



Live with the End in Mind

The Story of Scripture – Part 27

Today, I want to talk about living with the end in mind. Please open your Bible to Matthew 25. I hope today is the tipping point for many of you. My prayer is that God will push you over the edge, to obey Him and do what He has called you to do.

I was recently listening to a podcast that mentioned that when people are surveyed on their deathbeds, the primary thing people regret is not what they did do but what they did not do. They say the majority of deathbed responses will be that the primary thing people regret is what they did not do, the risks they did not take, the complacency they felt in their lives, what they thought they should do but were too scared to do it. Today I want to tip us over to live with the end in mind. God is calling you and me to take action, take risks, do what He has put on our hearts to do. Some of you have been too afraid to do it. He's been knocking on the door and has sent me here to push you over the edge. You've been saying no but there is a step of faith He wants you to take.

Obviously, I would love to invite you to any of the new CityLight network churches or church plants in the area. Perhaps God is calling you to take a step of faith. Some of you are going to learn about that step today. God has been talking to some of you for weeks, months, maybe even years, but you haven't said yes yet.

I was recently really convicted about a high school friend of mine from about 15 years ago. When I was in high school, I wasn't really living close with the Lord, so was not faithful to share the gospel. I haven't talked to Clayton for a while and he just kept coming to my mind. So during my prayer time, God reminded me of Clayton. When I was driving down the road, I was reminded to pray for Clayton. Then it became clear that I should call him, like God was saying, "You cannot come and stand before Me without having shared the gospel with Clayton. I don't care if it's 15 years too late, it's at least better late than never. You need to call him."

I was thinking, "Call him and do what, Lord?"

"Call him and tell him about Me."

"Well, I don't want to do that. I'm a pastor; I love telling people about You, but I don't want to call Clayton. That's weird because I haven't talked to him in at least ten years when he came to my wedding."

"Call him. Call him. Call him."

I kept saying, "No. I'll pray for him but I won't call him." Now, don't act like you don't do that all the time.

I remember one night when I was listening to worship music in the car and was super bothered in my spirit. I was like, "I'm listening to worship music; You should be happy, Lord." I knew I needed to call him right then, but I was like a stubborn teenager, just rolling my eyes. So I was driving down the road and tried to call Clayton but was not expecting him to answer. Why would he answer? He would wait for the voice mail to see who called and why, then would decide if he should call back. That is proper communication etiquette, right?

So I called and on the very first ring he said, “Hello.”

I was shocked and said, “Hello” as if he had called me. I was confused. “Oh yeah, I called you. Hey, what’s up man?”

“It’s been a while.”

“Yeah, it has. So, I’m just going to get right to it and this might seem strange, but I have to tell you something. I’ve been super bothered that I didn’t share the gospel clearly with you in high school so I’m going to do it right now. I’m going to tell you about Jesus.” So we began to talk about the gospel and he listened to me and was nice. I told him the Lord had been putting him on my heart lately.

He said, “The funny thing is I’ve been thinking about you, too.”

I thought, “That sounds kind of weird but I’m happy.” That’s the kind of thing I’d say to my wife, you know? But it sounded strange from him.

He said, “Actually, just at dinner a couple days ago something came up.” I think Liberty University, the college I attended, was in the playoffs and he mentioned me to his wife. So they started talking about his memories of me, literally two days before this phone call.

I said, “Dude, can you believe this? God is pursuing your heart. Why in the world am I calling you. He’s after you. Look at what God is doing. He loves you and I’m the idiot who didn’t share this sooner.” So we began to talk about the gospel and some doors opened up to stay in contact now and see what the Lord does going forward.

I want to encourage you that God has possibly been pressing in on you and saying, “Go do this.” Half of you might already know what I’m talking about; you could leave the room right now. You don’t need any more sermons. God has spoken and you know what God has put on your heart to do. Some of you are like Jonah; you’ve been running away. Some of you have been so distracted by the world that you haven’t even heard Him. Some of you are asleep and need to literally wake up and listen to what the Lord is doing.

My prayer is that this sermon will have an immediate ripple effect in the world around us. Biblically speaking, one of the best ways to make the most of your life is to live with the end in mind. When life is hard because we’re trying to follow Jesus, one of the things I often tell my wife is that it will be worth it when we’re standing before Him. This is hard now; we’d rather not be doing it, but it will be worth it on that day. If we don’t think about that day, we won’t take the risk now. We think it’s not worth it right now if there is not going to be that day. But if there is that day before the Lord, it’s worth it.

So we’re going to look at Matthew and work backwards, showing you the picture the Bible gives us of that great day. Then we’re going to look at how Jesus wants to prepare you for that great day. So let’s open God’s Word.

I want to remind you that it is no accident that you are here today. That you are sitting in this seat, in this church. There are lots of faithful sermons being preached all over the world, but God has brought you here. I like to think about the purpose of preaching as being this crowd at this time in this moment. God has brought you here, not somewhere else, to tell you something today. This is no accident; God has a word for you. I’m super excited about what He has been filling my heart with and I want you to come with that kind of anticipation, ready to think about what God might say to you.

Ready? Let’s open God’s Word. Let’s do this and be excited! Matthew 25:31-46:

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I

was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?' ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?' ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

⁴⁰ "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

⁴⁴ "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

⁴⁵ "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

⁴⁶ "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

When Jesus returns will be the most important day in history!

Do you know the feeling of being in a big crowd. It makes you feel like something important is happening. This day will result in the biggest crowd that will ever be assembled and Jesus will be sitting on His throne. Notice that all the angels will be present—hundreds and hundreds of thousands of them, if not more. Every person in all of history—billions and billions—will be present from all the nations. This is where we are all going. This is not a fairy tale, a myth, a philosophy, an idea. This is reality. You and I will be standing there with angels and nations before the throne of God. This is going to happen whether you want it to happen or not; you do not get a choice in the matter. You will be there. This is where you are going. The focal point of human history is building up to this very event.

We don't think about it much, so I want to prepare you for this day and I want Jesus to help us learn how to prepare for this day. We're going to learn lots of things, but the main thing I want you to know is that the only way to really be prepared for this day is to trust in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus to forgive your sins, to believe in the gospel and follow Him as your Savior. If you have not done that, you are not prepared and I want you to do that today. The Lord is calling you.

So that we'll be ready for that day, Jesus gave us two parables in Matthew 25—two stories to help us prepare. I hope you'll see how important it is that we're ready. Jesus says, "I want you to prepare so I'm going to give you two examples." Here's a summary sentence to help you understand this:

Prepare for judgment day by investing your life according to the priorities of Jesus.

There are three main things we're going to look at:

1. Don't procrastinate your preparation.
2. Don't be indifferent about your investment.
3. Prepare and invest according to the priorities of Jesus.

Don't procrastinate your preparation.

This is the story in Matthew 25:1-13 about the ten virgins:

¹ "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³ The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴ The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵ The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶ "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

⁷ "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'

⁹ "No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

¹⁰ "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

¹¹ "Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!'

¹² "But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.'

¹³ "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

The interesting thing about this story and the next one is that the focal point is not that they did bad things; it's that they didn't do the right thing. So often we define our Christianity by what we avoid morally, which is important, but God defines it by what we pursue. If we spend our lives trying to not do bad things, we will still miss at least half of the point.

In both of these stories, they were not out partying all night; they were not drunk when He came; they weren't doing the things we would think of as bad things. They looked just like the rest, but the only difference was they weren't prepared. They grabbed their lamps in a rush, not thinking about what would happen. They didn't think about the cost of following Jesus. They didn't think about the road ahead. They grabbed their lamps and rushed out. In this example, Jesus was trying to prepare His disciples and us to say, "Hey, it might be awhile. He might not come as soon as I think, but I need to be ready for a long road ahead."

Look at verse three: "*The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them.*" What we learn from this is that to be half ready is not to be ready at all. They had their lamps but they didn't have their oil; they were ready. They didn't even get 50% credit.

Now every husband knows that to be half ready is not to be ready at all. We know this by experience. She asks, "Which one should I pick?"

I reply, "That one."

"You don't care; you're just picking."

"Of course I really don't care; I'm just trying to help you out. You look good in anything."

She says, "Of course you'd say that."

"Then why did you ask?"

So we know to be half ready is to not be ready at all. Some of us are not fully invested and we think partly ready counts, like coming to church; doing nice things; trying to not be a bad person. But to be half ready is not to be ready at all. If we haven't fully given our lives to Jesus and surrendered to Him, then we're not ready.

When I was preparing this sermon, I felt like the Lord wanted me to encourage many of you to not give up. You're trying to follow Jesus but it's really hard. You're beaten down; wondering what God is doing and when He's going to fix this or that. I want to encourage you, just like He does here, that He is coming back. It just might take longer, so count the cost of following Jesus. It might be really hard for the next 20, 40, 60 years, but on that day it will have been worth it. Don't give up. Keep going. That's what the Lord wants you to hear today. He is coming back. That day is coming. Stay faithful; persevere; don't give up.

You know the traffic on interstate 495 can be miserable. I remember one really bad day and , getting frustrated and trying to reroute to the E-Z Pass E-Z Pass fast lane. When I finally got back on, there was traffic on the E-Z Pass fast lane so I wasn't going anywhere. Then literally five minutes later, everything cleared up over the next hill. If we would have just waited and persevered, we would have been fine. I think it is true too often in our lives that when we hit something difficult we reroute too fast. We try to find the way out; to do something different. Most of the time, Jesus is saying, "Just keep going. Take the next minute, the next step and persevere." The Lord wants to call many of you to that today. The ironic thing in our culture is that we spend our whole life preparing for what we think is important—a good plan, a college fund, a retirement account—but we don't prepare for that great day. So the question for many of you is are you prepared. Do you have and know and follow Jesus? Have you fully surrendered to Jesus? Without Him, you are not prepared and God wants you to be prepared. So prepare for judgment day by investing your life according to the priorities of Jesus. Do not procrastinate your preparation.

Don't be indifferent about your investment.

So we think procrastination and indifference are not terrible things, but to Jesus and God they are terrible things. We need to have His understanding of what is good and what is bad.

So we have another example in Matthew 25. This time instead of ten virgins we get three stewards. Jesus is going to teach us one more thing about being prepared, picking up at Matthew 25:14:

¹⁴ "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵ To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶ He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷ So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸ But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

¹⁹ Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.'

²¹ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

²² And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.'

²³ His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

²⁴ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.'

²⁶ But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.'

²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹ For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰ And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Once again, I hope you're seeing what He is trying to communicate. This guy did not gamble the money away; he didn't use it on prostitutes; he didn't use it negatively. What did he do? Nothing. All he did was nothing. God calls nothing wickedness. "Hey, you didn't do anything, wicked servant." In God's mind, nothingness equals wickedness. In this example, the master would have been satisfied even with the simple step of putting it in the bank. He wouldn't have had to think about it anymore, but at least he would have received interest.

I really believe one of the devil's tricks on us and the church in general is to get us to think that avoiding bad things is our greatest moral obligation. We think that's all it means to be a good person, to be a Christian, to be a follower of Christ. As we said earlier, that's only half of it. We are not only commanded, we are required to invest our lives. Don't be indifferent about your investment. Don't be apathetic and complacent about your investment. Nothingness is wickedness.

As we saw from the first example, to be half ready is not to be ready at all. What we're going to see from this parable is to hold on to is not to take care of. If you're half ready, you're not ready. If you hold on to something that does not mean you're taking care of it. What does the guy do? He hides it in the ground. Well, it's safe in the ground; nobody will steal it. He held on to it. He kept it safe. He protected it. He did not leverage it. He didn't use it or invest it.

This is so true for many of us, right? We feel like due diligence is holding on, protecting, keeping safe. "Nothing bad will happen to my children if we just stay like this. If I am nice and just do this, I could still be good and follow Jesus. I'll be protected and safe. I'll put this here; I won't give it away; I won't gamble it away; I won't do bad things with it. I'm going to protect the investment God has given me. I'm going to put it in the ground."

God is saying, "No, no, no. That's literally just as bad as using it for bad things. Nothingness is wickedness. To be half ready is not to be ready at all. To hold on is not to take care of."

The interesting thing about these two parables is that the bridesmaids think the task is too easy. They don't plan; they don't count the cost. The wicked servant thinks the task is too hard when he just needed to do something. Both mindsets lead to neglect. "It's too easy; I'm unprepared. I'm just going to

pray this prayer, believe in Jesus, attend church. I like this; these seats are comfortable. I got this. Life is good. Hey, following Jesus works out pretty well. This is easy.” On the other hand, we think, “It’s too hard; I won’t do anything. Man, I can’t be like David Platt; I can’t preach like that. I can’t do this; I can’t do that. This is too hard. Being someone who makes a difference is too hard. I don’t have what it takes. God is asking too much of me; it’s too much. I won’t do it.”

Wherever you fall, both sides are what lead to our neglect. I hope these are a matter of conviction in your heart that brings repentance.

Let me build you up now with some encouragement. I want you to notice the phrase, “...according to his ability ...” in verse 15. He gave to each one according to his ability. God will not hold you accountable according to someone else’s ability. Stop comparing what you don’t have with others; start declaring what you do have and use it. Stop looking around and saying, “I can’t do this. I can’t do that. It’s too hard.”

What has God done? Be encouraged. He’s given to you according to your ability exactly what you need to make the most difference. So stop looking around and comparing. No, the Lord has put something in your life and heart. He’s given you time, money and resources. If you trust in Christ, you have the Holy Spirit and He wants you to go after the same thing God has told you to do. God will not hold you accountable according to someone else’s ability. Stop looking around to see if you measure up; start looking to Christ and ask for help. Go do what God has called you to do because by His Spirit you can do it. There is no such thing as a super Christian. God has given to each one according to his ability.

Now some of you need to stop feeling guilty about what you cannot do and start investing in what you can do. Are you a mother of little children, thinking, “I would love to do more. I have these passions and skills. I love my kids, but feel tethered to them. I want to make a difference over here and over there.” You’re discouraged because you feel like you can’t really do much in this season of life. But God says to you, “Hey, stop feeling guilty about what you cannot do now; invest in what you can do. Your children are your calling and are worth it in that moment. Be fully invested.”

If you’re a business man, you’re may be frustrated, not knowing how to take the next step because you’re so busy and unable to get involved in community. Stop feeling guilty about what you can’t do and invest in what you can do. Be present everywhere you go; you’re a missionary. Take every opportunity.

Are you a college student, thinking, “I’ve got no money, no job. I’ve got nothing to give.” Then give yourself. Reach your friends; reach other students. This is the most mobile time of your life; go somewhere for Jesus. Stop feeling guilty about the things you can’t do because of the boundaries of your life and start investing in what you can do. You can leave from here without any more training, any more help and invest for God’s Kingdom today.

So God gives to each one according to his ability. If we just stop looking around at everyone else’s ability, we could treasure what the Lord has given us. I want to free you from that. The Lord has placed something special inside you, given you unique skills, talents, experiences, spiritual gifts. He wants you to invest them.

I love what it says about the guy who had two talents. He didn’t say, “Yo, the other guy got ten back; I only got four.” No, he’s happy. Why? Because he used what he had. He turned two into four. There’s not a difference in God’s mind between ten and four. He’s concerned about your faithfulness. It’s not whether you can bring as much as the other guy; it’s whether you do what you’re called to do with what He’s given you. This should empower you. I hope it convicts you but also empowers you to say,

“By God’s grace and Spirit, I’ve got something.” Stop telling yourself it’s nothing; it’s not. God’s given you something; use it, invest it, leverage it.

Now because this is true, investing your life usually is not a matter of changing your situation, but changing your perspective. For the majority of you, if you want to invest your life it’s not some huge, radical decision to change your situation; it’s simply a decision today to change your perspective. Where you’re going matters today; the people you find matters today; the things God puts in front of you matter today. Your family, friends and the people you know matter today. The things that God sends you to do matter today. Your presence at work next week matters. It just a matter of changing your perspective.

Some of us feel like if we want to make the most of our lives, we need to change our situations. Maybe for 10% of you that might be true and God is calling you to that. You might be called to move somewhere else. But for most of you, God is saying, “I’ve already put you in this place. I’ve already given you what you’re supposed to have. Switch your perspective and go do it.” This is amazing and so encouraging.

I want you to notice the second thing he says in verse 16: *“He who had received the five talents went after a little while and traded with them...”* You know, as if the first servant in verse 15 thought about it, prayed about it. No, it says he went *at once*. He went right away. We said earlier don’t procrastinate; now we can add to that don’t hesitate. Don’t wait; go now with what God has given you. Go now into the life He has called you. You might say, “Oh Nate, that’s a good challenge from the Word, but I can’t. What about this; what about that? I’ll pray about it.”

Have you ever heard Jesus say in the Gospels, “Hey, follow Me later”? Is that anywhere in Scripture? No. But don’t we live like that? “I’ll do it later, God.” This servant went at once. This is an important application for us to think about. “What is the Lord calling me to do? I’m going to leap through those doors right now. God wants me to go at once. He’s given me an investment; I’m not going to hesitate.”

Don’t hesitate based on your skill set. It doesn’t matter; He’s given you an investment. Don’t hesitate based on your situation. It doesn’t matter; He’s given you an investment. When you walk out of this room, there will be a thousand reasons why you can’t do the thing God is calling you to do. I’m here on the front end, telling you not to hesitate. The Lord is telling you, “Don’t hesitate; I’m with you. Don’t hesitate; I’m for you. Don’t hesitate; it will be worth it on that day. Don’t hesitate; you have what you need. Go, do what I’ve put on your heart and called you to right now. Don’t hesitate.”

I love this little phrase and use it often: “Use what you’ve got because in God’s Kingdom, a little is a lot.” You might think you don’t have much to offer, but that’s not true. In God’s Kingdom, everything is a seed; everything is small at first but a little is a lot. So the call here is to invest your whole life, not just 10% of it. So you prepare for judgment day by investing your life according to the priorities of Jesus. Don’t be indifferent about your investment.

Prepare and invest according to the priorities of Jesus.

Then finally, to do all these things according to God’s priorities. Look at the end of Matthew 25 where he lists six things: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothes the naked, welcome the stranger, visit the sick and visit the prisoner. These are the priorities of Jesus. On judgment day, these will be the markers of people who truly followed Him. Now when He says least of these, He’s probably most likely referring to His disciples—to believers. This is the phrase used throughout Matthew to depict disciples and Christ connects Himself so much to His people that He says, *“as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”*

The Bible is so full of callings to care for these kinds of situations all over the board. Galatians 6:10 is helpful: “...let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Do these six things to everyone, especially to those of the household of faith. We need to take action in tangible ways. We need to build the church off these kinds of texts.

My son recently said pronounce to everyone present, “My dad said our old church (meaning this one) is all filled up so we need to start a new one so other people can hear about Jesus.” As funny as that is, it’s a little bit true. God has blessed this amazing place. I’ve been here five years and loved every second of it. I’m so thankful for this place and there is much more ministry to be done here. However, a primary theme in Christianity is not to stay put but to spread out. Check out Acts 8.

A long time ago, the Lord called me to plant a church and I believe this is the time He is leading me to do that. Based on Scripture we’ve just looked at, we want to build a church that helps prepare people and lives according to the priorities of Jesus. We want to make a tangible difference in the world around us. It’s called CityLight Church. Our official launch is September 15, just a couple weeks away. We’re going to meet at 10:00 at Falls Church High School. Here’s a quick video just to give you a little taste of what we’ve been doing over the summer and what we’re calling you to.

Video:

Nate: I’m really excited to invite you to join us at CityLight Church. This is an opportunity to make a real difference right here in the Washington D.C. area. We know there are needs here among our friends and family, as well as the poor and disadvantaged here. All of us need to be part of spreading the gospel message.

David: Here at the church, we believe in honoring God, making disciples, then planting churches. My wife and I have decided to go with the third one. We will join to plant a local church because I believe through the local church, the gospel can be visible. So let’s plant more churches.

Danielle: I’m going to CityLight because of their commitment to engage the community around them. Something that Nate says often is that light was meant for dark places and it has resonated with me that we are called to go out and be light in a very dark world. So I’m very excited to join CityLight and be part of a community of believers who are excited to go out and engage the people around them with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Nate: So I’m hoping that many of you will want to come and hear the Word of God preached by myself and other brothers, then together make an impact with our lives and among the people right here in northern Virginia

[End of Video]

So I hope that gives you a little taste of what we’re trying to do. We’ve been working all summer toward this. Our mission statement is: “Our passion is to shine the light of Christ in dark and hard places, to bring real hope and help to all people.” This is our passion. As Danielle said, “Light is made for darkness.” If we’re called the light of the world, that means you’ve been particularly designed to be in the dark. So we want all Christians to live with this in mind.

We have ministry going on throughout the region already. We have Lighthouses which are house-groups. A youth group is forming and kids’ ministry has rolled out. By God’s grace, we saw seven kids come to know Christ at VBS this summer. By God’s grace, we’ve made connections with social workers, community leaders and lots of interesting people. We are ready to receive what the Lord has called us to

do and to bring in whoever wants to join us. It's clear that God's hand is on the move there. I would be thrilled to invite you to join us and what He is doing.

I want to not only invite you to join what we're doing, but as David said in the video, there are lots of faithful people from this church who are starting other churches as well. I would love for you to consider joining them. You can learn more about all the church plants happening around the area at www.newcityplanting.org. If God doesn't lead you to join what we're doing, I would ask you to check out what God is doing all around the area and being a part of advancing His Kingdom through church plants. I can tell you as a church planter and by first-hand experience that any godly person is super, super helpful. Don't worry about what skills you have; that doesn't matter. If you just show up, be present and helpful, that is everything. We would love to have you look at how God might be leading you.

As we close, I want to share one quick thing to give you a reminder of what is going on in this area around us. I was eating in a barbeque place recently where lots of people were and I met this lady from Vietnam, so I wanted to engage her with the gospel. I began by asking about her heritage, what her faith views are, etc. I asked, "Have you ever heard of Jesus Christ?" You won't believe what she said to me. She said, "Who?" I said, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The message of the gospel, the Bible." She literally said, "I don't know what you're talking about." She's lived in the U.S. for 20 years. I haven't stopped thinking about her and that was about two month ago.

I want that picture to bother you. If you're assuming that because this church is big or because we plant a lot of churches, then there's enough work happening. There is not. As David said in the video, there are thousands and millions of people who do not have a meaningful relationship with Jesus and more than you would expect have no idea what you're talking about. They don't even know His name. They have no place to put their hope. They cannot even reject His name because they haven't heard it. I want you to have this picture in mind and trust it bothers you, too. As we pray, be thinking about how the Lord might be leading and calling you to invest your life and make a difference. Prepare for that day by investing your life according to the priorities of Jesus today.

Let me pray for us.

Heavenly Father, we love You so much and are so thankful for this time in Your Word. I pray that You would both convict and build up. That You would help each of us leave from here and prepare for that great day. You're calling some to go somewhere; to change their situation; to help plant a church. You're calling some to simply invest, to be intentional from where they are now. I pray, Lord, that as we leave that You will lead each of us to go, obey and make a difference with our lives for Your glory and Your fame here in D.C. and around the world. We love You and it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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