



## What Will Matter On That Day?

Let me give you a little background for today. We've been reading through the Bible together as a church this year and last week we read Acts 2. This is the story of the first church that ever started and here's what happened. A follower of Jesus named Peter stood up in front of a crowd of people and told them that Jesus had died on the cross for their sin. Acts 2:37 says, "*When they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'*" Here was Peter's response:

*<sup>38</sup> Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."*

Now this wasn't just for that day—it is about days to come in the future, like today.

*<sup>40</sup> And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." <sup>41</sup> So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

Three thousand people decided that day to be baptized as followers of Jesus. Three thousand people, who, when they woke up that morning, were totally not expecting to be baptized that day. That thought had not even crossed their minds. But when they heard this message from God's Word, they were cut to the heart and their lives were changed on the spot, right there.

In our Bible reading this week we read about another man named Saul who was completely opposed to Christianity. He was actually persecuting Christians, killing them and imprisoning them, until one day, in a way he didn't see coming, he met Jesus. He knew about Jesus before, but on this day he met Jesus and as a result—in a way he never could have imagined—he was being baptized as a follower of Jesus.

In fact, that's the theme over and over and over again in the book of Acts. There's an Ethiopian eunuch riding in his chariot, just reading in his chariot, a guy named Philip tells him about Jesus. Listen to what happens in Acts 8:36-38:

*And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And he commanded the*

*chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.*

He hadn't even planned on doing that when he got in his car that day.

Stories like this happen over and over again in Acts. An entrepreneurial businesswoman named Lydia is hanging out with some of her friends by a river one day. She meets Jesus and immediately she's baptized (Acts 16:11-15). When two Christians, Paul and Silas, are in prison, preaching about Jesus, they share about Jesus with the jailor, then that night the jailor and his family get baptized (Acts 16:16-40). One day a religious leader named Crispus, who had been religious all his life, thought he had it all together. One day he encountered Jesus and that day he and his family got baptized (Acts 18:1-17). One thing all these people had in common is that none of them knew when they woke up that morning that they were going to be baptized that day as followers of Jesus.

So here's the deal. At the end of our time today, I'm going to offer two specific invitations to everyone who's here. First, I am going to invite you to receive Jesus' invitation for you to experience eternal life in a relationship with Him—starting today. This invitation is for everybody, whether you've grown up in church or whether this is your first time in church. This is an invitation for people who may not feel like they fit in a setting like this. It's an invitation for people who may feel far from God right now, because of your past, or maybe even your present. It's an invitation for people who have been opposed to God and Christianity, maybe your entire life. It's an invitation for people who may have felt close to God at some point in your life, but that was a long time ago, and a lot has happened since then. It doesn't matter—your past, your present, your personality, your politics, your age or your ethnicity. This invitation is for you to experience life in Jesus today, by either beginning or renewing a relationship with Him. If you have any questions today about where you stand with Jesus, I want to help you settle those today.

Then in the second invitation, I'm going to give you an opportunity to be baptized today, on the spot. You see, baptism—based on what we just saw—is the first thing followers of Jesus do. It's our “going public” declaration and celebration of new life in Jesus. It's not some way we earn new life in Jesus. Instead, it's a celebration of the life we have in Him. It's how you publicly declare that you are not ashamed to be identified as a follower of Jesus.

Many here have never done that. Maybe it's because you have yet to become a follower of Jesus, or maybe you became a follower of Jesus recently or however many years ago, but for whatever reason you've never taken this step. Regardless of your story, today I'm going to invite you to take this step. I know there are many here today who have been baptized before, but I also know I am talking to a lot of people who have not been baptized for a variety of reasons. I'm going to show you that none of those reasons are valid, so today is the day to make that decision.

You might say, “Well, I got baptized as a baby. Doesn’t that count?” I’ll say more on this at the end; we are so thankful that your parents saw faith as important when you were a child and that, in a sense, they expressed that faith on your behalf. But every time we see baptism in the Bible—including every instance I just referred to—baptism is a public profession of your own faith, not your parents’ faith. So today you have an opportunity to personally affirm what they wanted for you however many years ago, in a way that doesn’t reject what they did for you. By being baptized, you are affirming, “Of my own volition, I choose Jesus.” You’re going to have an opportunity to make a call today and say, “Mom, Dad, you hoped that I would choose to follow Jesus and today I’ve made it public that I’m following Him.”

As a side note about children who might come forward today—parents, today will begin a process for your children to be baptized in the days to come. We want to start that process with you and your family today. Even teenagers—we want to walk through this process with you and your parents to the extent possible.

Now, some of you are already wondering, “I don’t have clothes to change into. I don’t want to go home wet.” We have thought of everything you need. From this dark-colored t-shirt, to shorts, to towels, to hair dryers, to all kinds of things. We have you covered, so you can take this step of faith today in a way you probably didn’t plan when you woke up this morning.

Let’s listen to this message from God’s Word, then I’m going to give you an opportunity to respond to these two invitations. As I was praying about what passage in God’s Word to look at today, my mind immediately went to the end of God’s Word—Revelation 19. So if you have a Bible, you can turn there and follow along as I read it.

This past Easter, I used an illustration with a rope, saying, “Let’s pretend this rope goes on forever. It doesn’t end where this stage ends—it just goes on and on and on forever. It does not stop. Out the door, around the world, then it just keeps going.” Then I said, “Imagine that this rope represents the timeline of your life. It begins at a point in time, then goes on forever. Imagine this red part represents your time on earth. You have a relatively few short years on earth, then you have an eternity somewhere else. This is your life.” We talked about how baffling it is that we’re so focused on this little red part, being consumed with this little bit.

I was speaking down at the University of Maryland this last weekend. I was talking to people about all the classes they’re in and said, “You are laboring and toiling to get a degree, so you can get a job, so you can work really hard for a lot of years. Then at the very end, you can live it up. You know, when you’re tired and don’t really want to go anywhere, that’s when you explore the world. It’s the American Dream.” That’s foolishness, isn’t it? Why are we so focused on this part—or even this little

part—and not focused on this long part? Why are we not consumed with what this is going to look like, and this, and this? Why are we so focused right here?

We talked about this on Easter. What I want to do today is to pick that up again. I want to think with you about this moment when this time on earth is over, this moment when everything you have—job, possessions, money, relationships, family, health—all of it will suddenly be gone. In that moment, what’s going to determine what the rest of this looks like for you? We don’t think a lot about that moment. We think that’s a long way off. “I’ll worry about that later.”

But in our own church family over the last month, we’ve seen that even a precious teenage boy is not guaranteed tomorrow—and neither are you. Not one of us is guaranteed to make it to our pillow tonight. Not one of us. Meanwhile, this world tells us day in and day out to focus on this little part and how to live it up here. Nobody is saying, “Think about what’s next and all that’s coming after this life.” The good news I have for you today is that God has not left us in the dark on that moment, how to be ready for that moment and how being ready affects the way we live here and now.

With that picture, I want us to hear from God today. I know I just referenced the book of Acts in the Bible which tells about all kinds of people who met Jesus on earth, whose lives were changed for eternity. The reality is, regardless of what we do on earth with Jesus, God tells us that one day we are all going to realize a few things about Him. Revelation 19 gives us a picture of what we’re going to realize, of where all eternity is headed, plus specifically a picture of Jesus in the end. I want to show you four eventual realizations we will all come to that will be clear on that day about Jesus.

### **Jesus alone is faithful and true.**

First, on that day, we will all realize that Jesus alone is faithful and true. Revelation 19:11 says, “*I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True.*” It’s interesting that this is how the book of Revelation introduces Jesus as the Faithful and True Witness and this is also the final description of Him in the end. When it’s all over, we’re going to realize that Jesus is Faithful. All He said He would do, He will have done. All He has promised will have come to pass.

Jesus is also True. There is no hint of error in Him. He is in no way counterfeit or phony. He is fully authentic and completely perfect. Think about how different Jesus is from everyone and everything else. I wonder how many of you have ever put your trust in someone only to be let down by them. For some of you, it’s a mom or dad who you looked to and leaned on, until one day they weren’t there anymore. For some of you, it’s a husband or wife who loved you for a little while, then left you.

Heather and I sat with a woman whose husband had been unfaithful to her. She said through tears, “What do I do when the one I thought loved me the most actually hates me?” For others of you, it’s

friends, coworkers, people you thought you could trust. Let's be honest. Even for those who have the healthiest relationships, we still know what it's like to be let down.

Let me confess the obvious: as much as I love my wife, I'm not a perfect husband. I don't always say what I should say, do what I should do. Even if I was perfect, she could not always trust in me. As we said, I'm not guaranteed to be here tomorrow. This is the reality of people in a fallen world. And it's not just people. We're so prone to trust in things—jobs, career opportunities, health, homes, investments, bank accounts, plans, dreams, pursuits, positions—and we're constantly let down.

So open your eyes and realize that there is One Who is Faithful and True. The picture the Bible gives of Jesus is perfect love, perfect goodness, perfect power, perfect humility, perfect kindness, perfect gentleness, perfect strength. I could go on and on. The point is this: you put your trust in Jesus and He will never, ever, ever, ever let you down for all of eternity.

### **Jesus is the final Judge of all.**

Jesus is perfectly just, which leads to the next realization we will all come to which is that Jesus is the final Judge of all. The Bible says at the end of Revelation 19:11, “*...in righteousness he judges and makes war.*” The whole picture here is that in the end, Jesus will come to make all wrongs right. He will come to dispense the justice of God rightly, fairly and completely. This is good news.

I think about the time I'm spending in different places in the world, whether the heights of remote regions hidden in the Himalayas or the depths of the trafficking industry I've seen in global cities, where I've met eight-year-old girls and boys who were taken from their homes and put to work in evil that none of us want to even imagine. On a radio interview this last week I was asked, “How do you believe in God, in Jesus, when you see those kinds of things in the world?” I said, “How do I not believe in God? I talk with my friends who don't believe in God, who say there is no God, which means in the end there is no justice. We're all just products of chance. They think we all just die and no matter what we did right or wrong, it doesn't matter in the end. Some people get lucky; some people don't and that's it, That's not true.”

It does matter and we know instinctively that it matters. We all want it to matter. We all have a thirst for justice. This is no accident. We are wired by God, our Creator, to see evil and want it not to be the end of the story. The good news of Jesus is that evil will not be the end of the story. Justice is coming. That's why we're compelled to work, by Jesus and with Jesus, against injustice in the world now.

This Wednesday night we're gathering together here at Tysons to hear about how injustice is being encountered with the hope of Jesus in some dark places in the world and to challenge each other to be a part of it, with the confidence that one day Jesus is going to bring evil to an end. But here's the deal. It's not just traffickers whom Jesus will come to judge. It's you and me and herein lies the problem.

As I was sharing about Jesus with a waitress this week, she said to me, “We’ve not done really bad things like murder or something.” But as I told her, “We have rebelled against God. Every one of us has. Every single one of us has turned from God’s ways to our own way. Sure, it looks different in each of our lives, but in all of our hearts, we’ve all said that we know better than God what is best for our lives.”

The Bible calls this condition of our hearts “sin.” We know it. We see the effects of sin in all kinds of ways in our lives, in our relationships, in hurt, heartache, loneliness, emptiness, disappointment and distress. These are things we’re all familiar with, but none of these were part of God’s original design for us. All of these things are the result of our separation from God by sin in our hearts—and we are all guilty. In fact, God says in James 2:10 that whoever keeps the whole law, but fails in one point, has become guilty of all of it. That means no matter how small or big we think our sin is, in reality we are all guilty before a holy God—every single one of us, even those we would consider the best of us.

### **Jesus sees and knows all.**

The third realization is that on that final day we will realize that Jesus sees and knows all. Revelation 19:12 says, “*His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.*” The imagery here is describing how Jesus sees and knows everything—everything in the world and everything in our lives, even those things we’d like to hide.

Just imagine for a moment a movie of everything you’ve ever thought, said or done, things you would be horrified for thousands of people to see. The reality is Jesus sees all and knows all. Many things we think are hidden now, but one day we will realize that Jesus sees and knows all of them.

### **Jesus is the ultimate King and Lord over all.**

That leads to the last part of this picture in Revelation 19. One day we will all realize that Jesus is the ultimate King and Lord over all. We don’t really have time to explore all this imagery in depth, but let me read it and show you the big picture of what it means. Verses 13-16:

*He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

Basically the picture we have here is Jesus as King, ultimately bringing His Kingdom on earth. All the kings of all the nations are bowing down to Him. This is where all of eternity is headed. In the present day, President Xi in China, Prime Ministers Modi in India, Netanyahu in Israel, the Ayatollah

Khamenei in Iran, Chancellor Merkel in Germany, President Trump in the United States—one day they are all going to bow before King Jesus.

And not just them—but you and me. The Bible says in Philippians 2:10-11, “...*at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...*” Please hear this. The question today is not, “Are you going to call Jesus Lord?” It is certain that you will. The question is, “Will you call Jesus Lord now, or when it is too late?”

That leads to the second passage in Revelation 20:11-15 that specifically talks about the day when every one of us, from the youngest to the oldest, from the richest to the poorest, will stand before God.

Picture what’s going to happen for every single one of us right here:

*Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

There is coming a day when every single one of us will face judgment. The dead, great and small, each of us will stand before God’s throne and books will be opened. These books mentioned in verse 12 are records of what we have done—all of our lives, completely laid bare before a holy God, every single thing we have done.

Most people I talk with are hoping that on that day, the scales will weigh heavier on the side of good things than bad things. Many, if not most people I meet, have put their hope for all eternity in the good outweighing the bad in the end. The problem is that is not what God says determines your eternity or my eternity. Instead, one critical question on that day will determine your eternity and my eternity.

## **Did you trust Jesus as your life?**

The critical question that will determine your eternity and my eternity on that day is “Did you trust in Jesus as your life?” You see, you have two pictures of books in Revelation. You have the books which contain your deeds and another book, the book of life. In Revelation 13:8 we read that this is “...*the book of life of the Lamb who was slain*” for our sin. It’s the book of the life of the One Who paid the sacrifice for our sins. This book is a reference to everyone who has trusted in Jesus to save them from their sin.

This is what Peter was preaching in that first Christian sermon back in Acts 2. As we talked about, we all have sin that separates us from God. We are guilty before God and deserving of judgment. No matter how many good things we do, we are still guilty of sin. But the good news of the Bible is that God has not left us alone in our guilt. God has come to us in the person of Jesus.

Jesus has done three things for us:

- One, He lived a life we couldn't live—a life of sinless, perfect obedience to God. And because of that, He was able to do number two.
- Jesus died the death we deserved to die. When Jesus died on the cross, He was paying the price, the penalty, for sin—death. But you say, “He didn't have any sin. So whose sin was He paying a penalty for?” And that's the point. That's the good news. Jesus was paying the price for your sin and my sin. Jesus died for our sin.
- Then number three: the good news keeps getting better, because Jesus didn't stay dead for long. Jesus did what no one else has ever done. Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus conquered the enemy we cannot conquer—death itself. Jesus is alive, and He offers life to all who will trust in Him.

This is the central message of the Bible. Anyone, anywhere, no matter who you are or what you have done, you can be forgiven of all your sin against God and have eternal life with God. You say, “How? What do I need to do?” That's exactly the question they were asking in Acts 2: “What do we do?” The answer is not, “Go out there and try to work hard and do better. Be good. Go to church. Do this or that.” No. The answer is what Peter said in Acts 2. It's the same word Jesus said over and over again when He was on the earth. We see it all over the Bible. The answer to “What do we do?” is repent. You , “What does that mean?” It means humbly confess your guilt before God, turn from your sinful heart, trusting in Jesus' love. Renounce sin, your preference for your ways over God's way. Renounce sin and declare allegiance to Jesus as Lord of your life.

That's why I used the language “Trust in Jesus as your life.” This is not merely a decision to believe some things about Jesus in your mind. There are a lot of people who believe a lot of things about Jesus. The critical question is do you trust in Jesus as your life? Because, remember, we have all these other books mentioned in Revelation that describe the deeds we've done. The point is not that our deeds, our works, earn our way into heaven. The point is that our deeds show that Jesus was our life.

That's what happened back in Acts 2. Peter said, “Repent and be baptized; you will receive the Holy Spirit, the life of Jesus, in you.” When you trust in Jesus, you receive a new life. This is the invitation today—to receive a new life, to receive a life that is no longer enslaved to sin, but a life that is free and empowered to live according to God's good design. It is to receive a life that is no longer caught up in the futile quest for pleasure, endless possessions and pursuits in this world. Instead, it's a life that

finds eternal pleasure in the enjoyment of God. He's your life—eternal pleasure in Him. That's the point. Don't miss it. The answer to this critical question will lead to one of two potential destinations.

## **Eternal torment**

Every single one of us, on this day that's coming in the future, will either go to eternal torment. Oh, I so don't want to use that word. Torment? Talk about politically incorrect. Really? I tried to think of different words to put here, but the reason I put that word here is because God uses that word. Revelation 20:15 says, "*If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*" Earlier in chapter 20, verse ten says that people who are thrown into the lake of fire are "*tormented day and night forever and ever.*"

Eternal, which means forever and ever. Forever would have been sufficient, but "*and ever*" is to make sure we understand that it doesn't end. Torment. People hear this language and think, "Is that literal? Is hell a place of literal fire and torment or just symbolic?" Let's just assume for a moment it's symbolic. If that's the case, I would ask, "What is fiery torment a symbol for? A winter retreat? A nice summer vacation?" No, fire and torment would be symbols for a horrible place to be. The whole point of a symbol is to express in words that which cannot be expressed in words. I don't think it's very comforting to think this language is symbolic. Whatever fiery torment is, it lasts forever...and ever.

I remember distinctly as a teenager hearing a weird illustration, but it so stuck with me that I was thinking about it this week. Somebody told me to imagine eternity as an eagle at the top of a mountain. Every 1,000, the eagle flies down and picks up a grain of sand from the earth and takes it back to the top of this huge mountain. A thousand years later, he goes back and does the same thing. A thousand years later, he does the same thing. Imagine how long it takes for that eagle to do that—every thousand years, one grain of sand. How long would it take for it to pick up every grain of sand on the earth and bring it back to the top of the mountain? Then, the eagle would do the same thing in reverse. If you picture that amount of time, eternity will just have begun. We're talking about forever.

People say, "How can God be loving and this be true?" The answer is God loves us so much that He made a way for us to be saved from this. He loves us so much to tell us this. He loves you so much to bring you today to hear this. The good news is that the way to avoid this is not by doing a laundry list of good works, hoping that in the end your good will outweigh your bad. No. Don't put your hope there. You are a sinner. Don't put your hope in yourself. One sin keeps you from eternal life with God. Put your hope in Jesus. God loves you so much He has made a way for you to be saved from all your sin, not by what you do, but by trusting in what Jesus has done for you, by trusting Him to be your life.

## **Everlasting joy**

Because God loves sinners, He has made a way for sinners like you and me to experience another destination—a destination of everlasting joy. We read about this in Revelation 21:1-4:

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."*

God has created you to come to this point right here, and though you have sinned against Him and deserve to be separated from Him forever, God has made a way for you to be safe on that day through trust in Jesus as your life on this earth and for eternity. I am urging you to be ready for that day.

When I was in high school, my dream was to be a professional baseball player. The only problem was I wasn't very good at baseball. I was on the high school baseball team, which may cause you to think, "Well, you were good enough to be on the team." But our team was very bad—and that's why I was on the team. During my senior year, we could not win any games. We got near the end of the season and played another team that was also very bad. So it was a close game—two very bad teams playing each other—and we got to the last inning of that game. They were up to bat at the top of the inning. It was a tied score. They didn't score.

We came onto the field in the bottom of the last inning with a chance to win the game. Our coach met us in front of the dugout. He often did this to give us a pep talk, but it never really worked. He met us this day and said, "All right, listen, guys. We actually have a chance to win a game. We need to do it right here. Because if we go into extra innings, then what's going to happen? We'll lose, right?" Right. We'll lose. "So if it's going to happen, it needs to happen right here."

He said, "Here's the plan. David, you're up first. We need you to get to first base. Once you get to first, we're going to have you steal second. Once you get to second, all we need is one hit, you round third, come home, we win the game." I'm thinking, "Yeah, right. We win the game—that doesn't happen. It's dependent on me getting to first. That also does not happen." But all the guys were saying, "Yes! Come on, David. Just get to first. Just get to first." So I put my helmet on, grab my bat and walk out there praying, "God, I know You love everybody on this field. Would You just show me an extra measure of grace today? Use this for their humility. I don't know. Just help me get to first base."

I stepped up into the batter's box and by the grace of almighty God, I draw a walk. I walk down to first base and look over at the coach. He's giving me the steal sign. I'm thinking, "Ah, I got the walk—now I've got to run?" So I take my lead off first base. The pitcher winds, throws, I turn and start running as hard as I can. I get about five feet away and start this head-first slide into second base. What do you

think—safe or out? Who said out? A chorus of outs over here. I was safe! I got wheels, all right? Anyway, so I'm safe at second base. Besides, it would be a horrible story if it ended at that point. I was safe. The next guy up to bat strikes out. Big loser. Didn't walk like I did. So now what that means is we've got one out.

If you know anything about baseball, you know if it's going to happen, it needs to happen right here because if they get another out, they don't have to worry about me as a runner. They can kind of relax. If it's going to happen, this is when it needs to happen. I take my lead off second base. The guy up to bat hits the ball in between the third base man and the shortstop. I turn and watch it go in front of me into left field. I start running for third base. I look up and see the third base coach. Anybody know what he's doing? He's running all the way down the line faster than I ever could. I thought, "Why don't you do this, coach?" He's giving me the "go" sign. I touch third base and look up. About 90 feet in front of me is a dude who's much bigger than I am, with all this equipment on, but his mask is off and he is standing over the plate, just waiting for me. I decided, "This is my moment."

I started running as hard as I could. All the guys in the dugout were jumping up and down, screaming. All the fans were going nuts. There were only two people there, but they were going nuts. I'm telling you, not even our parents would come to watch us play because we were so bad. I'm running as hard as I can. I get five feet away and start this head-first slide. It was like a movie. My hand starts to brush the plate as the catcher catches the ball and puts it down on my shoulder. We look up from the dust at the umpire.

I'm not going to ask you guys what you think he's going to say. He yells, "Safe! Safe!" The guys went nuts. They come running out of the dugout. They jump on top of me. You'd think we'd won the World Series. We had won one game. It was one of the most...actually, it was the only glorious moments in my entire sports career. It was pure joy. I'm reliving it with you right now.

Anyway, let me ask you a question. What would you think of me, as a baseball player, if when I was rounding third base, I thought, "I'm kind of hungry right now; I could use a hot dog"? So I just run over to the concession stand. Or what would you think of me as a baseball player if, as I was rounding third base, I looked up and saw over in the stands that, for some unknown reason, a high school girl had come to watch us play and I thought, "Huh. She looks better than he does." So I just go running over to her and start a conversation with her. Or what would you think of me as a baseball player if, as I was rounding third base, I look up and see the coach passionately going down the line and I was to think, "You know, I've not spent a lot of time with Coach recently." So I just go over to him, put my hand on his shoulder, "Coach, calm down, bro. How are you? How's the wife and the kids? How's your heart?" You'd think, "Well, of course you can't win a game." Why? Because when it came down to the end and what matters most, you got distracted.

I'm looking at thousands of people in this room and I'm saying there's going to be an end—it could be today for any one of us. I'm looking at a sea of people who are distracted by so many things. What is going to matter on that day? Did you trust in Jesus as your life? It's what's going to matter forever and ever and ever.

So at the beginning, I told you I have two invitations for you today. Invitation number one is for you to receive new life in Jesus. I wish I could sit down with every person, look you in the eye and ask, "Have you trusted in Jesus as your life?" Again, this may be your first time in church or you may have grown up in church. You may have even called yourself a Christian, but truth be told, if you were to stand before God right now, it would be clear that Jesus is not your life. You believe certain things about Jesus, but Jesus is not your life. Your heart does not leap with, "Yes! Jesus is my life."

Many of you have all kinds of excuses for not making Jesus your life. You say, "I've still got questions." That's great. Today, you can get them answered. Start that conversation right now.

You say, "Well, the church has too many hypocrites." With all due respect, do you know that has nothing to do with it. The medical profession has some crazy people out there, but you don't ignore all medicine. Somebody else's hypocrisy has nothing to do with you. Besides, you probably have your own hypocritical moments. So be glad Jesus loves hypocrites. It means there's hope for you too. That's the point today. Jesus didn't come for the perfect, because none of us are. He came for the imperfect, which qualifies every single one of us.

You say, "I'll do this later." I want to warn you, there may not be a "later." I've already said this and I'll say it again, as plainly as possible. You are not guaranteed tonight, tomorrow. You could die on your way home today, then this opportunity will be gone forever. Even if you live for many more years, you do not want to harden your heart toward God today. Do you hear the voice of God's Spirit speaking to you right now, but you're thinking, "Maybe later." Then God lets your heart harden all the more and you never come back to this moment. I say to some of you this could be your last opportunity. Today is the day.

Don't make excuses. Today's excuses will be tomorrow's regrets. Five minutes into eternity, what are you going to be glad you held on to that kept you from Jesus? The first invitation is for you to receive new life in Jesus.

The second invitation is for you to be baptized. I want to be clear here. Baptism and salvation are not the same thing. Baptism is a public celebration of a personal decision. You decide to trust in Jesus as Lord of your life, then baptism is going public with that decision. Again, all kinds of people make excuses—some of them the same.

You say, "I'm not ready." But the reality is, if you have trusted in Jesus, you are ready. In the book of Acts, they believed and were baptized. You don't need a certain level of Bible knowledge or have

it all figured out. Besides, at what point are you going to have it all figured out? Today is your opportunity to say, “Jesus is my Savior. He’s my life.” And if that’s all you know, you are ready.

People say, “Ah, baptism. It’s not really that important. It doesn’t make a big difference whether I do this or not.” Are you serious? Are you really saying Jesus’ first command to you is not that important? That it’s not really a big deal? If you won’t obey Jesus’ initial clear command to you, how are you ever going to go all the way with Him?

You say, “This will be inconvenient to do today for this reason or that reason.” Honestly, if you’re thinking that, please hear me in love. I don’t think you get Christianity at all. I had a conversation this week with a pastor in another country who has five people in his church who are under death threats right now because they were baptized. But it’s too inconvenient for you to get wet?

You might say, “I was baptized as a baby.” We talked about this earlier. Your baptism as a baby was a profession of someone else’s faith, not your own. Praise God for that. We honor that faith in your parents or whomever. But today is the day to profess your faith. You have a chance today not to reject what they did, but to affirm what they wanted for your life.

You say, “I don’t have a change of clothes.” Listen, we have everything you could possibly need. T-shirts, shorts, towels—we tried to think of everything. We even have hair stylists who will get your hair back in the exact form it was when you came. I’m just kidding; we don’t actually have that. But we have everything else.

You say, “But I came with friends and they have plans after church.” Listen, don’t miss the importance of this. They will wait. They will gladly wait if they are your friends. If they will not wait, tell them there is something wrong with their hearts and they need to get baptized. We will get you a ride if we need to.

Here’s the deal. When it comes down to it, the question is do you trust in Jesus as your life or do you reject Jesus as Lord? That’s the question and this is a defining moment. Today is a defining day for you to do what God is telling you to do—to live today in view of that final judgment day. Put aside your pride, step out from your seat and say, “I want Jesus to be my life.” Or, “I am ready to publicly declare that Jesus is my life.” Two invitations. It’s time to respond. Let me invite you to bow your heads with me. Every head bowed, every eye closed, so you can focus on you before God right now.

I want to ask every single person, first and foremost, is Jesus your life? Is Jesus your life? If the answer to that question is not a resounding yes in your heart, then I want to invite you right where you’re sitting to pray to Him, “God, I want and I need Jesus to be my life. I know that I have sin in my heart that separates me from You. I hate my sin that separates me from You, so today I’m turning from it. I need You to save me. Today I trust in Jesus, in His death on the cross for my sin and in His resurrection from the grave as my Lord. Today I confess that Jesus is my life.”

If you just prayed that and expressed that to God in your heart, I want to ask you to raise your hand? Before God, if you would say, “I’m trusting Jesus for new life today,” would you just raise your hand right now? All across this room.

O God, I pray for all these people, the ones I see, the ones I can’t see. I praise You, Jesus, for saving them, for giving new life, eternal life with You. I pray that You would give this group courage to do what I’m about to invite them and others to do next.

As you put your hands down, here’s the second invitation. Maybe you just prayed that to God and you’re going to celebrate that today through baptism. Or maybe you’re already a Christian, but you’ve not been baptized since deciding to follow Jesus. I want you to pray right now, “God, please give me the courage to do what I know You’re calling me to do. Give me the courage to take this step.” As you take this first step, I guarantee you God’s Spirit will give you all you need to continue every step after that.

Here’s what’s going to happen. I’m going to pray, then as soon as I say amen, we’re all going to stand together. We’re going to sing about life in Jesus. As soon as we stand, I’m going to ask everybody who’s ready to be baptized today to pick up your things and walk to the front of the room. When you get to the front, someone will meet you and walk with you to where you can get ready. You can talk with someone to answer any questions you have, then if it’s the right time, we will baptize you. You don’t have to come alone. Feel free to grab the person next to you and say, “Will you come with me?” They can. You, or you and that person, come to the front and someone will meet you here.

O God, I pray that You would give people courage all across this room and other campuses to unashamedly say in this moment, “I celebrate life in Jesus.” Give them courage to make today—in a way they likely didn’t expect—a defining moment in their lives and their relationship with You. We pray these things in the power of Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Permissions:** You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material provided that you do not alter it in any way, use the material in its entirety, and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, a link to the media on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Radical.

All Scriptures are quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

**Please include the following statement on any distributed copy:** By David Platt. © David Platt. Website: [Radical.net](http://Radical.net)