

Transcript - 20250803

Speaker 1

So we're going to kind of talk a little bit, especially over the next three weeks, starting next week, about kind of that idea of resetting spiritually. But I was going to kind of use this week, since school does start, at least for our students this week, I know our teachers, You have been there and our staff have been there one day kind of already officially. Many of you have been there a lot leading into the official start of the school year. But we're going to talk about this kind of idea of resetting and refocusing for this year. What does your focus need to be kind of moving into this new school year? And how do we kind of reframe the coming days with what we've just talked about over the last few weeks? into what we're fixing to be living or what you're fixing to be living together in the hallways of our schools. And not really just for our students, but for everybody in a lot of different ways as we think about our time together. I want you to think about this verse. The kind of the idea here is to let your light shine this school year. I want you to think about this verse with me. Matthew 5, verse 16. Let your light shine before others, but they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. So let your light shine. That's kind of the overall idea of what we're gonna talk about. But the purpose of that light shining is so that they can see what? First off, so they can see your good works so that who gets the glory? God, so that God gets the glory. So we want to see your good things. We wanna see you live a life that's good, that's great, that's honoring, so that when they look at you, they don't look at Pete and go, look how awesome Pete is. They look at Pete and they go, look how awesome God is. So that's what we're going to kind of try to talk about as we talk about this together this morning. So let's go to God in prayer, and then we'll jump into our lesson together. God, we thank you so much for this time. We thank you for this opportunity to be here together this morning. We thank you for the chance to study, to encourage, to be encouraged, God. We pray that we open up our hearts now to your word. We pray that we open up to your scriptures, to your spirit, God. And we just pray that as we leave here today, that we will be more convicted to let our light shine to the community around us, specifically to our students and our teachers and our parents in the lives that they're going to live in the next nine months in the dynamic of school. Be with them and encourage them, God. Give them the strength that they need to be the Christians that you've called them to be in those places. And it's in your son's name we pray, amen. All right, let's start with our first thought right here. The first thought that we're gonna talk about here is to our students. If you're a student in school, regardless of your age, if you're a student in school, raise your hand for me. Raise your hand for me. Student in school, all of you, raise your hand for me. Okay, if you're an excited student in school, raise your hand for me. Man, where are all of my excited students? All of my excited students. All right, so here's my thought for you this morning.

Okay, we're going to break it up to our students, to our teachers, and to our parents this morning. Here's the first idea that I want you to think about. The building that you're going to walk into Thursday, this is your what? Mission field. Good job, Pete. Good job. This is your, it's like it was written on the board, right? This is your mission field. So when I was growing up, we had this youth rally, and actually I think Josh took some of our kids to it last year, or this past January, called Evangelism University. And it was a thing that Savannah hosted, and we hosted it at our high school. And I remember we were having kind of a breakout session. One of the breakout sessions that you have was with your youth group. And I remember sitting in a class, we're in a classroom in my high school, talking about evangelizing your age group, like your school. And I'm sitting in that room and I'm thinking, like I have class in this room. I had English class in that room every single day. It was my senior year of high school. It was my senior class, my senior English class. And it just kind of hit me. I came into contact with more people that I could share the gospel with at that time in my life, and I realized that I was probably ever going to the rest of my life. I was like, is this kind of a true thing? Have I come into contact with more people on a daily basis that I could share the gospel with than I ever will at any other point in my life? And the answer to that was yes. So when you're in this school building, especially our middle school and high school kids, as you're in your school buildings, you come into contact with more people on a daily basis than really and truly you will at any other point in your growing life. I come, you know, I'm a preacher. This is what I do for a living, right? But you guys still come into contact with more people on a daily basis than I do. Just because of the nature of school, outside of the teachers, probably you come into contact with more people than probably most of the people in this room actually see at work on a day-to-day basis. So you have a great opportunity to let your light shine in that dynamic. And what I love about that dynamic is it's also a dynamic where those people, those kids, those teenagers, they know you. They know your heart. They know who you are. They know that you don't, you're not trying to like, you know, trick them into anything. They know you're sincere and that you're, you know, really trying to just show them something that's maybe best for them in their life. So be aware of that. Be aware that as you sit at the cafeteria table, as you sit in the classroom, as you're on the ball field or the basketball court, that you are a light and to let that light shine. What does Jesus say? You are the light of the world. And that goes for all of our students. And as the light of the world, he says, then let your light shine before others. Neil, if you would dim our lights for a second. I want everybody to do this with me. Take your cell phones out. We're going to dim the lights just a little bit to make it a little more effective. Take your cell phones out and turn your lights on. Turn your lights on. So we are all very comfortable with these little bitty lights, aren't we? Did you ever think, how many of you ever thought that, man, I'll never have a flashlight in my pocket at any time? Same thing with calculators. What do they tell you in school? You got to learn, add, subtract, multiply, divide, because you'll never what? Have a calculator in your pocket. It's just not true, right? You always have a calculator in your pocket now. But here's the thing about these little bitty lights. As great as they are, sometimes I think our Christian faith is like these

little bitty lights. They're great, but they're comfortable sized lights, right? They're not real offensive lights. The only time they're really like inconvenient is when you leave it on and you put it in your pocket and someone's like, hey, you left your light on, right? But like you really don't blind people with these lights. Like, I mean, I'm looking right at your light and it's really not that blinding. Like I notice it, but it really doesn't affect me. And I'm looking at all these lights. I notice these lights, but they really don't affect me. God wants you to be a light that's not just noticeable, but what? Effective, like Vance's light. Show him your light, Vance. Now, Vance's light is effective, right? He's not going to. If Vance shone his light in your eyes, would you notice it? Yeah, you think so. You can turn your lights on, Neil. You can bring our lights back up. so not only be a light you can turn your light off Vance not only be a light but be an effective light at the same time I read a quote one time and it hung on my wall for a long time it was out of a youth ministry journal and this guy said teenagers don't need you to run around and I don't remember the exact quote but it was this idea they don't need you to run around with a flashlight shining it in their lives pointing out all the wrong things. They need you to be a lighthouse showing them the way to safety. And I loved that idea. But as you are a light, be a steady light. Be a bright light. Be an effective light. Be a good light. But be a steady light that simply shows them the way to who? Jesus. Not just showing them all the wrong that they're doing in their life. Don't end your friends with your light. Show them Jesus with your light every single day. Another thing that I want you to think about, guys, students, as you go to school this week is remember this, your family, not just youth group. Your family, not just youth group. We talk all the time about the church is a family, the church is a family, the church is a family, and our kids have spent a lot of time together summer. I remember when I was a senior, we did this thing. We did a freshman-senior day retreat where all of our freshmen and seniors went off together. We just spent time together trying to kind of help them as they came into high school, talked about things that they would face over the next four years. It's a different world, different environment, different kind of dynamic. And there was this guy in our youth group named Ben Dorn. We had this great retreat like two weeks before school we're gonna be a family all these great things we get to school Ben has a class right across from me second period and I remember walking in my class he's standing there like hey Ben nothing Ben thought it was like too cool talk to me you know nothing next day hey Ben he looks at me nothing day three hey Ben nothing I walk into class he walks in the class by Thursday I was like you know what Bible says to greet each other with a holy kiss so on Thursday I greeted being with the holy kiss in the hallway that's biblical right Bennett that's biblical right Ben spoke to me every day the rest of the year I reminded him that we were family family is important especially when you're in the world and when Satan's after you it's always important to know that your family is there. Students, older students to younger students, older elementary students, all the younger elementary students in this room, they're your family, okay? When you see them in the hallways, speak to them, say hi to them. Older middle school kids, the younger middle school kids, they're your family. Make them feel welcome. Seniors to freshmen, they're your family. Make them feel welcome. Remember that you are family,

not just youth group members. Jesus tells you this, or scripture does. Paul writes it. Galatians chapter six, verse two, carry one another's burdens. Romans 12, verse 10, love one another with brotherly affection. Why does he remind us of these things? Because we are family. Thank you. Because we're family and family takes care of each other family loves one another family carries each other's burdens when they need to so here's your here's what I want you to practice students here's your daily prayer your action step this is what you to try to do you don't have to do it every day but try to do this at least once a week pray something like this God help me shine today help my light be something help my light shine through kindness through courage and character go to God in prayer every week and ask him to help you let your light shine to those that are gonna be around you in that building so that you can make a difference to those people. All right, teachers, teachers. I know that this is an exciting time as a teacher. There's a lot of newness. I know it can also be a nervous time. You don't know what kind of class you're gonna have. Maybe you had a great class last year and you don't know what kind of class you're gonna have this year. Maybe you had a great group of kids last year. Maybe you had a bad group of kids last year, and you're like, man, this year's going to be better because it couldn't be any worse than last year. And the minute you go, it couldn't be any worse than last year, Miss Kaye. What happens? It's worse, isn't it? And then you retire, and you're like, I never have a bad kid ever again. But once you have that great class, you know it's only going to be downhill for the next couple of years. So what's your challenge? This is what I want you to know, is that these students are your mission. These students are your mission. You're more than an instructor. You're a lot bearer. I want you to take in with you this week as you get ready for your students. I want you to realize that you need to make your room a place where grace and excellence dwell together. Yes, it's a place of instruction. Yes, it's a place where they have to come and learn. There's things that you're required to teach them by the state. But there's also things as Christians that you're required to teach them as well. You're required to teach them how to love. You're required to teach them how to forgive. You're required to teach them how to show grace and how to show mercy. Those are things that you're required to teach everybody and show everybody that you come into contact with. You know, your classroom might be the only place that they ever experienced that much love and that much grace. It might be the only safe haven that they have in their world most days. That's a big burden to carry. But it's a burden that God says, I've picked you for this. This is something that I know that you can do and you can do in a very, very special way. Paul writes in Colossians 3 and verse 23, he says, Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart. So give it everything you've got. But then he prefaces or specifies that. He says, work at it with all your heart at working for the Lord. So as you step into your classroom every day, realize you're not just working for a paycheck. You're not just working because you love kids. You're working because you love who? Because you love God. And this is a place, this is a space that you get the opportunity to show how much you love God. You just have the ability to do it as Jesus says in Matthew 19 and verse 14, where everybody's around, they're trying to push all the kids away. And Jesus says, no, let the little children come to me. He says, unless

you become like one of these, you don't enter the kingdom of heaven. You have an opportunity to minister and to share the message of Jesus, to share the love of Jesus with the most precious gift that God gives us, and that is children. And so here's your daily prayer challenge. Ask God every day, help me be the light in this room, the calm in the chaos, the hope in hurt, and the love in learning. Because we know that there are going to be days where students walk into your room and their life is going to be nothing but chaos. They're going to have experienced nothing but hurt. And in those moments, be their calm and be their hope. Now the last group, the people who cannot wait for Thursday, the people who are most excited about the week ahead, the parents who only have to raise their kids full-time for three months out of the whole year. Here's the most important thing that we can do, parents, and help them is to help them build spiritual habits that last. One of the things that I've learned, and I'm sure everybody else has as well, is that the world is going to tell us that there are a lot of important things that we need to teach our kids. There's a lot of important things that they need to learn. There's a lot of important things that they need to do. There's not a very small window of their life to make that difference. A very small window. It's backpacks today and graduation tomorrow. It really does feel that way. I remember when we started in Arkansas, we had a couple of kids that were graduating that first year. And one of the dads in particular gave me a really hard time. Collins was six months old when we moved there. And he's like, listen, dude, it's going to be you quick. It'll be you before you know it. And I'm like, ain't no way. Like 18 years from now, 18 years does not go by that fast. We're in year 14, fixing to be 15. And it really does just feel like that. Now we've still got like 30 more to go with the kids that we've got, you know? Um, so I figured it up the other day. If all three of my girls cheer, we're going to be cheerleaders at Haleville for 45 years. So, but that's okay. It'll be all right. Um, So what can you do to kind of help your children accomplish this? And this may be something that you have to do for yourself first. Involve them in the process. Teach your kids to build routines of faith. All right? They talk about, hey, to get homework done, you got to build routines of homework. To be good in athletics, you got to build routines around, you know, practice and that sport or whatever. Help them build routines of faith. Maybe it's something small. Maybe you begin, you know, as a family, just praying together every morning. You know, getting out the door is maybe one of the hardest things for most families during the week. Just simply getting out the door. What if you slowed that process down and spent time in prayer? Do you think that would raise the anxiety or lower the anxiety of that moment, of that time together? I would imagine it would lower it. Maybe just set aside a time of the day where you just simply talk about where did you see God today? Where did you see something that God was working in? Create moments of spiritual reflection, of prayer, of growth. Remember, this is not just an idea. This is something that Scripture tells us to do. Deuteronomy 6 and verse 7, impress them. He's talking about the law. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home. Isaiah 40 and verse eight is such a powerful verse. When you think about the world versus the word, he talks about the world. He says, the grass will wither, the flowers will fade, but the word of God stands forever. So all these things that the world

says is important, you gotta do this, you gotta learn this, this, this, all of those things, they're gonna fade. They're not going to be as important at some point, but the word of God, what? stands forever. And so that needs to be the grounding point of everything that we do. So parents, here's your action steps. Not really a prayer as much as it is a challenge. Build one new faith habit this school year with your children. Let's just make it one. Make it one faith habit. Imagine that. Imagine if you've got a child that's going into kindergarten. You've got 13 years you add one new faith habit every year that is 13 things that will become a normal part of their Christian walk by the time they graduate high school that is ground them in a faith that will not fade so whether you're a student a teacher or a parent just remember that this year isn't just about grades it's not just about schedules it's not just about Friday nights or Monday nights or game day. It's about what? It's about your mission. It's about letting your light shine. Shine where you are because where you are is where God has placed you. Let's end our lesson with a word of prayer. God, we thank you for the chance to be in a season of newness, to be in a season of restart, of reset with a new school year. God, we pray a very special prayer this morning, first for our students as they walk into our buildings this week, into their classroom as they meet new teachers, as they get new schedules, as they are around new people and revisit old friendships and create new ones. We pray that you give them the strength and the courage to let their shine and not to just let it shine in a way that's comfortable, but to maybe step out this year and let their light shine in a new way, in a way that makes a difference, in a way that shines more light on you than ever before. God, we pray for our teachers and we pray for the ability they have to make a difference. We know that they are such special people in our world and in our community, that they have the ability to impact children at such a young age and at such an important time in their life. And we pray that they do so with love and with your spirit. And we just pray that they make a difference, not just on a day-to-day level, but on an eternal level, God. Help us to support them and give them the courage to turn their classroom into that mission field, God. We pray for our parents. We pray that we are their community. We pray that we are their village, God, that we encourage them. For our church family that has raised their children and have already been where they are, that they are able to mentor them and to disciple them through these times. We pray that you give each one of our families and our parents the strength to make it through the coming weeks of adjusting to the new schedule of the school year, help them to find their routine and their new normal. God, God, we thank you so much above everything else for Jesus and for his sacrifice, for the love that it had to, that he had to have, that had to exist in him to give up his life for us. And we pray that in everything that we do, we let that be our motivation, that we let that be our focal point. We let that be the reason that we live. We thank you for all that you do for us, God. In your son's name we pray. Amen.