



Message Transcript

The Challenges to Faith

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This morning, I want to talk to you about the challenges of a new behavior. What it looks like to know that you want to do something, but then actually, putting it into practice, how difficult that can become. Perhaps you remember when you were a little kid and you were four or five years old and learning to ride a bike, and there was the excitement of learning to ride, but when you got on, you realized nobody could teach you balance in a classroom, you had to learn it yourself. You learned how to wobble, you probably fell, you learned that you didn't want to do that again. So you continued to progress and get better. For those of you that are older than 16, you may remember when you got your license and how excited you were to have your own independence and be able to go places without your parents or others, driving you someplace.

Then, you learned about the challenges of what having a car meant and the responsibilities it had, and you had to pay for maybe insurance or gas or different things that went along with it or perhaps, it was going to college. Perhaps, it was an advanced degree. Perhaps, it was starting a new job where you had the faith and the vision to say, I want to take this step, but then when you started stepping in that direction, you realized, it's a whole lot harder than what I thought. There's some challenges to doing this. Some of you who are single, a desire to get married, couldn't wait to get married. When I get married, it's going to be different than all the other marriages.

We're going to have bliss all the time, and then, you got married and you learned, there's some challenges that work in marriage to make it bliss, or you're a parent and you wanted to have a child and you got pregnant and you wanted to bring this child into

the world, and you knew that this is exactly what you wanted only to have this child and realize there's challenges to parenting. I mean, all of the good things in life that we would walk through all have challenges to them, and faith is no different. Last week, we talked about walking by faith and not by sight. We talked about how our personal witness matters and trusting the Lord's word implicitly and applying his word implicitly and then, seeking him so we could be rewarded.

As you heard that message, you said, "That's what I want. I'm a Christian. I want to walk like that," and God wants you to walk like that, but he also wants you to know there's challenges to walking like that. That just because you desire to live a life filled with faith. It doesn't mean that you just walk out into the world and it just automatically happens. There's some challenges and today, I want to address five challenges to living by faith. Five challenges that you're going to need to overcome, that you can overcome if you will walk by faith. So, this morning, we're going to be in the book of Hebrews chapter 11, talking about what the five challenges of faith are.

We're going to begin in verse seven and go through verse 22 today. So, I'll read it out loud and then, we'll unpack these five challenges together. Here's what he says. He says by, "Faith, Noah being warned by God about things not yet seen in reverence, prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness, which is according to faith. By faith Abraham, when he was called obeyed, by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith, he lived

as an alien in the land of promise as a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise, for he was looking for the city, which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

"By faith, even Sarah, herself, received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered him faithful, who had promised, therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of heaven in number and enumerable as the sand, which is by the seashore. All these died in faith without receiving the promises, but having seen them and welcomed them from a distance and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things, make it clear that they're seeking a country of their own."

"And indeed, if they had been thinking of that country, from which they went out, they would have had the opportunity to return, but as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son. It was he, to whom it was said, in Isaac, your descendant shall be called. He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type. By faith, Isaac bless Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come."

"By Faith, Jacob as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph and worship leaning on the top of his staff. By faith, Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the Exodus of the sons of Israel and gave orders concerning his bones."

Here, in these verses, I love chapter 11 of Hebrews. There's so much to unpack, but really what we're going to take a look is, five challenges of faith. Five things that if you were to walk out of this building and say, "I want to live faithfully," five challenges that will keep you and work with you and work at you from being that faithful person that God wants you to be. All of these things that I'm going to talk to you about today are overcomeable.

You are an overcomer in Christ and you can overcome them, but we need to be aware of what's going to fight against the faith that God wants us to have, and the first is this, the first challenge to faith involves being the minority that reverences God. One of the first challenges to faith is being the minority that reverences God. Notice Noah. He's going to talk about Noah in verse seven. He says, "By faith, Noah being warned by God about things not yet seen in reverence, prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness, which is according to faith."

Now, think about the calling of Noah. We love the Noah story. For most people, when they begin to read through the Bible, if they don't have faith in Christ, we'll get to Genesis chapter six and beyond and start saying, "I just don't believe ... you can't tell me that there were some people that God saved in a big boat with all the animals." Even if you look at depictions of what that looks like, it looks like a floating bathtub, people have with giraffes' head sticking out of it and they make it like a cartoon, like it really didn't happen. It did happen just the way that God said that it happened.

God called Noah in his generation to do two different things. One is to build an ark. That ark was to house him, his family and anybody else who would repent for their wickedness and trust in Christ as God was getting ready to pour out his wrath on the world. That's what he did. Then, a pair of each of the animals would come in so that God could repopulate the earth with all the different species of animals. The second thing he was called to do was to preach the righteousness of God. Noah was considered a faithful preacher of righteousness. That's what he was called to do. That's all he was called to do, but guess what he was in his generation?

He was the minority position, because at the end of his life, do you know how many people were saved under his preaching ministry? Eight, his wife, his three sons and their wives. That's it. He preached to the entire world for 120 years and eight people got saved. Let me just tell you this man, the faithfulness of a preacher is not determined by the size of the crowd, it's determined by the faithfulness of the preacher. Noah was faithful. He preached what God wanted him to preach, and God used his word to do what Noah wanted him to do. So not only was he called to preach, he was called to put into practice what God showed him, which was what? Build an ark. He built an ark. It's an ocean line cruiser, the size of a football field and a half.

Now, it's interesting because it doesn't tell us that Noah had any experience in building an ark, he was just told he was called to build one. This is in a time when the Bible makes no reference to even rain because the earth at the time was watered from underneath. So here he's called to build an ark and it's one thing to build a boat like an ocean lining vessel and put it in a bay in Florida or California. It would be another thing

to build one in docket here at the church, and then explain to people, "Yeah, it's going to really flood bad, and you to get on this boat." I mean, Noah, would've been the butt of everybody's joke in his generation for 120 years.

Everybody made fun of him. Everybody mocked him. Everybody is like, "Who's the guy talking about God and building a boat, what an idiot." Here's the question. We love the story of Noah, because we know he heard God and we know he did what God said, and we saw the fruit of it. Here's the point, Noah was the minority in his generation and he walked faithfully with God. One of the challenges to faith is being the minority. The minority in your household, where in your family, you're the only one walking with Christ, and nobody wants to hear about it. To be the minority at your job or you're the only one walking with Christ in your job, and you're kind of the butt of everybody's joke in your job or you're the one in school, who's the one person in your school that's walking with Christ.

I mean, here's what I find that God test in our faith. Oftentimes, he'll use us as the minority. The one that's going a little bit different direction to see if we're still going to follow God, when all the people around us, even our sphere of influence. Even people that love us, don't understand why it is we're doing what we're doing. It's one of the big challenges of faith. I mean, all of us love the idea of what God's spoken into our heart, we want to see fulfilled and we want to go after that. Then, we expect all of our Christian friends and all of our families and all the people at work to say, "Oh, that's great. I'm so for you." What you will find is when you step out in faith, at some point in

time, you will be the minority.

You'll be going in a direction different than everybody else, and because you're going in that direction and pursuing that direction, it's going to be hard for other people. Noah reverence God, that means he called God holy. He was being the minority that reverence God. It meant this, he was honoring God. It's easy to honor God when you're in a church building where everybody else is honoring God. I mean, if you don't want to honor God, you can at least stand here where other people are honoring God and say, it's okay. Sometimes it's difficult to honor God when you're in a hostile environment, where you're the one person that's saying things differently, speaking things differently, living differently than the other people around you.

Noah honored God. It's difficult to do alone, but I find that God takes us through seasons and takes us through paths to challenge our faith and to grow our faith where we're comfortable being the minority, that reverences God. I notice what else he said about him. It says that he condemned the world. He condemned the world in verse seven. He read reverence for God, by which he condemned the world. He had the salvation of his household. He condemned the world. How do you condemn the world? God is the one that condemned the world. How was Noah a participant in that? Because Noah was preaching the righteousness of God. Like any good preacher will do and say that God is holy and you're not, and you need to get right with God and you need to repent, you need to trust God by faith, and that's what every faithful preacher and every generation is doing.

The fact is the majority of people in every generation think that that's foolishness.

I don't need to get right. I'm a pretty good person. I'll stand before God on my own good merit and Pastor Jeff, if what you're saying is true, it means more people are going to hell than are going to heaven. I don't know that I want to believe all that stuff. Well, you better believe it because it's the authority of God's word, and there's no way to the father except through the Lord Jesus Christ, who laid down his life on a cross and died for all of your sin and rose from the dead, so that if you would turn from your sin and turn to Christ, you could be healed and forgiven to the full. Amen. That's what the Bible teaches. He said, "Well, Jeff, most of the people in our church believe that."

"That may be true, but most of the people in our world don't. Most of the people in Denver, Colorado don't." Most people would say that's foolish, he condemned the world. He wasn't trying to fit in with the world. One of the challenges to being faithful is wanting to fit in with everybody else. Yeah, I have my faith, but when I'm around my non-Christian friends or my non-Christian family or my people that aren't as deep as me, I water it down a little bit. I don't want to be known as that guy. I don't want to be known as that gal. I'm going to ease into it a little bit. One of the challenges to being faithful is that you're the same everywhere. You're not a Christian chameleon just fitting into wherever you go.

That you're consistent in your walk with God. Paul talked about this in second Corinthians chapter two verses 15, 16 and 17. Here's what he says, he says for we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved, and among those who are perishing, to the one in aroma from death to death and the other in aroma from life to life and who is adequate for these things. In other words, if you live the

gospel, if you live it out, you speak it, you live it, you let people know. I know I'm a sinner, Christ forgave, my sins. He's the only way, you need to repent and trust Christ too. If you live that out to the full, to some, you will be the aroma of life. There will be some people that will say that's exactly what I've been looking for my whole life.

I needed Christ. We had 72 kids at high five this week that said, "I need Christ, that's what I'm looking for." We have adults that say, "I need Christ." That's what ... you become the aroma of life to them, but for those that reject that truth, guess what you become, the aroma of death. They think you stink. They think you're narrow-minded and you're a bigot and that you don't care for anybody. You don't have tolerance for everybody. Just by being who God wants you to be to some, you become a life-giver and to some, you promote the death that they're already experienced on the inside. He goes on to say, for we are not like many peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

Paul was saying, "I don't water down the word. I don't act different when I'm among Jews or when I'm among Gentiles or when I'm among pagans or when I'm among Christians. I'm the same all the time. It's who I am. This is who I am. I'm not peddling the word of God. I'm not doing what I do, so that you'll pay me. I'm not saying what I say so that you'll like me. I'm preaching the authority of Christ and his holiness and his righteousness and not only am I proclaiming it, I want to live it and not perfectly, but I want to grow in it." That's what he was saying. That's what Noah did for

120 years. Faithfully proclaiming, faithfully being obedient, eight people in awe were saved, that came out of that ark a year later and repopulated the earth, which is why we're here. Faithfulness in your generation.

One of the challenges to you, walking faithful is are you willing to be the minority? Are you willing to be the minority in your school? Are you willing to be the minority in your job? Are you willing to be the minority in the world? Are you willing to be that neighbor? Are you willing to be the minority as the neighbor? When I talk about minority, I'm not talking about the pigmentation of your skin. I'm talking about are you really willing to live for Christ because all throughout biblical history and world history, here's what we see, that very few people want to walk at that level in their faith. That's a minority. God's always used a remnant, will you be part of that? Notice this, it says he became an heir of righteousness by faith. Righteousness has always been by faith. He wasn't righteous because he built the ark and he wasn't righteous because he was a preacher.

He was righteous because he heard God and believed God. We're not righteous because of the good things we do. We're righteous because we've trusted Christ, and if we've trusted Christ, God will do good things in and through us, but we're not righteous because of our works, it's because we're righteous that we do good works. Here's the question friends. Listen, listen, are you willing to be the minority for Jesus Christ? Are you willing to be the minority when you're going to force him on the golf course, and you're the only Christian, will you speak it and live it in such a way that the other three, you're the aroma of life or the aroma of death for them. When you go to

sporting events, when you go to concerts, are you the aroma of life and the aroma of death where people see your life and they know you're so different than me.

You've changed, you don't do what I do. You don't live like I live. You don't talk like I talk. That's being the minority and very few people choose to live that way, which is why very few people are walking the walk of faith, but here's the good news, you can walk that walk. The good news is, God says, "I'll walk with you. You put me first. I'll walk with you." I remember about the time I was 24. I finally got to a place where I was like, "Lord, I've been a Christian, about five years. I want to live this sin. I want to put you on want to display? I'm going to do what you want me to do." And God began to lead my life differently than how he was leading it before. When it came time to end college and all my friends were going off, getting jobs and doing all these other things and God was tugging at my heart for ministry, I started going this way.

All my friends were going this way. It was a slight fork in the road and some people told me, "Oh, that's good. The world needs people like you, but when you come back around, we'll be here for you too." I was like, God, I'm going this way and they're buying houses and they're getting further education. What am I doing? I'm in a small little parsonage working with high school kids at a church of 100 people, but I can tell you this, I was never more excited than when I was working in a small little parsonage in a church of a hundred people with four youth, because I was doing what God wanted me to do. As you take a step of faith, I've said it from this pulpit, I'll say it today probably several times, the hardest step of faith you'll ever take is the next one. Where is God calling you to do something where if you do it, you're the minority

opinion.

I mean, I'm pretty comfortable with it now because I realize everything I share on the weekend is a minority opinion now. I mean, I'm pretty ... I feel like I'm on this island and I'm like the one person on this island and people come to BRAVE church to our island every week that, "Oh, there's other people that believe in this stuff too." I mean, this word is different. If you believe the Bible, you're a minority in our culture. Did you know that? If you're going to walk it and you're going to live it, then God is going to use you for different things. A challenge through the faith is being the minority. Are you willing to be the minority? If you are, God can use you greatly. The second challenge to faith is this, it's hearing clearly without clarity.

Let me say that again, another challenge to faith is hearing clearly, but without clarity. Notice verse eight. It says, "By faith, Abraham, when he was called obeyed by going out to a place which he was called to receive for an inheritance and he went out, not knowing where he was going. Abraham hears God clearly. He tells him you're going to be the father of a great nation and you need to go and take the land. Abraham went but he didn't know where he was going. Abraham was a pagan from Ur of the Chaldees, can you imagine him telling his dad, what are you doing? Well, God spoke to me. What God? God, the God of the universe. He told me I'm going to be the father of a great nation. Well, where are you going? I don't know. I clearly heard him, but there's no clarity to what I heard.

Most of us have a hard time with that, when it comes to faith. We think if it's God

speaking, he's going to give us the blueprint for the next 30 or 40 years. He rarely does that and even if he does, it's more of a vision of something than it is how you're going to get there. You can hear God clearly, but he rarely gives clarity. Let me tell you what I mean. For many of us, we're waiting for God to tell us something huge, like quit your job and go to seminary. Sell all you own and move to Africa. He's never told me that before, so I guess I'm not hearing him. Well, that's not what God is saying. Sometimes we clearly hear God through a message or we clearly heard God on first Tuesday, and he says something like this, "You need to help the kids" We clearly heard God in a message, "Hey, you need to give a little more of your resources."

We clearly hear God in a ... "You need to break up with them." We clearly hear God in a message. You need to start living faithfully in that area. Then, we begin to wonder, "Well, how's that going to work out?" I mean, if I let go of this job and go the way you go, I mean, what job is coming for me? If I let go of this person, I'm dating and go this way, where's my spouse? You know what God says in those things, he sometimes doesn't talk because he wants to know that you're going to take the step of faith and then he'll provide. You heard him clearly. You just don't have clarity. The older I get and the more seasoned I get in my faith, the more comfortable I am with ambiguity because faith is always a walk of ambiguity.

I mean, God has given me vision for so much for this church, but I have no idea how we're going to get there. I have to listen to him and listen to him and listen to him and listen to him. Sometimes, here's what I'm thinking and then, I test that with some advisors or I pray about that some more. That's not what it is. It's constantly walking

with Christ. He doesn't give us this plan. John 10 verse 27 says that, "My sheep hear my voice." He said, "I've never heard the voice of the Lord." Well, you've already been hearing them today, if you've been listening to this message. Sometimes we're waiting for this subjective little voice that God is going to bump me or nudge me. He does speak today, and his holy spirit does whisper to us, but I'm telling you a majority of the time, if you're just getting his word and you read it and you believe it and you say, "Lord, I'm listening, speak." God has a word for you from his word.

The more acquainted you are with this word, the more familiar you'll be with his voice, because his voice never contradicts this book, because the holy spirit wrote this book. So when someone says, "Well, the Lord is calling me to divorce my spouse." I'm like, "He didn't say that. I know he didn't say that, because he doesn't speak that way, because I know his word" So we have to be familiar with his word. Then, we have to be familiar because the Bible says in Proverbs 16:9, "The mind of man plans his ways, but the Lord directs his step." God wants to direct our steps. Psalm 119 says, "Thy word is a what, lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." How do you take the lamp with you? You got to take a step. If Jesus is the light, then you got to take a step.

Then, it lights up here and you take another step and then, it lights up here. Rarely, have I ever seen God open up the runway and light up the next 30 years. Like I said, even if he does, it's more of a vision for where he wants to take you than how he's going to get you there, because God has a way of taking you on a path that looks so different than what you would've planned, if you would've planned it yourself, God's ways are different than your ways. That's what he wants you to know. They're just

different. See, it's all about the pursuit of God's coming kingdom. We pray, "Let your kingdom come, let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." What does that mean? It means I want to walk by faith in such a way that what's going on in heaven starts happening on the earth through what you want to do in my life.

I'm trying to live my life and align my life now with what your word says and what you're saying to me so that I can continue to do what you want me to do. It's hearing clearly without clarity. Abraham went, even though he didn't know where he was going. When I listen to people that have had a true encounter with the Lord and I'm like, "Well, what did the Lord tell you?" I just think we're supposed to sell our business and do this. I'm like, "Well, what's next?" I have no idea. I begin to think, they're probably listening to the Lord. When I hear people tell me, "I'm going to sell my business and then we're going to do this and then we're going to do this and then we're going to do this and then we're going to do this," I think to myself, you're going to be real disappointed, because that sounds like your plan, not God's.

God has a way of unfolding it as we go, not letting us know before we get there, and if we're really excited about God's vision, we'll be excited about the way in which he wants to do it. Notice verses nine and 10, talking about Abraham, it says, "By faith, he lived as an alien in the land of promise as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise, for he was looking for the city, which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. So here he has faith to go where God tells him to go. He doesn't know where he is going. He gets to the place he's going and guess, what he gets to do? Live in a tent. I mean I'm not an outdoor

enthusiast. That doesn't sound fun to me.

I mean, if God has taken me to a place, I mean build me a fat house, build me somewhere with air conditioning. He's living in tents. He's a foreigner in the land that God promised him. So when he walks into the land, he doesn't say, "God told me to be here. This is my land. You all need to leave." He came in and lived in a tent and was faithful to what God called him to do. Guess what, it wasn't just his generation. It was his sons and his grandson's generation as well. They all lived in tents. They were all waiting for God to fulfill his promise. Sometimes we think that faith means we're going to see the completion of everything that God does, and I'm here to tell you, if it's of the Lord in all likelihood, you'll never see the fulfillment of everything God has put on your heart.

I mean, here's the way I would ask the question too, with all the vision you have and all the steps of faith you want to take, I want to ask you this. If your vision was interrupted by the return of Christ, would you be excited or bothered that your vision wasn't realized? I mean, for some of us, we tell God things like this, "Lord, here's the deal. Here's the deal. I'm going to serve you like this. I'm going to make this kind of money. I'm going to do these kind of things. I'm going to go here, go there." Even though the word of God says, "You don't even know what a day may bring forth," but you tell God all these things that you're going to do.

Once you get to this place, then you're going to ... and you fill in the blank. Friends, that is not the voice of God. The voice of God is God, I want to give you

everything I have right now to the full in every possible way I can right now, and I don't know exactly what that looks like for me, but if you'll show me the next step to take, I'll take that step for you. When you walk that way, I promise you this, if the Lord returns, while you're walking out the vision, you'll be so excited. Friends, I have great vision for our church. There's things we want to do both all over our city and all over the world. If Jesus comes back before those things are realized, praise the Lord, I'm waiting for him. Amen.

It's not my vision. It's not stuff I'm trying to get done. I live my life that way before I really started walking with the Lord like, "Lord, I'm going to go into business. I'm going to do all these things, and then, once I get to this age and once I get to this amount of money, then I'm going to do this for you." I was never satisfied. I remember selling life insurance at the age of 24 and my goals went something like this, "I want to be a millionaire by the time I'm 27 and I want to retire at 40 and then I'll serve you." I remember being invited to a fellowship of Christian athletes leaders' meeting because the guy that was a state director wanted me to come see what it was like. So I took off three days of work to go with them, and I met these really old people.

They were like 40, 45, 50. I was 24, and when I was their age in my mind's eye, I was going to be retired and here they were serving, and there's how they talked. They didn't make much money, but they kept talking like this, there's not enough years in my life left for me to do what the Lord wants me to do. I remember thinking, I made a serious vocational error. I don't think that way at all. I hate my job. I hate what I'm doing. I hate getting up every day. I hate going to bed because then I have to get up

again. I want to do what God wants me to do, and I went home and I quit the very next day. There's something about God's vision, if you're doing what God wants, even when the trials get tough, and even when the challenges get hard, you'll be glad that you're in the center of God's will, doing what God wanted you to do.

One of the challenges is not only being the minority, but it's when you hear God clearly, but you don't have clarity that you still walk in his way. So let me tell you how God speaks. I think God speaks clear enough for us to understand the next step. I think God will always speak clear enough for you to understand the next step. God in this relationship, what's the next step in my job, what's the next step with my resources? What's the next step in my family? What's the next ... what are you looking for me to do right now? He'll always speak clearly enough for what he wants you to do for the next step. Secondly, I would say this, God provides enough wisdom for you so that you'll stay dependent. Enough wisdom so you'll stay dependent. Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

God usually only gives us enough in a season so that we'll have to continually depend upon him. God doesn't download everything you'll ever need to know, being a perfect husband or everything you'll ever need to know, being a perfect wife and then, you go live it. I mean his word tells us that and we spend a lifetime trying to figure out, "Okay, how's that play out for me? What does it look like for me? How do I handle this situation? How does your word teach me this? What can I learn from somebody else? I mean, God gives us enough to take the next step. He provides enough wisdom, so we'll stay dependent, because God never wants us to get to a place where we're like,

"I know how you work. You've always done it like that. I don't need you anymore."

That never happens. I found that we as believers, we like to come up with plans and just continue to run the plan, because it's way easier than continuing to hear the voice of God. We're at Bandimere, that's what we do on Easter. That's what we've done on Easter. What if God has a different plan for next Easter? We've done high five, but what if God has a different plan next year than ... Well then we wouldn't have the plan. Yeah, but we have God. I mean we got to hear God. That's why prayer is so primary to our church. That's why prayer is so primary to our staff. That's why the first Tuesday of every month we gather to hear God, why? Because he has a plan, we don't have it and we need him. Then, third, let me tell you this, I believe that God directs uniquely so that we cannot plan every move.

God directs uniquely, so we cannot plan every move. He says, I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you, not harm you. Plans for hope in a good future, but do you know what, God made each of us uniquely different. You have different strengths than I have. You have different weaknesses than I have and it's true of everybody you're sitting around. So God is going to take your path differently than he's going to take mine. He's going to teach me different things in different seasons than he's teaching you, and that's totally fine. When you get comfortable with, "These are my strengths" and you get comfortable with, "These are my weaknesses," then you get comfortable with who God wants you to be, and you're not ashamed for who you are. You thank God for who you are.

For whatever reason, when created me, he gave me no mechanical ability whatsoever. None. I've been to every men's conference, if you're a real man, you got to get your toolbox out. I don't have a toolbox. My light goes out in my house, I literally call somebody. I got those LED ones that last 30 years, if it goes out, I'm not touching that. You climb up there and change it. I don't want to do that. I'm not good at it. I'm not embarrassed to tell you, I'm not good at it. Some of you, you could do with your eyes closed. I get all that. I'll pay you. I'm not wasting my time on that stuff anymore. I think I can be a man without doing that, to the glory of God. Amen. My point is all of us have different strengths and weaknesses and here's the problem in the church, not only do we like God to tell us the whole plan, and we like to follow other people that seemingly have one.

We like to follow the pastor, that's got it all down and we like to follow the spiritual leader, like our dad that had it all down. We like to follow ... nobody has it all down. You want to follow people that are pursuing the Lord and then, take that model and you pursue the Lord and you'll go a different direction than they went, and that'll be the exact right direction for you. Where you're hearing the voice of the Lord and he's whispering behind you, turn to the right or turn to the left, and you know what you need to do because you're honoring Jesus in that. Amen. One of the challenges of faith is the fact that we hear clearly, but we don't have clarity. I mean, Abraham was going there. He is living with Isaac and Jacob 10 in tents, but he was looking for a city which has foundations, whose architect and builder has got, what was he looking for?

He's looking for the coming kingdom. I'll do this here and now, but here's what I'm

really looking forward to, when Jesus comes, what I'm looking forward to is the millennium, when Jesus comes. Friends, he's coming soon to a city near you. I promise you that, and when he comes, that's more glorious than anything we could experience here. Jesus wants to do something. So our vision, our goal doesn't need to be, "We'll all do this and chipping a little for Jesus." It's, if God gave you a gift to do this, then do it for the glory of God, do everything you can for the glory of God. Whether you eat or drink or whatever, you do, do it all for the glory of God.

And if you say, "Well, I can't do this for the glory of God," then ask God, what do I need to change, so I can live my life completely for the glory of God. He'll show you what the next step is, and if you walk that way, he will build you in a way that you need to go. Amen. See the good news about this is God doesn't give us a map. I mean, yeah, I get Bible stands for basic instructions before leaving earth and God gives us some things and a map we can go on, but here's the deal, God gives you something way better than a map. When Jesus left, he says, "Good for you. I'm going away, because I'm going away, I'm going to send you another. The holy spirit will be with you forever." He doesn't give you a map. He gives you a Sherpa. He puts the holy spirit in your heart to guide you everywhere you go, there God is.

And you're reading his word, the holy spirit wrote this book. He's showing you where to go. What path to take, where to go? How do you know? Because the God of the universe is dwelling in you. That's way better than a map. Amen. That's what God wants for us. He speaks clear enough for you to know the next step, enough wisdom,

so you'll stay dependent and uniquely enough so that you can't plan every move. You're not going to be like anybody else. God made you unique. Quit following other people. Follow Christ. Go the way he wants you to go. Let me tell you the third challenge to faith. Third challenge to faith involves believing the impossible. That's a third challenge to faith is believing the impossible. Now we serve a God of the impossible, do we not?

We can do all things through Christ who gives us strength. God says, "I'm the God of the universe. What's too hard for me?" I mean, God can do everything. So when we're trusting and placing our faith in God, we're trusting the God where all things are easy for him. I mean, you go back to Genesis chapter one, verse one, which is the hardest book in the Bible to believe by faith. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Before anything existed, God existed. When God created, he created everything out of nothing. Here's how he did it, he spoke. Now, if you can believe that, what else is hard to believe in the Bible, that God could become incarnate flesh and come to the earth and walk on one of the seas that he created? Why is that hard to believe? Why is it hard to believe he could provide food for 5,000 people in the desert when he provides life for everybody else?

Why is it hard to believe he can raise the dead if he's the one that's given life? I mean, it's not that hard to believe we serve the God of the impossible. So faith means, I believe the impossible. Lord, I believe help my unbelief. We believe that he can, that's what it looks like. That's what it means. Notice what we see here, by faith, verse 11, "Even Sarah herself received ability to conceive even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered him faithful, that's God, who had promised." Do you remember

when God told Sarah that she was going to be pregnant? She laughed because she was 90. I mean the older I get, I realize having kids is a young man's sport. I mean, my brother has got like four under the age of seven and they're delightful and I love them, but I couldn't do that anymore.

I'd be scared of getting down and playing cards and not being able to get back up or something. You know what I mean? Sarah is 90, Abraham is 100. Abraham was promised at age 75 that he'd be the father of a great nation. Now, he's a 100 old, he gets promised again, and it says in verse 12, I love the way the Bible writes, "Therefore there was one born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of heaven in number and enumerable as the sand by the seashore." It's believing the impossible. If you can explain your story, I promise you, God is not in it. If you can explain your life and how you're doing everything you're doing and people, "Well, you're smart. Well, you're rich and well you're this. I see how that works." God is not really in it. When people see your life and they're like, "I don't even understand how you're doing that because I know you, and you're not all that."

That's when you know God's part of your story. When they see a church, I don't understand what's going on in your church, because in some ways all churches are pretty much the same. I mean some ways all churches sing songs and have prayers and somebody speaks and somebody has some readings and there's relationships. They're all kind of the same in that way, but I can tell you this, all churches are not the same. In a lot of ways, they're radically different. See because someone has seek the manifest presence of Christ through his holy spirit. It's not about what the routine is, it's

about, is God showing up in the midst and helping people take steps of faith? Are we believing the impossible?

Are we seeing God do the impossible? A couple first Tuesdays ago I asked people to stand. I said, "If you've been healed physically since coming to BRAVE Church, would you just stand?" About a third of the people stood. I had somebody in the lobby this week at high five, tell me about how her knee had been healed at the last first Tuesday and how she had ... she felt kind of weird, like praying for her knee, just the kneecap wasn't doing right. As we prayed for healing, she felt something under her kneecap kind of wiggle. Then, she get up and straightened it and she's like, it hasn't hurt since. And I'm like, "That's the Lord." Praise the Lord. The Lord still heals. Did you know that? He does. We can give him praise for that.

Now, we still do funerals at BRAVE church. If the Lord carries, they'll do my funeral someday. I'm not saying that the Lord heals everybody, of everything every single time, because it's clear that he doesn't, but sometimes he does and he does it to show us that he can, and that he is. The gal come up to us, a couple weeks ago, diagnosed with cancer, asked for prayer to be healed. We say, "Yeah, I will pray that." Pray that God would heal her from the top of her head to the bottom of her feet, and that when she went into the doctor, that the doctors wouldn't even be able to diagnose any more cancer. So she went back into the doctor last week. They couldn't find any cancer. Amen. So they did a couple more tests because they knew they messed the test up only to find out they couldn't find any more cancer. She's sitting right here in the front row this morning with us. Amen.

Does that mean God heals everybody from cancer every single time? No, it does not. I know some very faithful servants in the Lord have died of cancer. That's not what I'm saying. I'm saying will we believe the impossible? God heals. Will we believe the impossible that God delivers from demonic activity? Will we believe the impossible that God can save anybody? Some of us come to church and we'll talk about a relative or a friend like, "Oh my goodness. They're so far from God. I don't know if God could ever save them," to which my response is if I know them and if I don't know you, I wouldn't say this, but, "I would say he saved you, didn't he?" I mean, what's so hard about saving ... God can do anything he wants. I mean the apostle Paul that wrote two thirds of the New Testament was murdering and dragging off Christians to be persecuted, and that's who's writing to the glory of God, giving his life for the gospel.

God can do whatever he wants. Do you believe the impossible? Part of faith is saying, "Lord, I believe but help my unbelief, because I've been trained in our culture to not believe that, unless it's really radical." God is really radical. Christ's church wants to be put on display so that everyone knows that God still heals and he still delivers, and he still saves. Does that mean he saves everybody? It doesn't, unfortunately. Does that mean he heals everybody? He doesn't. Does that mean he delivers to everybody? No he doesn't, and sometimes the very thing we want God to deliver us of is the thing that he's using for a trial in our life. He gets to choose, but he does more than what we allow him to do sometimes, doesn't he?

I mean, this is where we get to a place that our faith can be hindered because

we don't believe the impossible. We can believe that God can heal somebody else's marriage, it's not ours. We believe God can heal somebody else's immorality, not ours. We can believe that God can change somebody. Else's behavior, not ours. We believe that God can provide a job for somebody else, but not for us. Believe the impossible. God wants you to believe him for it. To look silly enough to believe. Can you imagine if it never rained during Noah's life? I mean what an idiot. Can you believe God hadn't brought fire down when Elijah had prayed? Can you imagine what it would be like if David said, I don't come at you with javelin or spear, I come at you in the name of the Lord almighty and he threw a stone and it missed Goliath by a country mile and then Goliath stabbed him and he died?

I mean, we see the outcome of faithful stories and we're like, "Love that," but when we're in it and we can explain it and we're not sure what the outcome is going to look like, it's hard for us to stand up and say, "Yeah, I still believe, no matter what the outcome is, my God is still good." Just like those three Hebrew slaves, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. You can do whatever you want. We know our God is able, if not, we'll be with him in heaven, but if he so chooses, he'll deliver us this very day, which he did. The only thing that burned on them were the shackles that they had on their hands and their feet and then, they came out, not even smoke on them. Our God is able. Amen. We need to talk and believe that our God is.

Let me give you a fourth way that faith is challenged. I think this is a big one for all of us in North America, and it's this, it's God's timing in God's way. God's timing in God's way. It's holding on to the promises of God with an open hand saying, "God, you

can do what you want when you want in the way that you want." It also says in verse 13, "All these, that's to all the patriarchs, they died in faith without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth." So they never even saw the fulfillment of what they were going to say. God tells Abraham you're going to be the father of a great nation. Kids like sands on the seashore, like the stars in the sky, that was at age 75.

Nothing happened, so Abraham and Sarah got together and said, "We better help God out, because he forgot us." Sarah says, "Why don't you use our mistress, Hagar? That'll help" That didn't help. Ishmael was born and guess what? Sarah was mad, because now the mistress has a son and she doesn't. God is like, "That's not the way I do things. You got to do it my way." So now it's 25 years later. Abraham is 100. Now, he's going to have the child of promise. You're going to see it 17 years later, when Isaac is 17, he's going to take him up to sacrifice him. At age 40, Isaac is going to get married. At age 60, he's going to have kids. When Abraham dies at the age of 175, this father of a great nation, guess what he has? He has a son and two grandkids.

I mean, it's laughable, if you were living at that time. For him to say for 175 years ... really to say for 100 years, from the time of 75 to 175, I'll be the father of a great nation. Bro, you have one child and two grandkids. Was God faithful to his promise, even though Abraham never saw it? Absolutely, he was. Noah, 120 years. The only people saved were his own family as we talked about. It means when we're going,

God's way, we don't turn back, even though we can't see it. Notice what he goes on to say, "For those who say such things, make it clear that they're seeking a country of their own and indeed, if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would've had the opportunity to return, but as it is, they desire a better country that is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them."

So what happened? He was saying this, when you step out in faith, don't ever turn back. When you step out in faith, burn the bridges from where you're coming from. If Abraham would've left and said, "Okay, I'll go try Israel for a while, but if it doesn't work or I'm living in a tent, I'm going back to Ur of the Chaldees. No, he went not knowing where he was going, but he's not coming back. Men and women, if you choose to get married, burn all the bridges of everybody you've ever dated before you get married, because when you stand at the altar and you say you're going to forsake all others until death do you part, it's not, "Well, I'm getting married and if it doesn't work out, I'll go back to what I had." You're done.

Stepping out in faith means I'm going this way, and if it doesn't work out, you'll have a new path to get me to where I'm going. Kim and I, we're talking about the notion of moving to Denver to plant a church. I remember it was about three or four weeks before we left, and we were having a discussion, a very practical one of, "Do we take our furniture with us and store most of it or do we leave it here?" And we're trying to figure it out, and I remember Kim said to me, very specifically, she said, "Okay, so we'll go out there. We'll try this church, but if it doesn't work, then we'll have

our furniture here so we can just move back home, right?" And I remember thinking, "Oh heck no. We're never coming back."

I knew the only way I could get her to feel that, was if I called the movers. So I called the movers and I said, "Hey, can you pack our stuff?" They're like, "The only time we have is two days from now." I'm like, "Come pack it all." So they packed it all and we moved out and our house was barren, and I told her we're never ever coming back no matter what. If it doesn't work out, God's got a different direction for us. That's what it means to step out in faith. That's what Abraham did. That's what Isaac did. That's what Jacob did. That's what you're going to see that Moses did. When you step out in faith, you're not turning back around, you're going to trust God's timing and you're going to trust his ways.

Both are very, very difficult to trust. Do you know why? Because he doesn't do what you want and he doesn't do it in your time. Isaiah 55 says, "For my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts." My translation of that verse is, "Jeff, I know a heck of a lot more than you and my ways are way better than you, and you would never understand it if I explained it anyway, so just shut up and follow me." I mean that's God's ways is his time, why does God do what he does when he does? I don't know because he is God and I'm not. I don't need to figure it all out. I mean, we got to be open to his timing and his way in the way in which he's going to do it. Notice how he did it with Abraham, 17 years after Isaac was born, you can read about this in Genesis chapter 22 versus one through 12, God spoke to

Abraham again, he said, "Get up and take your son and go sacrifice him."

So what does he do? It says very early, the next morning he got up to take his son. As they're going up to the hill on Mount Moriah for the sacrifice, Isaac says, "Dad," and he goes, "I see the wood. I see stones for the offering, where's the offering?" His dad said, "The Lord will provide." The next verse or two, we see Isaac tied down in the altar. Abraham is about ready to cut his son's throat and here's the voice of the Lord that says, "Don't lay a hand on that boy, but now, I know that you were willing to do what I wanted you to do." It's God's way. It's God's time. Notice what it says in verse 17, "By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son. It was he to whom it was said, and Isaac shall all your descendants be called."

"He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type." Abraham had never seen Jesus raise somebody from the dead. Jesus Christ had not risen from the dead. He didn't have any experience that God could raise the dead. He knew the only way he could be the father of a nation was through Isaac and yet, God said, "Sacrifice him," and he said, "Okay, I'll put him on the altar, if that's what you want me to do. I'm doing it your way. I don't care anymore, and if that's what you're doing, then you probably have some other plan that I'm not even aware of, that you can do," which is why we have to continually listen to God, because what if Abraham would've woke up that more and said, "I heard God, I'm not listening to him anymore. I'm just going to go slay my son."

He would've missed the promise of God. We hear, we listen, we act. Then we go

back and hear and listen. He was listening to God the whole time. "God, not my will, but your will be done, if you have a different way," and God had a different way. Isaac became a type because there was coming a day in the future where the father would send his son up a hill and he wouldn't hold back. His son would be slaughtered. His one and only begotten son, so that all of us who are sinners through the shed blood of Christ could have life in his name. He says, "Now, Abraham, I know you're faithful." What does it mean? It means this, that at times God is going to ask us to put some of our things that we think are so important on the altar to see if he wants to take them.

For some of us, it's sports. For some of us, it's our job. For some of us, it's money. For some of us, it's kids. For some of us, it's our marriage, where we say, "No, this is my marriage. These are my kids. This is my job. This is my money." And God is like, "No, everything belongs to me. Put it up here, because I want to know that if I took it, you'd still love me," and God is constantly growing us in those areas, so that the only thing that's left is our pure love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Would you be willing to trust God in his timing and his way for what he wants to do? And I can stand up here and tell you story, after story, after story, after story of all I thought God was going to do, only to watch him do it in a different way than I thought he was going to do it.

I remember, I wanted to get married so bad in my 20s, I remember having prayers with God when I was in seminary, "God, I'm doing everything you're asking me to do, please bring me my wife." Nothing. I remember, I was officiating a wedding one time in Arkansas for a couple kids in our youth group. And there was a 19 year old

groom and a 23 year old bride. I went through the whole routine and as I'm officiating it, the only thing I'm thinking of is, "Lord, this kid is like 19 and I'm like 30, where's my bride? I'm not enjoying this at all." That kind of thing, and I didn't meet my wife until I was 32 and I didn't get married until I was 34. Don't cry. I would've cried if God would've told me that when I was 18.

In hindsight, looking back, I know that if God would've brought Kim into my life sooner than he did, number one, I wasn't ready, and number two, there's no way I would've stayed in school and did all the things that I did to prepare for ministry. I would've got out. I would've taken the easy road because I wanted to be married and God need to bring me somebody at the right time, but that wasn't my timing. That wasn't what I wanted. It was God's timing for my life. Remember, I went to seminary in 1998, Dallas seminary. They promised they would teach us every single book of the Bible. It's a four year degree. I'm like, "Okay, good, 1998. By 2002, I'll know everything there is to know about the Bible. I'll never need to study it again."

That clearly didn't happen. The more I study God's word, the more I realize, I don't know as much as I think I do, and the more I want to be in the presence of our eternal savior. Remember, when we started this church in 2010 and we moved out here, you have to realize what I did for a living prior to coming here, the only message I preached from a variety of passage was the gospel of Jesus Christ and his cross, and the need for people to turn from their sin and repent and trust Christ. That's all I did and then, everywhere I went, I called people to repentance like, come forward now,

give your life to Christ now. That was my message. So, every weekend, we would see like four people or 40 people or 500 people or however many people get saved.

That was so normative that when I preached the gospel, I just expected people to get saved. So I knew when we planted a church and people were telling me it's so hard, it's going to be really hard for you, you're going to have a small venue, nobody is going to show up. I remember thinking, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's what it's like for other people. We're going to see hundreds." I thought personally we'd be about this size after the first year, I really did. I thought we'd be seeing thousands of people saved and all this kind of stuff and Easter would look like Bandimere year one, and it didn't happen, folks. We started off with 208 people. We grew it quickly to 113. Then, progressed from there, because God's ways and his timing are different.

I still have vision for how we're going to reach our city, nation and world for the gospel. I still see brave church being a player in our great nation for what God is going to do to bring revival to our world. I see it, but it's not happening in my time and it's going to happen in God's. I remember buying our first building, the one we bought next door, wondering how in the world is this going to happen? I remember preaching on a Sunday and so fired up that God was going to do this incredible work, because we had to raise 1.73 million dollars in six days, and we had 313 people that gave to that, the Saturday ... the day we raised all the money, the day before that Sunday, kids were coming up, bringing, babysitting money and pouring it in, and all this stuff.

Our annual budget was \$800,000. We're trying to raise 1.73 million in a week and I remember being terrified on that Thursday. This is the stupidest thing I've ever

led a group of people to do. Not only are we not going to get the building, we're going to miss it by a country mile, and all the people that are trusting me are going to leave, and we don't have that many people to leave to begin with, so we're not going to have a church. I remember I was praying and I was praying through Psalm 27 and the Lord spoke to me through Psalm 27 and basically said, "Do not fear, you'll see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Jeff, you're not taking into account that I'm coming to the meeting. It's done." So on Thursday I'm like, "Cool."

So we walked through the weekend, I didn't know until Sunday morning what we got, but we needed 1.73 million. We raised 1.93 million in six days and God did an incredible work. Amen. Friends, I got all sorts ideas. The guy keeps birthing in my heart, as I listen to him. I never ever dreamed we would have a school. It is so on my heart, because I look at our next generation, I'm like, "If we don't do something, who is? How are we going to start BRAVE academy and where are we going to do it? And as we put campuses all over our city, are we putting schools all over our city, and what's it going to look like, and where's it going to be?" If you ask me how, I'd tell you, I don't know. One step at a time, but it's going to happen because we have to. We have to educate our kids, not just on Sunday mornings, but holistically all throughout the week. Amen, of ideas for campuses and sports and all sorts of things.

I remember we started this campus idea and people like, "That's never going to work. Yet, 35 people meeting in a small building, that's never going to happen." Do you know our Westminster campus has over 1000 people that call BRAVE church their home and they love BRAVE Church. We love Westminster. God is doing an incredible

thing, and that's just one campus. I want to put them all over the city. I want BRAVE to be known in our city where people are like, "Well, how do I get there? Oh, there's one 10 minutes from my house. There's one 10 minutes from my house. Oh there's one 10 minutes from my house." I know what they're about. They're about the Lord Jesus Christ and his glory and growing us up so we can impact the world with the kingdom of God.

I believe that's going to happen. Amen. It's God's timing and it's God's way, and if you ask me how's that all going to happen? If I was able to tell you, then I wouldn't be depending upon the Lord. Here's how it's going to happen. It's going to happen through us, when we're faithful to seek his face and trust what he wants to do in his timing and in his way. Let me give you a final challenge, because this one is super important, if we'll trust God's timing and in God's way, one of the final challenges is this, it's living for a legacy. One of the challenges of faith is living for a legacy. We just read that all these men died in faith without receiving the promises. If your vision is of the Lord, you will not see all of it realized in your lifetime, you can't.

It's bigger than you, and the more you walk in your vision, the more you realize it's way bigger than you. Notice what he says, "By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come. By faith, Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each one of the sons of Joseph in worship, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith, Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the Exodus of the sons of Israel and gave orders concerning his bones." What do you see in Isaac, Jacob and Joseph? They were

faithing all the way through the finish line. They didn't give up. What I find is so tragic of most men, my age is they start thinking about retirement, which is fine, if it's a transition to serve the Lord greater, it's not a problem. For some that are my age, their biggest goal in life is to get a cool retirement home or a lake home or to play more golf or more pickleball or whatever it is.

That they're going to get to a place in their faith where it's like, "I've done everything. Now, it's for the younger people." You don't see that in the Bible. Joshua and Caleb got their call at 80 and 85. Moses went in at 80. Abraham is 100. I mean, if you're younger than 120, God still has great things for you to do in your life. We need to see more people, men and women, but especially men, not believe the lie that says you already faithed enough, now just relax. You should be accelerating in your faith when you die. Jacob is on his cane leaning forward. The brother can't even stand up and he's worshiping God, blessing all of his sons and grandsons. That's what it looks like. When you ... I'm not talking about leaving the legacy like, "Well, I left a house, I left a car. I left money for my ..." I'm not talking about leaving the legacy.

I'm talking about living the legacy, because when you live all the way through the finish line and people see that your life to your very last breath was for Jesus Christ, you live and you leave a legacy of people that want to follow after that, and your life still speaks long after you're gone. John Wesley, the great evangelist started the Methodist movement, the very wee hours of his life set up in the morning that day. Sick all morning and here's his last words, "The greatest news of all is God is with us." And he laid down and died. Cool way to go. All the way to his end. What was he doing?

Preaching the gospel, helping people live, saving souls, living for the glory of God. It's why we still talk about him. It's true of every man and woman that accelerated all the way to the finish line.

Joseph understood, he would never be back in Israel, but he said of this, "I know God's going to deliver us. So make sure, even though I'm going to be dead, take my bones back with you. I want to go into the promise land. I won't be here." Here's what it means. Your legacy that God put you on the earth for, that you're called to live goes far beyond presently what you can see with your own eyes. It goes through your kids. It goes through those you invested in. Friends, BRAVE Church, my prayer is if Jesus doesn't return during my lifetime, BRAVE Church far exceeds my life, that we're turning it over to other young men who are living the legacy of Jesus with new and great ideas that are taking it further than I ever could.

I want to be up in heaven, receiving reward like cha-ching, cha-ching, cha-ching from other people, that are doing the work, that I'm currently doing now, because I want the vision to be big enough for anybody, anywhere, at any time to get involved. They want to outlive me. I don't want to get to be like 60 or 70 and tell my kids, "We did it. We planted a church. We have more campuses. We planted some churches." We're going to Florida, babe. We're going to dip our toes in the water and something else in the sand, and we're just going to have fun. I'm not doing that. I want to live for the glory of Jesus Christ until he returns, and I see him face to face. Now, let me tell you something about your life.

Not every single person is called to do the same thing. The question is how is

God asking you to live faithfully now? What's the next step in your life now? How do you take the next step of faith now? How do you keep taking the steps of faith and keep taking and keep taking and keep taking so that the glory of God is working in and through your life to others, because I'll tell you this, there's no more exhilarating life than knowing that Christ is using you. There's no more exhilarating life than being part of a community where Christ is using us and friends. We're going to see God do eat amazing things. I'm telling you need to believe this with your whole heart. This message is not for the select few that are going to do great things for God. Here's what God is screaming at you through his word today.

I want to use you for great things to the glory of God. I want to use your gifts and your talents and your abilities and where you're weak, rely on other people, but I have plans for you to, declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you, not harm you. Plans for hope in a good future. If you've heard me clearly, even if you don't have clarity on it, start taking the little steps you need. I'll give you more as you go. God wants to use you for greatness. He doesn't want you to get hung up on other things. He wants to use your life. Friends of all of us that called BRAVE church our home, we'll just take that next little baby step for the glory of Christ. I believe he would blow us away by doing more than we could ever ask or imagine according to his glorious power that is at work within us. Amen.

Amen. Would you stand? Father in heaven, we thank you for the privilege of being able to hear your voice and exercise the faith that you've given to us and God we

pray right now that you would do a work in the group of people that are listening. If you're hearing the Lord's voice today, clearly on what the next step is, Lord, would you give them the faith to take that step, the obedience, to take that step, trusting that you'll use them for great things. Let them be the minority, let them hear your voice. Let them walk with you. Let them never turn to the right or to the left, but go after you with everything they have and God we give you all the praise, glory and honor for your gospel that allows all people everywhere to be completely forgiven of their sins by trusting you and you alone, as our Lord and savior. We give you all the praise and glory in Jesus name. Amen. Can we give God praise this morning for who he is? Amen.