The Word Does The Work — Delivery Transcript

2 Timothy 3:14–17 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, October 2, 2022 · *Family Matters*

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And with the time that we have left this morning, I would like us to turn to Second Timothy chapter 3. We're going to be continuing the series we've been in on the local church. And I know some people think a series on the local church is totally irrelevant, but I'm really convinced that the more we go through this series and the more I think about it, that this is one of the most important things we can be discussing as a church in this season. Because there's a growing apathy in the heart of people towards the local church and it's this kind of mindset.

It's certainly accelerated during COVID, but the mindset is basically, I don't need the church and the church really doesn't need me. I've got my relationship with God, I'm fine. I'm growing, I'm reading the scripture, listening to Christian music on the radio, and I'll be okay. But the reality is you won't. If you're a Christian without a local church, I think you're a Christian in trouble, and it's just a matter of time until that trouble manifests itself and exposes the fact that you were made for community and as believers we belong in the family of God.

And so that's what we've been looking at the last couple of weeks, just to give you an idea of where we've been. We first wanted to establish why the church matters, and essentially the church matters because God has purchased the church by his blood. And he has commissioned the church specifically to carry on the ministry of Jesus Christ in the earth. The church does that as it submits to the authority of Christ, but by and large, Jesus having ascended into heaven, the only game left in town, God's plan A for accomplishing his redemptive mission is the church.

And so if you're taking notes, the church matters because we were purchased by Christ's blood. It continues Christ's ministry and stewards Christ's authority. Since that's true, we

said certain things matter in the church. Specifically, when it comes to membership in a local church, the people who belong to that church need to be truly saved, they need to belong to Jesus, truly regenerate. They need to be growing in their salvation. Maybe you've been part of a church where everyone's maturity in Christ stopped about the day after they got saved, and so it was very carnal and fleshly and immature.

In our church, we want to always be growing in grace. And then finally we want to be people who are joyfully submitted to Christ and his calling on our church. And we talked about what that looks like practically the last couple of weeks because God set those things in place. He says these things matter in the church. You need to be saved, you need to be growing in your salvation and you need to be submitted to Christ. The tools, the mechanisms that God has given us are very clear in Scripture.

And we listed them under four categories. You could add more, but not less. And those categories are the ordinances, which is baptism and the Lord's Supper, the offices, which is pastors and deacons and church governance. And then finally the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. You might want to put these up front, but because we're talking about these this morning, we're going to finish on the Word. And this morning as we look at 2 Timothy chapter 3, I want to try to show you the relationship that our church has with the Bible and why our church thinks about the Bible the way that we do and why we do what we do in our church when it comes to preaching and teaching and small groups and all of those things.

Why is the Bible such a big deal? And we're going to look at 2 Timothy chapter 3 to do so. But before we get to 2 Timothy, if you just take a bird's eye view of the Old Testament and New Testament, one of the themes that you will see happen over and over and over again is that God uses his word to create his people. God's word, you might think of it this way, is powerful. It is not just information when God speaks. It is power. It produces life and creates something from nothing.

You see this in Genesis 1:1, of course, when God speaks the world into existence. God creates the world through his word. In Genesis chapter 3, Adam and Eve sin against God. God uses his word to curse the serpent. He curses the ground. He judges Adam and Eve for their sin, but then after that he comforts them with a word and says, from the seed of the woman there's going to come a messiah who's going to crush the head of the serpent. He uses his word to give them comfort, in clothing them in their nakedness.

If you go to Genesis 12, you see that God creates his people from his word with the calling of Abraham. Remember, "Father Abraham had many sons; many sons had Father Abraham." This idea of God creating a people from all the other peoples of the world. He creates a special covenant people. How did he do that? He did it by his word. He spoke to Abraham and said, come out of Ur into the land that I'm going to show you. That of course manifests itself through the rest of the book of Genesis.

You get to the book of Exodus, and then you see Moses called out by God through his word and God uses his word to commission Moses. And Moses, through the word of God, takes the Israelites through the promised land, through the Red Sea, up to Mount Sinai, and God then consecrates his people through his word. He says through the Ten Commandments, if you're my people, this is how we live. This is what it looks like to belong to me. And then you go through the rest of the Old Testament, you see God confront his people through the prophets.

You see God with the prophet Ezekiel and the dry bones, the spiritual death that had existed and had kind of manifested in the people of God. He preaches the word and the dry bones come to life. The dry bones get flesh and muscle and breath in their lungs, all of that happens as Ezekiel prophesies and preaches the word. If you get to the New Testament, you see the word in Romans chapter 10.[1] You might remember this, maybe it's a memory verse you've learned before that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the what?

Word. Hearing, salvation, creation. Becoming a Christian comes through the Word of God. Romans 10, 9 and 10: If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. And so salvation itself comes from the Word. I could go on all day long showing you the power of the Word of God and that it is through God's word that he creates his people and that he builds us up into who we are meant to be. And that's what 2 Timothy is about.

We're going to look at verses 14 to 17. The book of 2 Timothy was written by Paul to his young protégé, a young pastor there in Ephesus struggling, trying to figure out how he's supposed to be a pastor and Paul encourages him and really grounds him, regrounds him in the Word of God, saying it's going to get harder, people are going to become more wicked, but you continue in what you've learned, you keep preaching the word, and God will do the work through the word. So let's read it together, 2 Timothy starting in verse 14.[2] "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed.

You know those who taught you, and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." Very important phrase. Those scriptures are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Then he says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." I want to show you two things from second Timothy.

We don't have time to get into the nitty-gritty. But in verse 15 I want to show you that God creates his people by his word. And then in verses 16 and 17, I want to show you that he constructs or builds us up into who he's called us to be through his word. One of the reasons at Broadview that we prioritize the word of God is because in prioritizing God's word, we're

prioritizing Christ. As you see in 2 Timothy, there's an inextricable link between the written word of God and the living word of God.

When you think of the written word, you think of the B-I-B-L-E, that's the book for me, Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth, that's the Bible, but that Bible points us to the living word, who is Jesus. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Everything in this world was created by the living word, who is Jesus Christ. And those two things, those two words, always go together. Now, where is that in 2 Timothy? Well, in 2 Timothy the apostle Paul encourages Timothy. He says godless people are going to get more godless.

You're going to be persecuted. Your church is probably going to have all sorts of problems. But keep preaching the word and continue in the word that you've heard. Why? Because that word is able to make you wise for salvation. And not just Timothy, but all the people in his church are going to become wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. So there's something about the Word of God that points people to the person of Christ. According to Timothy, there's this inextricable link between Jesus and the Word. And now in Timothy's case, you've got to remember he had the Old Testament scriptures.

The New Testament canon had not yet been completed. He didn't have the word that we have today. Paul's letters were being circulated, but he had the Old Testament. But even the Old Testament scriptures themselves are sufficient to point people to Jesus, and that's why we prioritize the Word, because the Word points us. If you go back in the Gospels, you can see this theme work itself out. Jesus on the road to Emmaus. He's been crucified; the disciples are in the doldrums, they're sad because their Messiah had been crucified. Jesus shows up on the road to Emmaus.

He says, why are you guys so sad? They said, because our Messiah has been crucified by the Romans. And then he lifts their spirits by showing them, from Moses all the way to the rest of the prophets, how everything in the scripture testified about him "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures." The same dynamic is spoken by Jesus himself in John chapter 5. He's rebuking the Pharisees and the religious leaders because they were using the Old Testament as a club to beat people over the head who didn't live a righteous life.

And he's basically saying, that's all works-based, that's all law, not gospel. You think you have eternal life in the scriptures. You'll never find eternal life in the scriptures. It is the scriptures that testify about me. I'm the source of eternal life. The scriptures were all about me. So why do we prioritize the word? Because the word makes us wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. You cannot know Jesus Christ without his word. He lived, he died, he walked around with people. Certainly, those people had a unique opportunity to see Jesus in

the flesh, but today the only way we can know Jesus truly, without error, is by encountering Jesus Christ in his word.

And the word is inspired by the Holy Spirit to create salvation in the lives of God's people. We become people of God. We become believers through the word and that's why we prioritize the word in our church because we prioritize Jesus Christ. Now I want to show you this truth one other place in Paul's writings, it's in 2 Corinthians chapter 4. And just by way of information, when I first had this passage explained to me. And the light came on for me, what this passage is actually saying, it changed my life.

It changed the way that I think about ministry. And it changed the way I thought about preaching. And the reason I do what I do the way that I do it is by and large because of this truth that I discovered in 2 Corinthians chapter 4. And the book that helped me was a book by Steven Smith named *Dying to Preach*. But I want to read this passage. I want to show you how Paul's making this connection between the word and Christ, that you cannot know Christ outside of the Word, and so the role of a preacher is to just expose the Word.

So he says in Second Corinthians chapter 4, verse 1, "Therefore, since we have this ministry because we were shown mercy, we do not give up." So he's talking about his philosophy of ministry, his philosophy of preaching. Instead of giving up, "we have renounced secret and shameful things"—look at this—"not acting deceitfully or distorting the word of God." Now he's contrasting himself here with a group of people called sophists, who were basically using the Bible and adding lots of rhetorical flourish and public speaking skills to make much of themselves. Look at how awesome I am, look at how gifted I am, look at how well I speak.

And they were using God's authority to bolster themselves. And Paul says, I'm not all about that. I'm a simple gospel preacher. I came knowing nothing except Christ and him crucified. I don't distort the word of God. Look at what he says. "But we commend ourselves before God to everyone's conscience by an open display of the truth." In other words, I'm not sugarcoating, I'm not adding, I'm not taking away. It's just a simple word. Why? Look at verse 3. "But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

In their case, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." "For we are not proclaiming ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus's sake. For God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ." So notice Paul's argument. I know that's very wordy, but here's what he's saying.

When I preach and teach, I just preach and teach the Bible. Very simply put, I let the word do the work. Not distorting, not twisting, an open display of the truth. Why? Because Satan has blinded the eyes of people in this world. The people to whom I'm preaching are blind,

spiritually dead, cannot see. Imagine if you were in a West Texas cotton field and you're looking at the most beautiful West Texas sunset you've ever seen. If you don't have eyes to see the sunset, it doesn't move you. It doesn't change you.

If you're in the museum, you see the most beautiful artwork in the world. If you don't have eyes to see the artwork, it will never move you. And that's spiritually what happens when unbelieving people hear the truth about the gospel or hear Christian truths— do this, don't do that. It does not move them. They cannot see it. The truth about Christ is hidden from their eyes because Satan has blinded them so they wouldn't see. But Paul says there's this unique thing called the Word of God that when it is preached, God uses that word to turn on the lights.

And the only way that those lights can be turned on is if the word is preached. And so I don't preach myself. I don't preach flourishy fluff. I just let the word do the work because through the word God turns on the light and God's people are created. If you want to think of it as a funnel, this is what was helpful for me. Jesus Christ reveals the Father. Jesus is the image of the invisible God, Colossians 1. Jesus is the image of God we just read, 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 4.

So how do we know God? Because God is spirit, he is invisible.[3] The only way we can know God is by looking at Jesus. Jesus reveals the character of God. But how do we know who Jesus is? Well, Jesus said to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the scriptures, the Old Testament scriptures in particular, reveal who I am, my person, my work. John 5, he told the religious leaders, you think you have eternal life in the scriptures? No, the scriptures point to me. The word reveals Christ. 2 Timothy 3:15, continue in the Word.

The Word makes you wise for salvation. So the Word exposes Jesus so that Jesus can expose the Father. If that's true, if that's the funnel of revelation, then the most important thing a preacher can do is to just reveal the word. Not add to the word, not take away from the word, not put all kinds of cute packaging around the word. My job as your preacher is to just simply represent what Christ has already presented, inspired by the Spirit, through the Word of God. And when that word is preached, here's what God does: He turns on the light.

And I don't know how to explain it. It's the most amazing thing I've ever seen in ministry. When a preacher will simply allow the word to do the work, the word does the work and it creates the people of God. That's why in our church we have such a high value on the scripture because God has inspired the scripture to create his people. But it doesn't just create, it also constructs. And you see that in the second half of 2 Timothy chapter 3. It doesn't just make us wise for salvation.

Timothy goes on and says that it's going to tear us down and build us up. Let me show you this in the passage. Verses 16 and 17, he says, "All Scripture is inspired by God." This is the

word— I can't remember the word. Basically God-breathed. Theopneustos, something along those lines. It is breathed out by God, and it is profitable, or helpful, useful, for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, the goal, of course, so that the man or woman of God would be complete and equipped for every good purpose. So when I said the word constructs us, the reason I use the word constructs, when I think of construction, I think of tearing stuff down and building stuff up, and that's what the Word of God does.

The Word of God is used by the Spirit of God to tear down idols, unbelief, sinful habits, attitudes, actions. I don't know if you've ever been sitting in a message or listening to a sermon and the Holy Spirit just goes to town on your heart, exposing this and exposing that, tearing stuff down. That's the word, that's the Spirit of God using the Word of God to tear it down. And then after he tears it down, what does he do? He builds it back up. I've heard it said that good preaching afflicts the comfortable and comforts the afflicted.

I've always liked that. It tears down and it builds up, tears down idolatry, tears down sin, but then puts in its place righteousness, love, obedience, truth. And that's what this passage is saying. Notice: teaching builds up, adds knowledge; rebuking tears down, corrects, convicts — stop doing that. Correcting— that's where we get our word for orthodontics. It straightens things up. It takes things that are crooked and not right and says, we're going to get rid of that and we're going to make things the way that they're supposed to be. That's what the scripture does when it is preached.

And then finally training. That's the Greek word paideia. That means… when you're raising your children: not just teaching them what to know, but teaching them how to be, how to live, how to develop virtue. That's what the word of God does for the people of God. It creates virtue, it creates righteousness, it transforms us literally into the image of Christ. And so when it comes to the Word of God, it constructs us, the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to transform us into the image of Christ. Now how does it do that?

Hebrews chapter four talks about this. And in Hebrews chapter 4 he's rebuking the Christians there, and he's saying, don't be like those Old Testament saints who, when they heard God's word, they hardened their hearts and rebelled against God. No, no, no. You'll miss the rest. You'll miss the promised land. Don't be like that. But hear God's word and heed it and put it into practice. And then he makes this statement about the word that's just such rich theology about the Bible and he says that "the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword."

Think of a scalpel. It penetrates as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. Have you ever listened to a sermon and thought to yourself the preacher's reading my emails, he must be listening in on my phone conversations? I've had some people sometimes say that to me before and I pull out my NSA badge and I say, yeah, I've been listening. No, no, I'm just kidding. I don't say that because I don't know. I'm not reading your mail. But the

Holy Spirit is, because the Holy Spirit sees things I can't see and knows things I don't know, and he penetrates your heart and your mind and exposes those secret intentions.

Look at the next phrase. It is able to judge. I can't judge, but the spirit can judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Notice this now. No creature is hidden from him. It is able to judge. No creature is hidden from him. There's a transition, third-person neuter noun to a third-person singular masculine noun. The living word and the written word always go together. The scripture judges the thoughts and intentions; no creature can hide from Jesus. All things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Jesus, to whom we must give an account.

Do you see the theology of Scripture is that Jesus Christ takes that written word through a humble preacher who will not preach himself but will preach the scripture. And the Holy Spirit uses that word to penetrate the hearts and minds of believing people or unbelieving people to create faith to construct righteousness because he can see what I can't see and he can do what I can't do. And that's why we prioritize the Bible in our church. Because in prioritizing the Bible, we prioritize Christ. Jesus Christ is the head of the church.

He exercises his authority through his word. When the word is unleashed, the word does the work. Does that make sense? Now, if this is true, which I think there's a pretty good biblical case for, what are the implications for how we do life at Broadview? Practical implication number one. My main responsibility as your preacher is to preach and teach the Bible. I've got other stuff I got to do. There's a sheet of paper on my desk right now with the increases in the insurance rates. 18%. You know, thank you very much, GuideStone.

I got to figure out what to do with all of that. And there's all sorts of complexities in the life of the church that the leader who leads needs to lead. But my main responsibility is not health insurance. It's preaching the Bible. And so the main thing I do as your pastor is every morning, at least Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings, I get in that study and I open this book. And I let the book read me and I read the book and I try to understand the book and I let the book try to understand me.

And then I try to die to myself so that I'm not preaching myself and I'm not motivated by my need for approval and affirmation and all those things, but I die to myself so that Christ can live and I try to take the text and represent the text so that the people can see Jesus Christ in the text because in seeing Jesus, he sees them and convicts and molds them. And that takes the vast majority of my week to do that work. And we were talking the other day, how long does it take you to write a sermon?

Mine was the longest. And someone said that's because you preach twice as long as everyone else. And that kind of stung a little bit. But it is the thing I do more than anything else. Now I'm not saying 40 hours a week is committed to preaching. That's not the case. You know, it's not that all of my time is spent doing this, but I spend more time doing this than anything

else because this is the most important thing I do. Because this word is God's particular word for this particular congregation, for this particular week.

It is the diet on which we feed. It gives a light to show us where we're supposed to go as a church. Jesus is the head. I'm the leader. How do I lead our church to do what Jesus wants us to do? I do it through preaching the word. Second implication. If the main job of a preacher is to preach the word, then the main method of his preaching ought to be text-driven exposition. This is a little more controversial, but I one hundred percent believe in expositional preaching. In our church, we don't often do topical preaching.

Topical preaching is where a preacher has a topic and he comes to the text with his topic. And he says, where are all the verses that talk about my topic? And I'm going to use those verses to put God's authority behind this topic that I want to preach. And sometimes that's not bad, sometimes that's fine. Some could say this sermon is a topical sermon because I'm using other passages to preach on the topic. But sometimes it is bad because sometimes preachers bring a topic that has nothing to do with the scripture.

Or if it does have something to do with the scripture, they misuse passages out of context as a proof text to lean God's authority on an issue, to say something in a way that maybe God wouldn't say it, or communicate a truth that maybe God didn't communicate. And that's why we want to just let the main point of the sermon be the main point of the text. So our text this morning is 2 Timothy chapter 3. The main point of that text is that God's word creates and God's word constructs.

And so can you pull supplemental passages? Absolutely, but the main point of the sermon needs to be the main point of the text. That's text-driven exposition. You let the text do the work. Why? Because you believe that the text is what's used by God. It's not my wisdom, it's not my creativity. It's the scripture that God has inspired. And so let the scripture do the work. And I'm not hating on theological preaching. Some people preach a text and here's the theological theme and they preach the theology of that text. That's useful at times, but the steady diet of a church should be expositional preaching through, I think, through books of the Bible, because all scripture is breathed by God.

All scripture is profitable. And so preaching through books of the Bible forces us, and me as your pastor, to deal with topics maybe we would otherwise avoid, and discovering just how relevant God's word is, even the difficult sections. So the main job is preaching, the main method is exposition, and finally the main book is the Bible. The main book for your small groups, for your ministry programming, for everything we do is the Bible. The reason we pick the songs that we pick is because they're in harmony with the scriptures. The reason we don't do other songs is because they're not in harmony with the Bible.

When you go to your small group, your small group leader is going to open up the Bible. Now they may use a quarterly, they may use RightNow Media, they may use other tools. But the steady diet, the transforming agent is the Bible. It's Colossians 3, let the word dwell in you richly. Teach and admonish, sing songs, hymns, spiritual songs, but it's got to be rooted in the word because the word is what does the work. And if we prioritize Jesus Christ in this church, then we will prioritize his word. By the way, women, one of the unique things I think you'll have an opportunity to do next Wednesday or this coming Wednesday, they're starting a new women's Bible study called Women of the Word.

And what I think is unique about this study is they are not just going through a Bible book or a theme like they sometimes do. But they're actually through this study going to teach you how to study the Bible. And I love that. How do I exposit a text? How do I bring in the context? How do I use a commentary? How do I break down the structure and the theme and the main original meaning of a passage? And if you've ever listened to a sermon and thought to yourself, I don't know how he got all that out of there.

Well we're going to teach you how to get all that out of there so that you can learn to exposit God's word for yourself and feed yourself throughout the week in your personal quiet times, I would highly, highly encourage you to participate in that study, because the word does the work. It'll do the work in your family. It'll do the work in your life. It does the work in our church when we let the word do the work. It creates God's people and it builds us up into the image of Christ.

So as we close, I want to leave you with a question. And the question is, what does your personal relationship with the word say about its priority in your life? I think all of us could probably say, I wish I spent more time in the scripture. But we can think that and feel that if we never act on it, then the word's never going to make any changes in our life. Maybe this morning you're not a Christian, and your application is, you know, you've read the Bible, you go to church every week, but you've never encountered the person of Christ.

Maybe you're kind of like what David shared. I grew up in the church. I was discipled before I became a Christian. I knew all the right answers. I lived the right way. But it wasn't until God broke me of my self-righteousness. It wasn't until God showed me that it was the Word, the living word, that could save. Not my obedience to the written word, but it is the living word who died for my sins, who can save me from my brokenness. And maybe this morning you've had the religion, but only the religion; you've never had the relationship with Jesus.

And if God's working in your heart saying for you to respond, then you can come down to the front and make that response. There will also be a QR code up on the screen. If you want to scan that QR code you can scan that code and fill out that connect card and we'll talk with you later on this week. Probably the vast majority of us this morning, the response for us is

to get more serious about the word. Our culture is hostile to people who believe the Bible is God's Word.

Everything in our culture pressures us to distance ourselves from the word. Oh, I don't believe the Bible. You know, I think it can be useful here and there, but it's got some things wrong. Will you allow the culture to dictate your relationship with Jesus or will you allow the Word of God to dictate your relationship with Jesus? It will not be easy. As a church, it will not be easy for our church to say we are holding fast to the Word of God, even though that makes us unpopular. Even though the Bible's teaching on sexual ethics and marriage and all these hot topics is unpopular in our culture, even though we will be unfashionable, we will hold fast because life is in the word.

Truth is in the Word. And we're going to be a people who are committed to the Word because we're a people committed to Christ. And so maybe you would ask the Lord to give you strength and a boldness and conviction personally to hold fast to the scripture even when it makes you unfashionable in our culture. I don't know; the Holy Spirit is at work. The Holy Spirit uses the word to convict your hearts. He knows better than I what you need to do, but let's spend a few moments responding to him as he leads.

Father in heaven, we thank you for this time and as we enter into a time of response. I pray for any person here who does not have a true relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord, that you would right now create faith in their heart through the preached word of God, that Jesus is God. He came to earth. He lived a sinless, perfect life, that he died on the cross for our sins. And that three days later he was raised from the dead, proving that our sins have been paid for, that we can be forgiven and reconciled to God.

If we'll just repent of our sin and put our faith in Jesus. For the person who's familiar with that, but it's never taken root, never taken hold in their heart, I pray you would, through your Spirit, turn on the lights and bring them to yourself and give them the courage to publicly declare that I'm giving my life to Jesus today. For others, Lord, would you help us to have the kind of soil where the word can take root? Some of us need to confess and repent of sin. Some of us have an attitude towards the Bible that does not allow it to produce fruit in our life.

Some of us have grown apathetic and cold towards the word. Some of us have deceived ourselves into thinking that we are good with Jesus. Even though we do not love his church and we do not love his word, would you expose what needs to be exposed? Tear down idols and unbelief and build back faith and righteousness through your spirit. And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. The altar is open. If anyone wants to pray about anything, I'm certainly happy to pray with you. There is a QR code if you want to use your phone to scan that; it'll take you to a connect card and you can indicate any next steps that you want to take and we'll follow up with you later this week.

Some may be interested in church membership or baptism, finding a place to serve, all of those things you can do through that QR code. One of the best ways to have the word come to life in your heart and mind is to shift from being Sunday-only into a small group. That's where the word gets applied personally. You get to know people, people get to know you, they can hold you accountable to the word producing fruit in your life. We have a lot of great small groups in our church. You can find information about that out in the Gathering Place.

Father in heaven, we thank you for this time together in your word. Thank you that you build your people around your word and not around the preferences of a group of people or a preacher or a personality. We are creatures of the word. We're a community built on the word. And I thank you that word is uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit to produce godliness and advance your mission through your bride, the local church. I know in our day and age it is difficult to hold fast to the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture, but I pray in the coming weeks and months and years, that you repeatedly prove yourself by your word, prove yourself to be faithful, prove yourself to be powerful.

As we submit ourselves to Christ by submitting ourselves to his word. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. And God's people said.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "Romans chapter 9"; "faith comes from what is heard" is Romans 10:17. Source: Romans 10:17 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "starting in verse 3"; the reading is 2 Timothy 3:14–17. Source: 2 Timothy 3:14–17 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩
3. Transcript note: spoken as "he's invincible"; the point (and Colossians 1:15, quoted just before) is that God is invisible. Source: Colossians 1:15; John 4:24 (CSB), BibleGateway. ↩