



Message **Transcript**

It's Time to take the Next Step

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Lord Jesus, we just thank you for today. Lord, we thank you for your grace that is new every morning. We thank you for your mercies, Lord. Lord, we pray today that as your word is proclaimed, that you would have your way with us. That Lord, we, as Brave Church would hear a specific message for us and what you might have for us as a church, and Lord what we, as individuals do to contribute to the church. And so, Lord, pour out your grace on today. Lord, change us. Lord, we believe that you want to speak to us, so do that. And so now for all of God's people who are gathered, who desire to hear the Lord, who will believe what the Lord says and will, by faith, put into practice what he shows you, will you agree with me this morning by very loudly saying the word, amen. Amen.

I think one of the greatest things to see in life is a young child learning how to walk, whether it's your own child, or a nephew, or a niece, or a grandchild, or somebody that you don't even know, isn't it interesting that it's innate inside of you to root for that kid? I mean, there's just something about learning to walk that causes you to want to cheer for that child, whether they're just learning to pull themselves up, whether they're just waddling or whatever, nobody's discouraging of that. I've never met somebody that discourages that behavior. Like, "Man, they waddle too much." Or, "Look at them, they'll never get it." Or "Do you see the way that they stride, that's not very good."

I mean, there's something of each one of us that says, "Hey, let's do this thing. Let's walk." Because there's something that we understand about a child that learns to walk, they're released. They have new freedoms. They can go places. They can

accomplish things that they didn't before. Now, some parents, when their kid learns to walk, it's not as exciting as it is for those of us on the outside watching because their kids are now moving around the house a little more. But there's something about that that's so important for us to understand.

It's interesting to me, when it comes to the Bible about our relationship with Jesus Christ, it's often referred to as a walk, walk. Walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Walk. In other words, it's as if God in heaven is rooting for you to begin to take greater and greater steps of faith. And we always say the hardest step of faith that you will ever take is the next one, because there's something inside of us that while God is always trying to thrust us forward and kind of move us into the next opportunity or, "Hey, you can trust me with this. You can do this." There's something inside of us that says, "I'm pretty comfortable right where I'm at. I mean, I've already done this. I've already accepted Jesus as my Lord. I've already learned how to do this. I've already let you change that behavior. Why more?"

What I've found is that God wants us to continue to walk until we meet him face to face. So no matter who you are, whether you're brand new to church and you've never even taken a step of faith to trust Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and savior or whether you've been walking with the Lord for a number of years, I'm telling you, you haven't arrived yet, and that God wants you to take a step of faith.

And in this first message that we're doing for the entire ministry year, today launches our ministry year for all the ministries that are opening up and everything we

do all the way until next summer, it's just on my heart that I thought we should pause and I could just make a synopsis or share with you as a church where God's leading us, and what he is doing, and how we can be praying, and what does it look like for you individually in this body collectively to take a step of faith so that God can use us.

It was July 16th of 2009. I was making a phone call to Kent Shaw who now happens to be the executive director of Brave Global. He was working at another church at the time and I was calling him because I was frustrated. I was traveling around the country and around the world, I was preaching the gospel, I was seeing people get saved, but there was something in my heart that was unsettled. And what was unsettled for me is, what happens to all these people that get saved? Who does anything with them? How do they get discipled? How do they grow? I feel like I'm just a speaker on a speaking circuit traveling around. And yes, I know never get tired of seeing people come to Christ, but there's got to be more than this.

I mean, if God really has made it a positive spirit in every single believer, then who's nurturing that, and who's caring for that, and who's doing anything about that? That was my heart. I didn't know what to do. And so, I called him and this first question to me was, "Have you ever considered planting a church?" And I said, "Yes, I'd been in a church planting residency, I'd planned to do that."

But just so you know a little bit about my background and the reason I'm so strong on this when I preach, I was one of those guys if you would've met me 20 years ago, I loved Jesus, I was preaching the gospel, I was serving full time in ministry, was not a big fan of the church. My view of church was the same people sitting in the same

seats, doing absolutely nothing just complaining about what goes on in their building.

And why would I want to give my life to that?

And so, I told Kent in no uncertain terms over the course of about a half an hour why I would never do that. And he asked me three questions. He said, "Can you preach?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Can you call up men?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Can you cast vision?" I said, "Yes." He goes, "If you can do those three things, well, staff other people around you that have other gifts than you and you can help be part of this."

And there were several things that converged all that same time. And I remember where I was, I was driving in my car in Illinois on Interstate 80, heading to Chicago to see Billy Joel and Elton John in concert at Wrigley Field, that's where we were going. And I looked at my wife and I said, "We're moving to Denver and planting a church." That were the first words out of my mouth and I started crying. And she said, "Okay." And as we're going into the concert that night, I'm like, "You don't understand, God told me we're moving to Denver and planting a church." And she said, "Well, you didn't say God said."

And I believe that if God called me, he called my wife. And so, we spent time just taking step by step, step. The step of faith was meeting Kent. It was coming and seeing a church. It was coming out to Denver to see, is God doing anything here? All those steps. And on August 4th, 2010, we moved out here. And on November 7th, 2010, we launched our church.

Thank you.

Praise the Lord, right? And it's been interesting for me because it's gone very different than I thought. Vision stayed the same. I mean, we want to reach Denver to reach the world, that's never changed, but we started with very humble beginnings. And I remember this year when we did Bandimere, we had nearly 9,000 people there, and 500 people streaming forward, and hundreds of baptisms and all that, I remember thinking in my head, I thought that was going to happen year two, and it didn't happen in year two, but God is faithful, amen.

And I believe that God's doing something in this church that is so special and so unique that I wanted to tell you, I love you, and I love this church, and there's nothing else I would rather do. And on weekends where I'm not in the pulpit where I'm preaching somewhere else, my heart is still here, this is where I want to be, this is where I want to preach, this is where God has me, and God's doing really special things here. And as we do an overview of everywhere we're going... yeah, we can give God praise for that, amen.

But I want to focus on two verses today just to highlight our entire year to tell you, "Hey, this is where God's taken us." And we'll pick up here later in this year. But if you have your Bibles, I'm going to encourage you to open up to the book of Hebrews chapter 11, the book of Hebrews chapter 11. And in this book of Hebrews, really what the author is writing to is a group of Jewish converts. And these group of Jewish converts found it much easier when they were just religious than they were finding it

when they were Christian. And it was much easier to just do religious rituals than to stand firm in Christ and do what God wanted you to do.

And so, what they were doing is they were turning back. And so, the author of Hebrews was writing and he's got one main message for these people, this is the message, that Christ superior to all things. He's superior to angels, he's superior to Moses, he is the superior sacrifice, he's superior to all things, therefore, don't turn back, keep going. And when we get to chapter 11, we see what was sometimes called the great hall of faith and we see people that remain faithful to the end.

But I want to highlight two main verses today, just to talk to us about what it looks like for us, individually and as a church, to take the next step. I want you to hear this today, what does it look like for you? What is God prompting in your heart? What's the next step for you? What is God prompting in our heart? What's the next step for us? And here's the truth, nobody can tell you what the next step is for you and nobody can tell you what the next step is for our church. We have to take a walk step by step and continue to listen to the Lord.

But let me read these two verses. It says now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Verse six, and without faith, it is impossible to please him for he who comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder for those who seek him. So here's what he says, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, it's the conviction of things not seen, and without faith, it's impossible to please God. So we better have a good idea of what faith looks like, what it means for us to take that next step.

It was so important in Jesus' ministry that sometimes when he went to a place where there wasn't enough faith, he couldn't heal people. His disciples one time asked him, "Why couldn't we heal this man?" He said, "Because of the littleness of your faith. If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you can ask this mountain to move, uproot itself and go throw itself in the sea, and it will be done." I mean, faith is such an important component to the Christian life.

Now, what is faith? Most people say it's blind faith, it's just, you got to kind of believe, it's all you're holding onto. Now, I believe faith has substance. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of what we do not see. Assurance really means the trust, the confidence, the substance, the foundation of everything we hope for. Well, what do we hope for? I'm going to telling you right now, Jesus Christ is our blessed hope that all our hope needs to be in him. And if your hope is not in Jesus Christ and in him alone, you're going to be miserable in this life and in the life to come.

The substance of our faith is always surrounded in and through the person of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ. And it's the conviction, or the evidence, or the proof of everything that is not seen. It's the verification. It means this, when you walk by faith and not by sight, it means this, because I've spent time with the Lord, and I'm depending upon the Lord, and I'm feeling the promptings of the Lord, I'm going to step out believing that all the things that the Lord is promising are going to take place even though I can't see it with my eyes and even though I can't convince you with my mouth, I know my God and I know what he'll do, that's what faith looks like.

Now, faith is difficult for many of us because we get complacent, we're afraid to step out in faith because of this, failure, rejection. Don't worry about those two things. God understands what failure looks like. God understand what rejection feels like. God wants you to take steps of faith. There's nothing wrong with taking a step of faith saying, "God, I'm going to trust you. I'm going to believe you for this. And Lord, I'm living my life as if you're going to come through."

Because for most of our lives, we develop comfort around what we like so that we don't really have to trust God. "Yeah, I'll be generous to church, but I got enough here that if things don't work out, I still got enough to take care of myself. Yeah, I'll give time to the church and I'll be okay with that, but I got enough time left that if it didn't go well, I'm okay." Most of us are afraid to leap completely out and trust. It's like the little kid at the end of the pool. I mean, when they're trusting their parents to jump, I mean, you got to leave the edge, that's what faith looks like. I believe you're going to catch me. I believe you're going to be... That's what faith looks like.

And in all the different elements of our lives, God is trying to get us to take steps of faith. And what may be a ginormous step of faith for you, may be a small step of faith for somebody else. And what may be a really tiny step of faith for you, may be immense for somebody. It doesn't matter, it's what is God prompting you to do?

And so, as we talk about faith, I just want to tell you as a church, I want to give you four things that we must grow in today. And at the end of the message, I want to highlight some things that God is doing, that we can begin to pray about and seek his

face on so that we're ready for all that God is going to do, because I still believe that the local church is the hope of the world. I believe that when we gather, this is where God meets us. I believe that the way God's going to reach our city by advancing the kingdom is through the church.

I don't believe we're the only church, I am for every faithful church that's proclaiming the word of God, that wants to get the kingdom out, I'm for them all, not only here in Denver, but everywhere else. We happen to be one of them. This is where we planted our flag. This is who we are, and God wants to do unique, special things through us on this side of eternity.

And as a church, I want to give you four things that we want to continue to grow. And these are four ways that you can grow in your faith. These are things I love about Brave Church. These may be things that you're already doing, but even if you are, like we talked about at the beginning, there are ways that you can grow in them even more. And the first is this, as a church, we must grow in our dedication to the truth. We must grow it in our dedication to the truth. Now, I love this church because this church just dedicated to the truth.

I mean, last year when I got to teach through Genesis one to 11 and the book of revelation, you would have to be dedicated to the truth or you wouldn't come here anymore. I mean, you couldn't even get through Genesis chapter one, right? I mean, if you can't even get through Genesis chapter one in most churches where we talked about one race, and two genders, and six days, I mean, most churches won't even talk about those things and yet it's in the very first chapter of the Bible. But we want to

grow in our dedication to the truth, not just being a group of people who say, "Yeah, we believe that. Yeah, we believe that. Yeah, I think I believe that, but it's really not that big of a deal." But that we walk in the truth.

That the convictions about the truth that we share and what we're here are actually the things that we're going to put into practice, it's so important for us. And why is this so important? Because we're living in a culture where religious liberties are being threatened, where churches are backing away, where churches are retreating. Brave Church has not retreated. Brave Church has stood firm and is continuing to advance the gospel and we will continue to do so. And the only reason for that is because of our dedication to the truth.

You say, "Well, what is truth?" That's what Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me." The word of God is true, all of it, Genesis one through revelation 22, it's all true, every bit of it, and we must, as a church, grow in our dedication to it. What does that mean for you? It means this, how's your time growing in the word of God? What's it look like for you?

I mean, this is a rhetorical question, you don't need to answer. How much time did you spend in the word today before you got to church? How much time did you spend yesterday on your Saturday before you went and did your thing? How much time do you spend seeking the face of the Lord so that you would know the word? How many scriptures have you memorized this year? What's a new thing God's shown you

in his word that's changed the way you think about him? What's your dedication to the truth? Because the more you are dedicated to the truth, the more you'll live the life that God requires.

I was just reading in my Bible study earlier this week about Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, how the spirit led him there. And when Satan comes after him, what does Jesus beat him with? The truth, the word of God. Satan even tries to deceive him by twisting the word of God and Jesus corrects him. The more you know and are dedicated to the truth, the more you'll be aligned with what God has for your life. Brave Church, we want to continue to grow in the truth.

Now, as I prepare sermon series, I like to pray for a long time about, hey, what's God have for us and what's God doing. And the Genesis and Revelation series, God put on my heart a year before we ever preached the Genesis and Revelation series, these are two books that I'm going to be preaching this year. I want to tell you what those two books are, if you were here on first Tuesday, you already know this, but the reason for these two books is as I've been praying as a church, where's our church at and what are we doing?

We celebrate our 11th year anniversary this November 7th, and as a church, there's some things that we need to teach about the church like what's supposed to go on in the church, and how's the church supposed to function, and how are leaders selected, and what are leaders' responsibility? Is there a role for men and is there a role for women? What should prayer look like in the church and how should we function in the church? What's the household of God put together?

Because I find everybody's got an opinion about church, just ask people, "What do you think about church? What should be going on there?" Everybody will tell you, but very rarely do we go to God's word to see, "God, what do you want to go on in your assembly? God, what do you want to go on in the gathering?" So this fall, I'm going to be teaching starting next week, Lord willing, the book of 1st Timothy. The book of 1st Timothy tells us how we're to act and to function in the household of God.

1st Timothy 3:15 says this, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. If you don't have the church, you don't have truth in a culture. That means when you come to church, you should be hearing things that you're hearing nowhere else in the culture, that's what church is. And so, if you're just like, "Well, that's kind of boring. I didn't want to go to church to learn about church."

That's why we're teaching that book, because it's a fascinating study. And I promise you, by the time we're done with 1st Timothy, you'll have strong convictions and opinions about what should be taking place in local churches, and what is essential, what's closed-handed that everybody needs to do, and what are some of the freedoms that we have that different churches can function in different ways wouldn't you like to know?

And then God's been putting this on my heart and you'd know this from my preaching, we're living in a different world than world I grew up in, I promise you that, it's a very different world. And I'm telling you while religious liberties are being

threatened to be taken away from you, what does it look like for you to stand firm in the faith? What does it look like for you to not retreat? What is God calling you to do? Especially when you're going to watch other people who are professing Christians leave the faith in the coming years and you're going to need to stand firm, how do you do that and what does that look like? That's what God's been burdening me to preach to our church.

So after we finish the book of 1st Timothy going into Christmas and when we start the next year, we're going to be in the book of Hebrews, and we're going to go through the entire book of Hebrews to talk about the superiority of Christ and what it means to persevere and remain firm in the faith. It's going to be a fascinating study for us as well. Those are the two books that God's led me to teach. I would encourage you to be praying for me, praying for you, reading through the those books, understanding what they're all about, but church, we're going to grow in our dedication to the truth. We're going to continue to grow in our dedication to the truth.

Second is this, as a church, we must grow in our dependence upon prayer. We must grow in our dependence upon prayer. Now, this is another reason I love Brave Church. Brave Church is committed to prayer. If there's anything I could get you to commit to, it would be prayer because I know that if you can get in front of our father's throne, and in front of his face, and seek him, everything else in your world will change.

I mean, from the very beginning of this church, we had prayer meetings, we did them at least once a month. Sometimes they were on Wednesdays, sometimes they were on Sundays, sometimes they were on Saturdays, they were always a different

time. As a matter of fact, Kyle Bryant, our worship leader in Broomfield sent me a video this week of a 2014 prayer meeting that we had, it was before we even started first Tuesday. And I remember that prayer meeting, the more I looked at it. There's probably about 40 people in this section, and about 30 people in this section, three over there and nobody over here.

And I walked up to the front and told people what we're going to pray about. My brother was playing the guitar, and I'm looking at it, and I'm like, "That looks nothing like what we do now." I mean, I'd be thoroughly disappointed if that's what our prayer meetings look like now. But I remember at the time calling people on the phone, "We had over 100 people at our prayer meeting, it was awesome. God's moving, God's doing things." Now, it's not uncommon for us to have several 100 people here at our prayer meetings, seeking the face of God, worshiping him.

This last Tuesday, if you weren't here, I'm just telling you, you missed a move of the Lord. There were people delivered, there were people healed, there were people set free, it's awesome. We will not stop praying as a church, we will only dedicate ourself more to prayer. Why? Why? Why? Because it was what Jesus did. Mark, 1:35 says, very early in the morning while it was still dark, Jesus got up and went to solitary places, where there he prayed.

Sometimes when his disciples were looking for him, they couldn't find him, like, "What were you doing?" He was praying. When he was 12 years old and his parents couldn't find him when they left Jerusalem to go back to Galilee and had to go back

into Jerusalem, they found him in the temple and he's like, "Did you not know I had to be in my father's house?" What do we see him doing on the night he's betrayed? Praying. What do we see him doing on the cross? Praying. What is the one thing the disciples ask Jesus to teach them how to do? Pray. Do you think it's important? Then why don't most churches pray? Why is prayer and afterthought?

Prayer should be the foundational part of your individual life and our churches life. If nothing else goes on in the church, prayer should be going on in the church all the time. The problems that we have now in our church with too much growth, and not enough space, and all the different things, that's a result of prayer, and I love that about our church. If you haven't been coming to first Tuesday prayer meetings, I invite you, I plead with you, I beg you, come, because you really don't know what's actually taking place at Brave Church until you're a part of our prayer meeting.

And why is it so important? Because I think as a pastor, I can give you vision, I can stand here and say, "Here's what I think. Here's what I think." To which you should respond, "Okay, that's what you think, who cares?" We're not a church that says, "Here's what Jeff thinks." We're a church much like the difference between being a motorboat or a sailboat, we're a sailboat, we're not a motorboat. We're not running in our play and telling God to bless it. We're a sailboat, and we're extending a mast, and putting up a big sail and saying, "God, you blow your wind in this, you take us wherever you want to take us, and we'll go wherever you want to go, and you do whatever you want to do." That can only come through a church that seeks the face of the Lord in prayer.

How are you devoted to prayer? I mean, again, rhetorical question. How long did you pray this morning before you left a house? I mean, what was your prayer life like yesterday? How many hours did you spend in prayer this week? How many minutes did you spend in prayer this week? Did you even pray this week? I mean, these are the kind of questions that we need to ask. If we're really going to be the kind of church that God is going to bless and we're really going to be the kind of church that takes steps of faith and believe that we can go everywhere God wants us to go, not only do we have to be dedicated to the word, we have to be dependent upon prayer, we have to be.

And it's not a have to, I would just encourage you, if you've never prayed before, why not do this, why not instead of setting some big goal, "Hey, tomorrow morning, I'm going to wake up and pray for a half an hour." Let me just assure you, if you've never prayed before, you won't, unless some crisis hits your life, then maybe you will. Just give God two minutes. You say, "Two minutes, that's nothing." Maybe it's two minutes more than you prayed today. Seek him, seek him, and don't make it about the time, make it about the relationship, make it about his face.

Men, when you take your wives out on dates, you don't set a time. "I'll give you 45 minutes at dinner, 15 minutes afterward, then I'm on my own." It doesn't work. It's not a relationship. You set time aside for the relationship. If you really love God, you'll want to spend time with him. And not only telling him what's on your heart, but you'll want to listen to what he has to say too. As a church, we must grow on our dedication to truth, we must grow on our dependence upon prayer.

Number three, and I think this is huge for us this year as a church if we're going to take steps of faith, we need to grow in our desire for holiness. Our desire for holiness, that's a desire to please God, that's a desire to be different. It says in the Psalms, in Psalm chapter 24 versus three and four, who may ascend into the hill of the Lord and who may stand in his holy place? Here's the answer, he who has clean hands and a pure heart. He who has clean hands in a pure heart. That's why David, after he sinned, prayed this in Psalm 51:10, create in me a clean heart, oh, God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

See, growing and holiness is about consecration. It's about setting yourself apart unto God. It's about taking off the things in your former life and it's about putting on Christ and walking into newness of him. It's about you used to live apart from the spirit of God that now indwells you, but now because the spirit of God indwells you, and because you are redeemed, and because you are holy, and because you are forgiven, and because you are loved, you're living in a new way.

And many Christians miss this point, many Christians think holiness is for those radical Christians out there. No, holiness is for every single Christian, which means your life should not continue to look the same. It means every day, month, week, year, you are growing and looking more, and more, and being conform to the image of the Lord, Jesus Christ. And here's how you know that you're growing in your faith. People that used to hang out with you will see a difference.

See, here's a question for you... I'm hearing music. Here's a question for you,

think about when it was that you got saved. Think about when it was you got saved. Okay, got that in your head. If you've never been saved, then I got good news for you, Jesus Christ died for you, rose for your sins so that if you repent and trust Christ, you can have today be your day. But think about when you came to Christ. Now, since the time you came to Christ, how many people in your sphere of influence have come to know Christ? Rhetorical, how many? Because God would expect several of them to, or you say, "Well, none of them."

How many of the none have left their relationship with you because they don't want to be around you anymore because you're too holy? And if you say, "Well, nobody's come to Christ and nobody's left me." Perhaps, just perhaps the reason is, is because you're not willing to walk with God, and change, and become who God wants you to be.

When I got saved, I started leading people to Christ right away. That's one of the gifts God gave me, was evangelism, that's what I started doing. And there were people here and there that got saved. When I gave my life fully to Christ and surrendered in such a way that I'm like, "God, I'll walk in holiness. I'll do what you want. I'll go where you want to go." Scores of people started coming to Christ, friends that were my friends, now they're like, "Now you're getting too serious about this, we don't want to hang out with you anymore." I remember what those feelings felt like. When does it happen for you. If you're living the same as you were before you got saved with all the non-believing friends you are, and they can hang out with you and they're fine with who you are, it means that you're not growing in the fullness of all that God wants for you.

Friends, for us to grow as a church, for us to take steps of faith as Brave, we need to desire, holiness. Holiness is not perfection. Holiness is a pursuit of Christ's perfection in us, it's the desire to allow God to work out of us what God has already worked in us through his holy spirit. It is not a commitment, "God, I'm going to be better." It is not a commitment, "God, I'm going to do good." It's not a promise, "Look what I'm going to do for you." No, it's, "God, I'm giving up what I used to be and I'm walking out my new identity in Christ. I'm exchanging my old life for the new life I have in Christ and everything you have for me, I want to come out." It's a desire for holiness.

By the way, only God can give you that desire, only God can give you that desire. If I tried to give you that desire, it would be legalism. I can't tell you what holiness looks like for your life. I can't tell you what God's telling you to put off, but I promise you if you're a Christian, there are things God's telling you. That's what you used to do. That's who you used to be. Those are the behaviors you used to engage in. Put them away, put this on. This is who I want you to be now. That's what it looks like to grow in holiness. And only the spirit of God can show you. Now, you know what it is, because it's that one area that you're stubborn about that you're like, "I'm not doing that." That's probably the area that God's saying, "Do that." There has to be a desire for holiness.

When we're dedicated to the truth, when we're dependent upon prayer, when we desire the holiness of God, I'm going to give you one more step. This is a step for all of us, individually and collectively at Brave Church. It's a demonstration of generosity. If we're going to take steps of faith, we must give a demonstration of generosity.

Generosity is being lavish in your love towards others. It's being generous and being a steward of everything you have for the sake of the kingdom, that's what generosity is. It's the opposite of being calculated. It's the opposite of being calculated. Whether we're talking about time, love, money, hospitality, whatever we're talking about, compassion, it is lavishly giving those things. You say, "Well, why do we want to do that?" Because that's the heart of the entire gospel. Hear the word of the Lord in 2nd Corinthians 8:9, for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for your sake, he became poor so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Jesus emptied himself of everything so that you could have all that he gave. He didn't hold back. He didn't say, "I'll give you some." He came and gave his very life. The entire gospel is of Christ, humbling himself and emptying himself for us so that we could be the fullness of Christ. Your next step of faith is going to require that. You said, "What's generosity look like?"

Now I think about the story, it's written in several of the gospels, but in Matthew 26, we see the story played out about a woman who comes into Jesus and she's weeping at his feet. And she takes this alabaster jar of perfume, it's probably worth about a year's wage, and she opens it and she begins to pour it all over Jesus' feet. And guess the two people that speak, one, a religious leader of Pharisee. You know what he says, "If this Jesus was a prophet he'd know the kind of woman this was." In other words, he was saying, "She's no good, what is she doing around him, let alone being lavish to him." Religious people hate generosity. And who was the other person

that spoke? Judas Iscariot. You know what he said? "What a waste," Judas, "This could have been sold and given to the poor."

See when you're generous, you're lavish, you're not calculated, you're just doing it because you want to do it. One of the reasons that you don't grow in your faith is you're not generous enough. There can be an area of your life that you refuse to be generous. Perhaps it's your time like, "Yeah, those other people can serve at the church, I don't have time for that." Perhaps, it's your love, "My kids know, my wife knows, they know I already love them. I don't need to demonstrate it, I already demonstrated it before." It could be your money, "I'm not one of the rich people that go to the church, I don't really have much to give, who really cares."

Can I tell you something about money? One of the greatest stories in the entire New Testament was a poor widow that gave two small copper coins worth less than a penny, it's not how much you give, it's that you give of yourself. See, when you're generous and you're lavish, you can experience the grace of God. And these four areas that I'm talking about, keep people from taking steps of faith. They love the truth of the gospel, but they don't want all the truth of the Bible. They love the fact that Jesus listens to them, but they don't want to spend any time with him because if Jesus directed their path in a way they didn't want to go, they wouldn't want that. There's a desire to look different but I don't want to look that different. I don't want to be one of those weird freaky people, that people talk about because I love Jesus.

And there's people like, "I'm generous, I'm more generous than they are or she is, or he is. but don't expect me to go all-in on that." All those things, where we begin

to be calculated, keep us from taking the next step of faith. When you're all engaged with God, and you're dedicated to the truth, and you're dependent upon prayer, and you desire holiness in your life, his holiness, and you demonstrate generosity, the next step becomes really clear. Because here's what you'll say, "God, I don't really care, whatever you want from me, you have. You gave your entire life for me, I wouldn't be who I am without you. You can send me wherever you want, you can use me however you want, you can take whatever resources I have and they're all yours for your kingdom." That's what it looks like.

It makes a difference in that story that you've heard between the pig and the chicken that wanted to give the farmer a breakfast one day. The chicken said, "Hey, let's give the farmer a ham and egg breakfast." The pig said, "That's easy for you to say, you just need to make a deposit, for me, that's a full commitment." You know what the moral of the story is? Don't be a chicken when it comes to your faith. Jesus gave his whole life for you. He gave his whole life for you. What are you holding back? I know for me, when I was 24, that was the turning point for me, where I was saying, "Lord, whatever you want, it doesn't matter. I'm done fighting you, it doesn't matter. You got my whole life however you would lead me."

And the Lord's guided my steps. He's had certain things that have stayed the same, certain venues that have changed but as I've taken steps in them, it's been an exhilarating ride. Friends, there is a return of investment on walking with Christ. There's an exhilarating life on walking with Christ. And I'm ashamed to say, too many Christians never experience it because they're too doggone calculated about everything.

I'm already saved, and this is my house, and this is my family, and what's the church going to do for me, and how can the church help me? And what can I get out of this whole thing? Friends, if you live that way, you will rot on the inside. It becomes, Christ, you died for me, and you rose for me, and you poured your life into me. And even if I gave you everything I have, that would be far too little for what you've given to me, so take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee. Lord, you're the cornerstone of my life, you have it all. Anything that I have, do, say, speak, it's for your name. I'm willing to do whatever you want.

And I know what you're thinking because I used to have this thought from the time I was five years old when I went to a Lutheran Grade School and we'd have missionaries come in from New Guinea that would explain what it was like to be on the mission field. And it was back in the days where they had those overhead projectors. They put up slides, they would show pictures of them eating iguana. And even as a five-year-old, I knew, don't get too close to Jesus, if you do, you're going to be eating iguana in New Guinea. I mean, tell me I'm not telling the truth. Some of you are afraid that if you give your whole life completely over to God, like, "I'm saved, that's enough. But if I get my complete life over to God, it's going to be miserable." Let me tell you the opposite is true. God designed you, he created you, he knows just what fulfills you. If you will walk in his way, you will experience Christ in measures you've never had before, amen.

Amen.

Be dedicated to the truth, amen. Be devoted to prayer, desire holiness, and demonstrate generosity. And I'm telling you, if you pray that and say, "Lord, is there any area in my life where I'm not doing that?" I promise you through his Holy Spirit, he'll show you. Will you be obedient where he shows you? And I tell you all this because God is doing amazing things through Brave Church. He has from the beginning, I've enjoyed every single season. I enjoyed the seasons when we met in a little room with chairs and had 19 people show up for our meetings at 4:00 in the afternoon, and we had to go up five floors on my apartment building, over 18-speed bumps to get there, and walk all the way downstairs and it'd be 19 people. And I was like, "This is awesome, God, you're doing it." I enjoyed moving into Cherry Creek High School and we just had a handful of people there and watched God grow that, I enjoyed moving into this building. And when people said, "Why would you buy a building like that? You don't need enough people to fill it." I said, "One day we will." I've enjoyed every season. Even the hard seasons have been some of the most shaping seasons of my life, but God's doing some amazing things.

So I want to talk to you about how you can get involved this year at Brave Church. This is important for you to know, just to see an overview. My number one is this, enjoy community here. Friends, I'm here to tell you, some of the best people in all of Denver, attend Brave Church, amen. I mean there's phenomenal people that make up this church, of every socioeconomic background, and race, and everything else that go here. Enjoy the people here, get involved in community here, get involved in a small group here. Let people get to know you, let you get to know them. Disciple people, do

whatever you want. I mean, there's ministries going on all over the place. There's kids' ministry, and production, and worship, and kids, and students, and young adults, there's everything.

We had 51 new ideas from people that gave us ministry ideas, a couple of weeks ago, that we're going through. You don't need to wait for us, just get going, just get involved in community, and do it. We started Alpha last spring. We saw seven people come to Christ last spring through Alpha, which was awesome. That's worthy of praise, by the way. If you have a desire to understand what it looks like to pray for people, that are lost and far from God if you have the understanding to say, "How would I lead them to Christ? And what does that look like?" I encourage you to get involved in Alpha, there's people that will help you do that.

Operation Christmas Child, something we've done about every single year, but I'm not giving enough time and attention to it, so usually what happens is, we get a bunch of boxes and we say, "Praise God." Listen, Operation Christmas Child is about giving gifts to kids that would never, otherwise, hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. 10 million boxes will go out this year. 10 million kids will hear the gospel in their own language, followed up by 12 weeks of discipleship. Muslim kids in mosque will hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. Friends, it is the best \$9, you will ever spend in your life. That's why we do it, we're taking the gospel around the world. You can be over there, witnessing Christ, without having to leave your seat. Everybody here can spend \$9. Even if you can't go shopping, we'll figure out a way for you to give \$9, somebody will go shopping for you. I mean, with all the people we have, there's no reason we

shouldn't give 10,000 in boxes to Operation Christmas Child. 10,000 kids hearing the gospel in their own language, I mean, how are we going to change the world? It's that next generation of kids.

Here's all I'm saying, just get involved somewhere, get involved in community. If God bursts something on your heart, just go do it. You don't need permission to go evangelize and make disciples, Jesus has already commissioned you to do that. Under his authority, go, enjoy it. God's going to do some amazing things in bringing us together. And as our church continues to grow, let me tell you something, you can always make a big church small, you can't always make a small church big. You say it's getting too big, that means you're not getting to know people well enough. Connect with them, get to enjoy them.

Number two, I want to tell you about our 11 year anniversary. As I mentioned before, our 11 year anniversary's coming up, November 7th of 2021. We're celebrating baptisms on that day. If you've never been baptized since you truly came to know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, make that your day, get baptized. What would keep you from being baptized? Jesus commands you to be baptized. "Well, I was baptized as an infant." Fantastic, that was a great ceremony. How about now that you're a Christian, actually get baptized in water?

"Well, yeah, what will other people think?" "They'll think that it's awesome that you're getting baptized in water and we'll cheer for you, amen." You can sign up online for this, we're going to have awesome baptisms. And as I mentioned in one of our

services recently, if you can give us a testimony that you're saved, we will baptize you. This does not mean, parents, bring your kids and prompt them to tell me what they need to say so they can get baptized. Your kid wants to come to me and give me a testimony, I'll listen to them, and if they're saved, we'll baptize them. Baptism is for those that want to enter the water, who have truly been saved. That's what baptism is. It's not forced, it's not made, it's commanded for those who have truly met Jesus. God, it's going to be an awesome day. To the day, 11 years on November 7th. It's going to be an incredible celebration, God's going to do some amazing things.

Number three, I want to tell you about an evening that we have coming up. How many of you guys know, by show of hands, who Charlie Kirk is? You guys know Charlie? I met Charlie at National Religious Broadcasters this year, he's become a friend of mine. Charlie's a Christian thought leader. He runs a ministry, really it's an organization called TP USA, Turning Point, USA. They're doing a national tour called Stand Up and Save America. I called Charlie and said, "Hey, we're not necessarily doing that tour, but would you come and do a night with us?" Because I was down at National Religious Broadcasters and he was on a platform with Voddie Baucham and Eric Metaxas and they talked about the difference between biblical justice and social justice. And it was awesome and I was saying, "I wish our whole church could have seen it." And so, I invited him and I said, "Would you come up? So we could do that." And so, Charlie Kirk's going to come and we're going to have him here as our guest.

And here's what you need to know about the event. It's not on a Sunday morning, it's going to be on a Friday night. It's October the 29th, it's on a Friday night. We're

going to sell tickets for it. It's going to be \$15 a ticket, but we're going to give you a code so that you can get it for cheaper than that so that you can come. We won't make money an issue if you can't afford to pay because we want you there. Here's what's going to happen, we're going to have some worship going on, I'm going to share the gospel, there's going to be a lot of people from around the city that are going to come. It's likely going to be next door at Denver First Church depending on how many people show up. We'll see, as we go, whether we do it here or there, but it's going to be an opportunity for us to ask this question. How can the kingdom of God truly influence our culture?

I'm going to be moderating, Charlie and I will be on the stage. I'll be asking questions, he'll be given answers. So it's going to be an awesome night for us. It's going to be a great opportunity for us to share the gospel with our community and we encourage you to be a part of that.

Let me give you a fourth, one, Brave Media. Many of you know that we're on the radio here. How many, by show of hands, come because of radio or heard me on the radio before they came. I mean, we get a lot of people that come because of radio. We're on four times a day, I guess in Denver, right now. We're on 33 stations nationwide right now and it's continuing to grow. Brave Media is in the process of finishing up building a studio, a podcasting studio, a radio studio, for us to continue to take messaging that we have and expand it. We have ideas for how we want to do that. Not only for you but also for the nation, so we're encouraging you to pray for that.

Brave Global, it's awesome what God is doing at Brave Global. Kent Shaw, who

was the one who inspired me to plant a church, is now the executive director, as I mentioned for Brave Global. And God is doing amazing things. Kent wants to see a thousand churches planted in his lifetime, I think we'll do a lot more than that, but God is building his church. I want you to know we have a training center here in Denver. Many of you don't know, that we have 10,000 square feet of office space down near Park Meadows Mall in Inverness. If you ever want to go down and see it, we'd love to have you as our guest. God's doing incredible things, we have a training center there, that's where Brave Media is housed, where we have a studio there and extra office space for our growing staff and what's going on. God's doing some amazing things.

And here's the deal, we have a training center now in Denver, we've launched a training center in Mexico City. We're in discussions about launching a training center in South Africa, with a friend of ours who's planted hundreds of churches. God is building his church around the world and we get to be a part of that. There are people in Denver who want to plant churches that we're helping. There's a young man, I guess he's young. He's a young man to me, he's only like 60, wants to plant a church up in Evergreen, so he's going to be doing that. There's somebody that wants to plant a church in Aurora, we're helping with that. And we've been pouring out our resources to anybody that comes to town as a church planter that's not even part of our network, because we say, "We'll do anything we can to help you spread the gospel, because we're for the church, not for Brave. We're for the kingdom of God advancing his church."

God's doing some amazing things. God's done some awesome stuff. So a couple of years ago we planted a Fervent Church down in Colorado Springs. And we planted Beacon in the inner city. I got to preach at Beacon last week. It was their two-year anniversary. Pastor CB invited me to preach there. Guys, I'm telling you, it was awesome. So moved, totally different group of people, totally different style of worship, feels very different than Brave, but one thing is the same, the gospel of Jesus Christ is being proclaimed, people are getting saved and growing in Christ and enriching the city. It's incredible. Same thing's going on down in Colorado Springs. I mean, if you tally up what God's doing, there's seven to 800 people now that are attending both those churches and expanding it.

I got to hear from my friend Abiel, from Harvest in Mexico or Harvest in Miami this year. God's doing some incredible things in their church, and they're blowing up. We love what God's doing in his church and around the world and we're going to continue to step on the faith pedal to do that. And the final thing I want to tell you is this, we need more space. I don't know if you know that or not. I'm going to talk about Broomfield first, because one thing you may not know about Broomfield, because for those of you that are here in Englewood, listening to me speak, you may not realize what God's doing in Broomfield. Broomfield started out because we were given a building and somebody said, "If I build this out, would you put a church there?" We were like, "Yeah." So we sent a few families up and it's just been kind of a hodgepodge way of putting things together.

As of two weeks ago, they'd 674 people come in on a weekend in Broomfield,

amen. Their building doesn't hold 674 people. It's a small building, it's 13,000 square feet. So we've been praying about what do we do? We've been praying for the last year. We've been praying saying, "God, what do you want us to do? And where do you want us to go?" We have people looking for properties. We've had people willing to buy us properties. There's nothing to buy. And even if you buy it, it's super expensive to build out.

And so, we've been and praying and praying and praying. And so, we got an extension for nine months, the guy gave us an extension for nine months. We paid more money than we needed to pay, but we needed to keep Broomfield going. But we know we're out, December 31st, we've known that for a long time. So the stress level of mine got pretty high for a while and then I said, "God, that's not my problem, that's your problem. I'm just praying, you provide, that's your job." Guys, I tell you, God provided, God has provided. And I want to tell you how it's pretty awesome.

So we've been praying about buildings and different things, so all of a sudden we hear about a church, that's done a great job, they love the Lord, they're a kingdom-minded church, but they're in a huge building and during COVID, and during some transitions, and everything, their congregational size has slipped. And so, it's hard for them to meet budget and do the different things and they need to right-size themselves. And so, we met with their pastor and as we talked, I said, "Would you ever be interested in selling us your building? Would you ever be interested in letting us meet in your building?" And he said, "Well, let's get our elders together." So we got our

elders together, Pastor Justin from Broomfield, we went and met them. And we met with our elders, and then very quickly they were like, "Well for sure, we're not leaving you guys out in the street, you can meet here."

The name of the church is Life Fellowship Church. Life Fellowship Church is in Westminster. It's five minutes away from our Broomfield campus. It's in an incredible location. Just so you know about this building, the building's nicer than the building I'm here in Englewood. It seats 2000 people. They actually have a gym on the side, which is likely where we would start our meetings. Whether we start them later this winter or early next year when we're done, the Lord's going to give us timing on all this.

But here's the beauty of all this, because of Brave Global, they want us to help them come together and potentially work on relaunching them, so they can launch with health in the right kind of space. They're willing to pray with us and do whatever the spirit leads. We're willing to pray with them and do whatever the spirit leads. So I don't know what the Spirit's going to do, but we do have a place to meet and likely have a place to eventually purchase. And the beauty of this, Broomfield, listen to me, the beauty of this is that you'll have the same experience that we have here. We'll have a place to bring thousands of people to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ on the Northeast side of our city, and God's doing amazing things there, which is incredible.

And so, be praying for Pastor Dan [Buckley 00:20:20], be praying for Life Fellowship Church. He's going to be sharing with them today at his church, what's going on. And here's the other interesting thing too, during COVID when most churches were losing people, we were gaining people. Our online community has blown up, so

online people we love having you. Check this out, I mean, I think we're going to show a heat map of what it looks like. We are literally all around the country and have been in over 50 countries during the time we've been broadcasting online, is that amazing or what?

So we've been praying too, and we've asked God, like, "God, what do we do?" Because for somebody that come here and especially those that come to the 10:30 service, they have kind of an 80% rule when it comes to churches that if 80% of the parking lots full, people drive away. We're like 120% in our parking lot right now. I mean, we have people in overflow, we can't meet our kids' needs, we can't meet our student ministry needs. I mean, we've been praying like crazy too, like, "What are we going to do? God, you can't bring all these people and then just drop us off." But again, that's God's problem, not our problem.

And so, I've been praying since we've moved into this building in 2013, that one day God would give us block and call it the Brave Block. That's been my prayer from the beginning. And about a year ago, I got to know the new pastor, Pastor Daren Snow over at Denver First Church of the Nazarene. And we just began talking and I began to ask him, "Hey, I've been over here before, I met your interim pastors, how are you guys feeling? What's God doing in your church? How can we be of help to you? What's going on." And as Pastor Daren and I've gotten to know each other, let me tell you this, we've become really good friends. And I love Pastor Daren and I love what God's doing in the Nazarene Church.

And as God is bringing this together, we've been in kind of a seven-month process of negotiation. We haven't agreed on price. There's some rezoning that would have to be done. Their church would have to vote as a congregation to be able to sell it. But it seems as if, I would say, it seems as if, the Lord is leading them to vote on November 7th, which is our anniversary. I don't know if I told you that or not, they're voting that day to potentially sell their church to Brave Church, amen.

Now, just so you know, I don't know if they put it on the screen behind me, the size of their church. Just so you know, we seat about 1300 people in here. They seat 1800 people on the floor, with another 1200 up top. We can fit 3000 people in there and you say, "Well, pastor Jeff, why is that important?" Let me tell you, we had 9,000 people come to Bandimere. It breaks my heart every week that we have people pulling into our parking lot and turn around and drive away because they don't want to fight the mess. We have people already that aren't coming to our church because we can't house them.

It's the same problem that we had before, when we had no community space and no children's space, over at the high school. You say, "Are you seriously going to ask us to buy two buildings?" "No, I'm going to ask you to pray. And I'm going to ask you to partner with God. I'm going to ask you to do whatever God tells you because God wants to reach our city with the gospel." These won't be the last two buildings we ever ask our congregation to buy, I promise you that.

Now just for show, just for a... and Broomfield, do this as well, you can do it

online, it just won't have the same effect. But Broomfield do this with me and if you're here in Englewood if Brave Church has touched you in any positive way in your growth with Christ, would you just stand up for a minute? Just stand. If you're seated, I'm really sorry. We're not doing our job. Now, remain standing, if you were here when we bought this building and you contributed to it. See that, can we give God praise for these faithful few? You may be seated.

I wanted to show you that because I started thinking about, if all of us come together, who knows what God's going to do? Who knows what God's going to do? Now, people are always big on growth until people grow, until the church grows. I remember one guy that was on our team, we moved into Cherry Creek High School. He prayed over every seat, there were like 600 plus seats. He goes, "One day, these are all going to be filled."

We had about 100 and he's like, "I can't wait for God to do that." As soon as we went over 200 people, he came and met with me privately and said, "The church is getting too big." And I said, "Well, what about all that talk about reaching the city." He's like, "Yeah, but we got to go deep with the Lord." I'm like, "We can do both, we can continue to reach people, because 3000 got saved on the very first day of the church and they were still able to make disciples. We can still reach our city with the gospel. If we reach 50,000 people next year, we wouldn't quit, would we? We would continue to pray and ask God to do what he wants to do."

So I'm just telling you, I don't have all the answers. I don't know exactly what it's going to look like. I don't know if we're going to have the opportunity to bid. Here's

what I'm telling you to do, number seven, I'm going to call you to a time of prayer and fasting because I want you to do whatever God asked you to do. Because nobody can twist your arm. I can't make you generous. I can't make you excited. I'm excited. I'm excited because I believe we're going to reach thousands of more people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And one thing that's true about this church, just so you know, this is one of the most generous churches in the country. You're generous. I'm trying to think about when's the last time we even took an offering or asked for one and yet people just continue to give lavishly. That's a credit to this body of people. But I'm asking you to pray and I'm asking you to fast. When I was talking to Pastor Daren at Denver First Church of the Nazarene, this is such a new deal for them. They're in year 114 as a church and he came in at year 113. You talk about a difficult leadership challenge, that's a difficult leadership challenge and he's doing a masterful job. But he's calling his church to 21 days of prayer and fasting. When I heard him calling 21 days of prayer and fasting, I'm like, "We'll fast with you. Why wouldn't we pray and fast with you? We'll do it with you." So we're going to start prayer and fasting on the 20th, that's a week from tomorrow, it's a week from Monday.

Prayer and fasting means this, nobody can make you fast. Don't write me and say, "Pastor Jeff, I don't want to." Then don't. Nobody can make you do this. It's kind of assumed in the New Testament, when you pray, when you fast, what does it mean to fast? Fasting is from food, that's what fasting is. It's not from Facebook, it's not from Instagram, it's not from Twitter, it's not from TikTok, you don't fast from social

media, you fast from food. You say, "Well, it'll be harder for me to fast from those social media." That's because you've fasted from food. Okay, fast.

Now, what does that look like? It may mean for some of you during that 21 days, you pick one day, one meal and then you dedicate that time instead of eating that meal to the Lord. Some of you might be able to do more than once a week. Some of you might be able to do more than one meal a day. Some of you could go the full 21 days without food and just drink and pray. It's not how much you're doing for the Lord, it's how intentional you are on seeking him. Nobody's going to ask you, "How long are you fasting?" You can tell people, it's not a big deal. I don't even know how the Lord's going to have me do it. I just know that we need to seek His face because we need an answer on a lot of things.

We need to come to agreement on price. We need to get to the place that God's aligning and the great thing about DFC, much like Life Fellowship Church, is they want to relaunch. And they want to do something special in their church and we want to help him. So this isn't about getting two new buildings, this is about launching two new congregations, with health and us expanding our reach to reach more people with the gospel.

Amen.

And that's what God wants to do and it's marvelous. So I'm just going to encourage you to do that. So when I was talking to Pastor Daren, I'm saying, "Well, we meet every first Tuesday of the month and we get a large percentage of our

congregation will come out and pray, what if we do it together?" He said, "Yeah, let's do it here. Our worship guy's on vacation, could you bring your worship team?" I said, "Yes." So on Tuesday, October 5th, you need to write this down on your calendar, we are going to be at DFC for First Tuesday prayer night, praying with their congregation for what God would have us do as churches coming together.

And just so you know, because some of this stuff sounds impossible, I get it. I mean, when we bought this building, it was impossible because we didn't have many people. And the way we bought this building and the way God did it, is we had to raise 1.73 million in six days, from the time I preached on it, in cash, not pledges, cash to take to the bank. And by God's grace, we raised 1.93 million in cash and took it to the bank and bought building, amen.

I don't know exactly what it's going to look like, I don't know exactly what our fundraising's going to look like. Here's what I do know, I know that you're going to seek the Lord of God and you're going to pray and we're going to trust the Lord to take the next steps of faith. And we're going to raise the sail big and we're going to invite God to blow his wind into the sail and we're going to let him lead us wherever he wants us to go.

And God just wants full participation. You walk the way God's calling you to walk. You do what God's calling you to do. And I believe this year is going to be one of the finest years we've ever experienced as a church in terms of fruitfulness and faithfulness of God's people. Because faith is the assurance of what we hope for, it's the conviction of what we do not see and guess what? Without faith, God's not pleased. Without

walking, God's not pleased. So he's asking each and every one of us to take that next step of faith, amen? Amen.

Would you stand with me as we pray? Lord Jesus, we just give you praise, we give you honor, we give you glory. Lord, we know the word praise means hallelujah, praise the Lord. And so, Lord we end today by praising you and praising your great name. Lord, would you do a work in our life so that God you would be pleased? Lord prompt us as a church to take the steps of faith that you would have for us and do what only you can do. And we give you all the glory and honor in Jesus' name and all God's people said.

Amen.

Amen, amen.