think about the fact that we have expectations of God, that we can come to God and God meets our needs, and God heals our hurts, and God gives us hope, and God provides for us, and God does all these things. But I want you to know God is not working in our lives to simply be a heavenly ATM machine. God has expectations for you and for me. And because of what this project is all about, the project becomes revolutionary when I embrace this in my life and begin to live my life accordingly.

That's why Paul says in chapter 4, verse 1: "I therefore..." Because of who God is and what God is doing, "I therefore as the prisoner of the Lord..." Paul was a prisoner when he wrote this letter. If he would have been technically correct, he would have said I'm a prisoner of Caesar." Because he was actually a prisoner of the Roman Empire. Now Paul didn't say I'm a prisoner of Caesar. Paul didn't say I'm in prison because of something that's happened. In fact what Paul did was he said, my whole perspective of life as I live it is now changed; I am a prisoner of the Lord. Some of you may need to come to that change of perspective tonight. You may be

struggling with some things that are going on in your life... things that aren't the way that you would want them to be.

I have to tell you, being a prisoner in the ancient world was anything but pleasant. The prisons were horrendous. The conditions were terrible. The last thing that you would think that somebody would be doing is writing prose about *"to Him be glory and honor in the church by Christ Jesus to all world without end. Amen."* Most of the time we'd think that he would be complaining.

But because Paul embraced... braced the idea of living his life to the glory of God, he realized that he didn't see even a prison experience in his life as being something that was wrong, he saw it as a circumstance that had been brought for the glory of God. And he said, "Therefore if I'm a prisoner of the Lord and I as God's prisoner can see the unseen hand behind the circumstances in my life, than I want you to remember that whoever you are and wherever you are and whatever you are doing, that your life is still about His glory."

And so the revolutionary truth is this: That we are to walk in a manner worthy of the calling of which we've been called. We are to live differently. We are to think differently. We are to act distinctively because we are now a part of this project... this Nazar... Nazareth project that is all for the glory of God. "Walk in a manner worthy of the calling..." God is calling you to live for His glory. God is calling us to live for this purpose.

Now I love the fact that he said walk because walking involves steps. And everyday as I go through life I walk through a series of steps. Life is not a run; it's steps. Now every now and then the pace picks up, but what I'm saying is life is stepping. And he says wherever you step keep stepping and keep adjusting, and keep anticipating that as you go through life, you're going to have to make some adjustments. You're going to have to deal with some changing conditions that you meet along the way. It's going to require some balance to stay on your feet. And being a Christian requires a lot of balance. It's easy to stumble; it's easy to fall. But Paul says because God has called you for a purpose I want you to walk and I want you to walk in balance according to the call that God has put on your life. That in all things... the good things and the bad things, the nice things and the horrendous things... that you still keep your eyes on living for the glory of God.

The word *walk* not only speaks of steps, it's also a word that used to describe the Christian life and the idea of conduct and lifestyle. It's how I conduct my life; it's how I live out my life. My walk with Christ is... is the daily experience but it's also the... the whole of that experience. It's the lifestyle that I live. And I'm now walking with Christ and I'm living out this life that is according to His call.

And then there's one other word. I want you to walk according to the calling with which you've been called, but he says I want you to walk worthy of the calling. What in the world does that word *worthy* mean? All of my life I've heard that I'm not worthy to earn salvation. I'm not worthy to merit the grace of God. It's not talking about the worth that we bring to God; it's talking about that which is equal to God's call. It's the idea of equivalence. Worthy means something that is equivalent.

We learn the law of equivalence at a very early age when we get on the see-saw (ha). You know how important it is to have somebody who balances your weight when you're on a see-saw, don't you? Do you ever remember when you were a kid, you got on a see-saw and somebody else got on the other end and suddenly you began to go up and down and then somebody jumped off and boom! You hit the ground! Remember that? You lost your equivalence in that moment. And when you lost that... when you lost the balance of that, you lost what was worthy... what was equal to that.

And so what Paul is saying here... God has called you for glory so be sure that you are living a life that is worthy of that calling, that you're focusing on the things that matter in your life and in your walk with Christ. Because what God wants in every single one of us is individual character, authenticity and integrity in our walk with Christ.

You see the character of this building that we're in is a result of two things: the quality of the materials individually and the quality of the materials collectively. If any part of the materials that are in this structure around us lack integrity or [don't] meet standards of specification, the whole building is in jeopardy. But on the other hand, if each part has quality and integrity, then the building has integrity.

And what God is doing in the church is building together a group of people individually. This is an individual challenge to individual Christians to live out the quality and the authenticity of your faith so that the whole of the church might be lived for the glory of God and for His honor.

Paul spoke of this in another place in 1 Pe... ah excuse me, 1 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 10 when he talked about different building materials, that there's one foundation upon which we're all built; that is the foundation of Christ Jesus. But he said craftsmen can add to that foundation gold, silver, precious stone, wood, hay or stubble. And he said if you choose an inferior quality of material then you're going to compromise what's built. And one of the great challenges we have in the church today is that there's a lot of compromise because we're building something other than what God intended for us to build.

We're not living lives of character; we're not living lives of integrity; we're not living lives of purity; and the compromise in the individual material is compromising the whole witness and testimony of the church. The problem with the church today is we've become too much like the world. And



yet the Bible says that God wants us to declare to the world the wonder of the love of God through the individual characters of our lives.

So what I've said to you is twofold tonight. One, I've said that the Nazareth project is something that's revealed in God's Word. And two, I've said that the Nazareth project, when I embrace it, is revolutionary in my life. I don't live the way that I used to live anymore. And I really do focus on distinctive living.

But there's one other thing that I want us to see tonight... and all of this is by way of introduction to what we're going to be doing in these weeks together. And so this other thing that I want us to see is that the Nazareth project includes the roles and the relationships that we share with one another.

From the very beginning we've said that this service is about connecting. It's about the way we see our connectedness as members in the body of Christ. And here the Nazareth project includes the roles and relationships that we share with one another. Paul says [Ephesians 4:1-3]:

*1) I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called, 2) with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3) eager to maintain unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."*

The Bible in... indicates here that there are some challenges that we face, some challenges that detract from the glory of God and the church; some... some challenges that will ultimately derail the quality of our lives as individual believers. And those challenges have to do with things that go on in our hearts, things that go on on the inside, things that are a breach to the character of who you are and who I am in the church of Jesus Christ. And sadly today I know and you know that there are many local churches that have been shattered and shamed because they lack these qualities in their lives.

Ernest T. Campbell said in the 1960's, and I think it's very true today, that "many of today's young people have little difficulty believing that God was in Christ, but what they find hard to accept is that Christ is in the church." Because so many churches today lack these very qualities that I speak of you... speak with you about tonight. And so the emphasis that Paul places on... is on focusing our lives on these qualities so that the project that God wants to accomplish and the purpose that God wants to accomplish can be fulfilled in us.

What are the qualities? Well there are three expressions to deal with three problems in the church... three expressions to deal with three problems. The first is humility. Why do we need humility? Why? What's a problem that we all have? Can you say it again? Thank you, Don. I appreciate you admitting that. I wish others would join you in that. What did you say it was? What's the middle letter in the word *pride*. "I". The problem that we all have is

that we are driven by a... by an "I" problem in life. And I'm not talking about the eye with which you see. I'm talking about the "I" of your heart. Everything in life begins to focus on me. How I do, what I do, how everything affects me. I struggle with this. You struggle with this. We struggle with this. It's the problem in our churches, it's the problem in our marriages, it's the problem in our workplace, it's the problem in all of life... it's the problem of pride. And one of the reasons that the church begins to shame and to shadow the glory that it's intended to have is because the church gets caught up in pride and self-assertion rather than humility that thinks more of others than it thinks of itself.

Back in Ephesians 2, Paul said [Ephesians 2:8-9], "*For by grace you're saved through faith, and that not of ourselves. Salvation is a gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*" It's not about boasting. It's not about me. It's not about you. It's about humility. And therefore the expression is the expression of humility that covers us from the problem of pride.

C.C. Morrison said, "The church is the only society in the world in which membership is based upon the qualification that the candidate should be unworthy of membership (ha)." And we all have to come to the place that we realize that we're here by grace. And therefore this is a place that needs to overwhelm us with grace and fill us with humility.

Not only does he talk about humility; he talks about gentleness... gentleness. It... it's the same word that could be used to say meekness. It's the opposite of indulgence. It's a restraint that is willfully put on my life and on your life so that we do not live for just our desire, but we live for the desires of others. And so when the Bible speaks of humility and the Bible speaks of gentleness, it's talking about moving away from self-assertion and moving back from self indulgence. A church can't exist when people are all just living for what they get. It's all got to be about we give, and therefore there's a spirit of gentleness in the church.

And then he says patience... patience. I know when we think about patience we think about [sound of fingers tapping rapidly] Hurry up, hurry up, hurry up, hurry up! But the Bible word patience is really endurance. It's stick-to-it-ness, it's seeing something through. It's the opposite of convenience. Convenience is "I'll do something as long as it feels good, it's easy, and it doesn't cost me anything." But endurance is stick-to-it-ness, staying with it, going through it. And God says that He puts us together in the church that in humility we might love one another, in gentleness we might encourage one another, and in patience we might go through things with one another, so that God is glorified in His people in the church.

And as we do these things, we are therefore bearing with one another in love and we are maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

What I'm saying to you in all of this tonight is really just this: There's a work that has to be done in us if God's going to do a work through us. And if God's glory is going to be in my life and in your life, and if we're going to be aligned with the Nazareth project that has been initiated by Christ, the Master Craftsman, then there always has to be an understanding that God is working in us, individually, in us collectively. Working in our lives through various seasons that we go through, through various experiences and circumstances that we face, and that we can be confident of the work of God in our lives, and therefore, what we have to be conscious of doing is answering God's call everyday, every place, everywhere He has put us.

In September of 1974 I was a junior in high school. We had a... we had a meeting... a series of evening gatherings in our church at that time that I went to as a high school student. About a year earlier I'd really firmed up my relationship with Jesus Christ and had really begun to walk with Christ. I mean, I'd been a kid who had been exposed to religion as a child and my mom and dad were believers and I went to a great church, but all of the religion and all of the exposure that I had, had not changed me, that is not until ah... the year after my freshman year in high school.

And about a year later I'd been walking with the Lord and seeking the Lord and I was in a church service on a Monday night or a Tuesday night... I'd have to look back at the calendar to be sure which night. It's much like the conference we've got coming up this Transform Conference that's coming up on the fifteenth. It's mentioned there in the worship guide tonight... in the newspaper tonight. That's conference.

I was at a conference like that and I had a sense of the call of God on my life... 33 years ago this month. You do the math. I had a sense that God was calling me to do what I'm doing tonight. I remember we sang a song of invitation in that church. It was a Baptist church. Many of you were a part of it. As we do here, we gave an invitation at the end. And that night it was just this seed thought... this seed sense that God was calling me. And I remember sitting back right over here in the church, and as we sang that night, boy, I held on to that pew in front of me, and I... I kept gripping that, thinking, "No, not now. Not going to do this. I need to think about this. This is too big of a decision to just make tonight. I... I need to go home and think about it."

And I had had a sense of it, but I was putting it off. We finished the invitation that night. We sat down. We did whatever we did at the close of the service and we got ready to close the service and leave that night. And the associate pastor at the church said something to my pastor, Adrian Rogers. Said, "You know, I believe we ought to have another song of invitation." And so after we had done everything else, we sang another invitation song and guess who went forward that night in that church? I did.

I had no idea that night what God would do with my life. My pastor Adrian Rogers had this voice that sounded like the voice of God when he preaches. I mean he would speak with this depth and this tone and this articulation! [high pitch] I felt like Mickey Mouse when I talked. [laughter] You know it was just... I just thought God could never use me, my voice. God could never ... I mean I just had no idea. And yet God has blessed my life as I've answered His call.

But what I'm trying to say to you tonight is that while that is a vivid moment in my life that matters to me personally, just because I say I'm called to ministry, that doesn't mean that you don't have a call. When my phone rang earlier tonight I had a call as I do many times in the course of a day, and my calls are not like your calls. The people that call me aren't the same people that call you. And all of our calls are not of equal time, or length or sometimes of importance. But there are calls that matter in life! And the call that matters in your life and in my life tonight is the fact that we have been called to wo... walk worthy of the calling that we have received of God and Jesus Christ.

I just want to ask you tonight: Are you answering that call? Are you answering that call? Are you living your life for the glory of Christ? Are you letting your life be marked with humility and gentleness and patience? Because everything in the Christian life is about Christian character. And if our character is not changing, then there's something wrong with our Christianity. And if the character of our marriages is not changing, there's something wrong with our faith. And if the character of how we train up our children and do our jobs is not different, then we're just fooling ourselves, folks.

This isn't about mind games; this is about life transformation. And the Nazareth project is what Christ is accomplishing in and through His church by the power that works within us. And it is to be for all generations forever and ever. And all the people said, [Amen] Amen.

*Father, tonight I thank You for this calling. And I pray that we would each individually understand that there is a call upon our lives to live and walk and to serve in obedience and in compliance with your plan for our lives. I pray tonight, Lord, for people who are here and who have gathered who are maybe struggling with some difficult circumstances in their lives, and maybe those circumstances have clouded and shadowed life in a way that they really wonder if they can live for Your glory. Maybe some of them are struggling because they need a fresh sense of Your grace. Lord, I just pray that tonight in this time and in this moment [music begins] that there would be a ministry of grace in this place in hearts and in lives, in hurts and in homes. And Father, that You would touch us and that You would let us see that You have power to work in us and through us for our good and for Your glory. I just pray tonight for fresh perspective. I pray tonight for ah... a new understanding of who and what we are as this community of faith, the church of Jesus Christ. And I pray that we would learn what it is to pray for one another as part of the church and learn what it is to build up*

*one another in faith, and to walk accordingly, to the call that You've given to us. We also know tonight, Lord, that Your word says that if we call unto You, that You will answer us and show us great and mighty things that we know not. And tonight we call out to You, Lord, with our needs and we call out to You from our hearts. We pray that You would hear Your people as we call.*

[Remainder of service is a call to individual prayer at the altar]