



CANYON HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Series: Global Outreach Week 2017

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We're Saved for Something Better

Dr. Steve Walker

As we're giving, I'm going to ask all of us to get our Bibles close by and open them to the gospel of Mark, chapter 10. In case you're new with us this morning, or maybe you were just gone last Sunday, today is the conclusion of our annual Global Outreach emphasis where we take a couple of Sundays and a whole week in between to focus our attention on what God is doing all over the world through Canyon Hills for the sake of the gospel.

We think it's important that we remember that the God who saves us in Christ is not just a God of the Eastside. He is the God of the whole universe, and God so loved the world that he sent Jesus to die for all who would believe.

Last week, our special guest, Nik Ripkin, incredibly challenged us as a church and as individuals to do whatever it takes to take Jesus to the countries and nations of the world that have little to no access to Jesus, the gospel, the church, or a missionary. That message was convicting.

The beautiful thing is that, on the spot last week, 60 people from amongst our church came forward and said, "God, I'm not sure where or when, but here I am. Send me." Single people, married people, and people with kids and family all came forward and said, "God, I sense your calling on my life. I'm not sure what it means yet, but I'm open to finding out what you would have me do and where you would have me go." In just one Sunday, 60 people said, "Here I am."

Today, I want to bring it a little closer to home, because when we talk about the globe and the world, it tends to seem a little far away. I want to get our attention on right here, right now, and I think a great place for us to get that focus is in Mark, chapter 10, starting in verse 17. Let's stand for the reading of God's Word, as we always do. We're going to pick it up in verse 17. You'll remember this encounter that Jesus has as we get into it pretty quickly here.

"And as [Jesus] was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the

commandments: "Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother."

And he said to him, 'Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.' And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, 'You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.' Disheartened [saddened] by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!' And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.'

And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, 'Then who can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.' Peter began to say to him, 'See, we have left everything and followed you.'

Jesus said, 'Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.'"

God, I pray that you would open our hearts right now to exactly what this means for us today. Help us, God, to see ourselves and our world in this passage. I pray, God, you would move in a mighty way today when it comes to us taking the gospel, not just to the whole world but to our little worlds right here all around us.

God, I pray for those who are standing in our midst right now whose hearts are really heavy and hurting. I pray that you would bring them divine comfort. Help them to know, God, right now in this moment, that you see them and love them and you will not forsake them. Lord, have your way now in our hearts. I pray in Christ's name, amen.

My conviction is that if we're going to make any progress in our faith today, and if we're going to make any greater commitment and sacrifice for the sake of the gospel, we're going to have to see ourselves in this passage.

We're going to have to see the world we live in right now right here in Mark, chapter 10, because if we don't, I think we're going to just be destined to a future of lukewarm faith, church. We're going to be destined to a faithless self-centeredness as a church and as individuals, both of which Scripture condemns and God promises to discipline, so we have to look at this passage and see ourselves in it.

I want us to get to know this man who walked up to Jesus. I want to just kind of go behind the veil of his heart a little bit and learn and see some things about him because I think he represents most of the unbelievers we live around, whom we know. He's the exact replica, really, of the people we're around every day.

It could be people in our family, at school, at work, or just our neighbors. This guy is a lot like the people you and I know who don't believe in Jesus. So, what do we know about him? What can we learn about him that will give us courage to share our faith? For lack of a better way to word this, I think this guy is...

1. *The perfect biography of an unbeliever.* Most people in our lives are not much different from him. They have a lot in common with this young man. When we understand this, I think our anxiety to share our faith with them eventually and slowly turns to courage and compassion to share our faith with guys like this who are in our lives. So, what do we know about him?

A. *He is respected and accomplished.* In the gospel of Mark, Mark just says a man ran up and knelt before Jesus. In the gospel of Luke and the other gospels, we learn that he's young and rich. He's a respected ruler. He's an accomplished leader of some sort. We don't know if he's in government, military, or business, but we know this man as the rich young ruler. He's respected. He's accomplished.

For the most part, most of our unbelieving friends, family, and coworkers who don't know Jesus aren't criminals. They're not terrorists. They're not murderers. They're just like this guy. They're just doing their best to make something out of their lives. They're trying to succeed at their version of what it means to be successful and happy. This guy is young, ambitious, and succeeding. That looks a lot like the people in our lives who don't know Jesus, for the most part.

B. *He desires to live forever.* He comes up to Jesus in verse 17 and he just says, "What do I have to do to have eternal life?" At the core of his question, he's asking Jesus, "How do I get out of this life alive? When this thing is over, how can I be sure that what's next is good or okay?" He's just like the people we know.

They have an innate, God-given sense that this life isn't all there is. They don't understand that completely, but we do, because Scripture tells us in Ecclesiastes, chapter 3, verse 11, that God has put eternity in the heart of every man. Every single person is created with the innate belief that this life isn't all there is. It doesn't end here.

The problem is that they're hopelessly looking for a way to achieve eternal life in their own efforts. Most people want to naturally do something that will make themselves deserving of whatever good happens next. He says, "What do I have to do? Give me a checklist, Jesus. I need to know what I have to do. I want to make sure I get it done." That's not too unlike the people in this world.

C. *His opinion of Jesus is way too low.* At the end of verse 17, and then 18, it says he comes up to him, kneels before him, and says, "**Good Teacher...**" He addresses Jesus as a good teacher.

Then, in verse 18, Jesus kind of questions his faulty reverence. Jesus says, "Why do you call me good? The only one who is truly good is God."

Jesus knows that unless this guy raises his estimation of Jesus being simply on some human standard of goodness, if he doesn't see Jesus for more than that, he won't believe that when Jesus speaks to him, God is speaking to him." So Jesus questions him. He says, "You're calling me good?" In essence, without saying it, Jesus is saying, "Are you considering me to be God?" Because that's what he needs to do.

Again, we know people like this, don't we? They don't necessarily reject Jesus altogether. This guy represents all the people we know who tolerate Jesus as a good or unique religious historical figure, someone who said and did good things. He was great teacher. Most of the people we know would at least go that far. Maybe not all, but most, just like him. That's way too low of an opinion of Jesus. It can't remain there.

D. His opinion of self is way too high. In verses 19 and 20, Jesus moves to answer his question. He wants to know, "What do I have to do to have eternal life?" Jesus, in essence, says, "If you really think you can do something, that you can do what is required for the salvation of your soul, okay. Well, then you're going to have to keep the law of Moses, the Ten Commandments, perfectly," because the Ten Commandments are God's standard of goodness.

The Ten Commandments are God's requirements for righteous and holy living, and so Jesus points carefully to six of them. I don't know how or why Jesus picked these six, but I think it makes a little more sense in just a minute. He looks at him and he says, "Hey, you know the commandments," and he lists six of them.

Then, this guy obviously thought he passed with flying colors, because he looks back at Jesus and he says, "Oh, I've kept all these from my youth!" You almost get the sense that the guy, here at the end of verse 20, is kind of pleasantly surprised. He's bragging to Jesus that he has been perfect so far, like, "Oh, is that it? Awesome! I've done all that! Is there anything else?" All he wanted to know was if there was anything else he could do to remove all doubt, to kind of seal the deal for himself.

Again, do we know anyone like this in our family or our work? Reasonably decent people, who boldly elevate themselves to righteous status, compared to, of course, serial killers and sexual predators. They're decent people and they lift themselves up above the worst and declare themselves to be good enough. That's natural. All of us, naturally speaking, want to think we're more righteous than we really are. That's why God is so careful to warn us to be extremely careful about self-assessing our own goodness. In Jeremiah, chapter 17, God says,

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick [wicked]; who can understand it? 'I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.'"

Now, what's so cool is after this guy says, "Oh, I've kept those since I was a kid," and he thinks he's good enough, Jesus doesn't argue with him. All Jesus needed to do was dust off the few commandments this guy had conveniently lowered to his standards of righteousness. In just one sentence, Jesus leads this man into the deeper recesses of his prideful, arrogant heart.

In one sentence, Jesus says, "Oh, okay. Well, just one more thing. Sell everything and come follow me." Now, I want you to be sure Jesus isn't saying self-imposed poverty is some pathway to heaven. That's not it at all. In fact, self-imposed poverty can end up being more of a prideful religious pride than it is anything else.

Jesus is saying here that if you think you're going to save yourself by keeping the commandments, the rules, then you have to keep all of them perfectly, not just the ones you like. Not just the rules you agree with, but all of God's rules. In this one sentence, "Go and sell everything you have," Jesus captured commandment number one: "You shall have no other gods before me." He captured commandment number two: "You shall not make for yourself an idol, bow down to it, and serve it." He captured commandment number ten: "Thou shalt not covet."

Those commandments... This guy had conveniently just kind of thought, "Eh, God isn't that serious about those. I have six out of ten. Passing!" Don't forget. Right after God gave the Ten Commandments, he also gave the sacrifices, the punishment required for breaking the commandments, didn't he? Because every human heart falls short of the perfect goodness and glory of God, there's no way possible for us to keep God's commands perfectly. Our hearts are incapable of being good enough.

So, in the Law, the commandments, require punishment for those who break the commandments. You see, the Law was never capable of making any of us righteous. It was meant to expose our *unrighteousness*. That's what the Ten Commandments were for. The whole book of Romans is all about showing that the Law was meant to get us to abandon the impossible task of self-righteousness. That's what Paul says in Romans. The Ten Commandments don't make you righteous. They prove how unrighteous we are. That's what they're for.

So, the gospel of Jesus invites us to his life of perfect righteousness and obedience. The gospel invites us to his death as the ultimate punishment and sacrifice for our disobedience, and to come to him for the gracious gift of God's forgiveness. The gospel invites us to his resurrection for something far better in this life and the one to come.

E. *He is willing to eternally forfeit his own soul.* Jesus invites him to repent. He says, "Go sell everything and then come follow me." He doesn't force him. He just invites him. The Bible tells us right here that he left saddened, disheartened. This worldly sorrow was for all the wrong reasons. He was sad because he wasn't willing to love God more than his sin. This is what sin does to the human heart. It affects our ability to reason. He walked away from the very thing that only Jesus could give him, eternal life, because he wouldn't let go of his sin.

These are the people all around us every day, people who, sadly, can't let go of what they believe is worth more than their own souls. For some people, it's things as trivial as partying. "You mean

I can't go and waste my life and party myself into oblivion every weekend and still follow Jesus? Eh, I'll just keep partying."

For some people it's more serious. It's their career. It's their work. For others, it's their sexual immorality or lifestyles they're unwilling to let go of. For some, it's their pursuit of intellectual superiority. Others will not let go of some long-abandoned religious tradition that they're hanging onto just for hopes that that might count as something. So, what does Jesus offer this guy? What does he offer him when he says, "Come follow me"? What is Jesus offering the world still today, for those who will repent and follow him? It's all right here.

2. *Jesus offers something far better.* That's what's really at stake here. This is our witness. This is our testimony. This is our good news.

A. *A better love.* Jesus invites us to a better love. I absolutely love verse 21. You may have missed it, but the guy just brags and says, "Okay, hey, I've done all that. Anything else?" Verse 21 says, " **And Jesus, looking at him, loved him...**" That just grabbed my heart this week.

Jesus loves us. This guy did nothing to earn that love. He did nothing to deserve that love. Jesus loves us with a self-sacrificing, purely motivated, unconditional, forgiving love: God's love. That's what Jesus was inviting him to. Jesus will never betray you. Jesus will never abandon you. He will never lie to you. He will never hurt you.

This rich young ruler obviously had a lot of things he loved, but none of them would ever and could ever love him back. Jesus invites us to know a greater love, greater than any love this world could ever come up with. Just think of all the people we know who desperately need to know they are loved like that. He's calling us to invite people, every day, to be unconditionally loved. This is what Global Outreach Week is all about: inviting people to be loved by God in Christ.

B. *A better lifestyle.* Following Jesus is an invitation to a higher standard of living, so to speak. Jesus exposes all of this guy's idolatry when he calls him to sell everything. Jesus exposes the idols of his heart when he says, "Go sell everything," but Jesus doesn't stop there. He calls him not only to sell it all, but he says, "I want you to give all the proceeds to the poor."

Be sure, Jesus isn't condemning this guy's success. He's not saying successful people aren't worthy of the gospel. He's saying there is a greater way to live. A life of giving is a million times better of a way to live than a life of getting. That's what he's saying to him: "Go give it away!" If we're honest, most greed and most materialism is really a search for meaning in our lives. That's what it is.

Following Jesus completely changes the meaning and purpose of our life. Our life purpose is no longer tied to our standard of living. Our life purpose is to give God's love and grace away, to use all of our resources as a means of reaching people with the gospel, something far better.

C. *A better treasure.* This man had great possessions, we see in verses 21 and 22, but the point of this message is not the price tag of his possessions. I've actually heard preachers spend a whole bunch of time trying to calculate this guy's worth. What a ridiculous endeavor, because that's not the point! The point here is about how much he treasured his possessions.

Again, don't we know people like this? They don't all live in big, fancy houses and drive big, fancy cars. This guy represents all the people we know who, sadly, believe their stuff, money, or possessions have lasting power. That's who he represents.

Jesus invites us to let go of whatever it takes to follow him, and the blessing will be a treasure that cannot be destroyed or stolen. It doesn't depreciate. Look at what he says here in verse 21. He says, "You lack one thing. Sell all that you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. You'll have heavenly treasure, so come follow me.

Now, this is not a promise. Jesus is not promising this guy, "If you sell it all and give it away, when you get to heaven, you'll have bigger cars, bigger houses, and bigger and cooler stuff!" Jesus isn't saying that at all. I've also heard that preached from some pulpits. "Give it all away now, because when you get to heaven you're going to have so much better stuff!"

Church, that's stupid. That's not what Jesus is talking about here. This is a promise of a better satisfaction, a perfect satisfaction. That's what Jesus is saying here. We know this because when Jesus said, in John 6:35, "**I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst...**" obviously he's not talking about food and drink there. He's saying, "When I'm your treasure, your need and longing for love, joy, peace, meaning, satisfaction, and purpose in your life will be completely satisfied in me."

That's what he's saying. That's what we're called to invite people to. That's what Global Outreach Week is all about: reminding ourselves that we get to invite people to a much better treasure, a treasure that satisfies forever. That treasure is Jesus Christ. It's not a thing. It's not a car. It's not a physical thing.

D. *A better happiness.* He walked away from a better happiness. In verse 22, it says he left disheartened. You see, he lived a lifestyle of investing much or most of his money in earthly treasures and earthly success. We know that. The issue for him was he couldn't imagine a happiness without those things in his life. That's the sad part. He's a lot like people we know. They can't imagine a happiness without certain things in their lives.

Again, don't miss how this guy is so much like the people we know. He just wanted to be happy. There's nothing evil about that. There's nothing wrong with that at all. His problem was that he thinks happiness is something that happens *to* us. That's his problem. He doesn't know real happiness is something that happens *in* us. The source of true joy is internal. It's not external. That's what Jesus was inviting him to. He says, "Follow me and I will save you from the fickle, fleeting, superficial, and temporary joys of the world."

I love how the psalmist wrote it this way: "In God's presence there is fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore." I want you to just look at that, because in God's economy, there is plenty of room for joy and pleasures forever. The difference is that the greatest joy and the greatest pleasures, the lasting joy and pleasures, come from having a relationship with God through his Son, Jesus Christ, something far better than any treasure and any happiness in the world.

Jesus is calling us to invite people to that, a joy that the world has no explanation for. This is what Global Outreach Week is all about. Ultimately, it's about a better happiness for those who will come to Jesus.

In verses 23-27, we get a little break here. The man walks away from Jesus and Jesus says something really scary. In a nutshell, he says to the disciples that the wealthy are at an exceptional disadvantage for salvation, for all of this. He says, "**How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!**" We're told here that the disciples are shocked by that. This is a scary thought, because the next question is, "Who can be saved?"

What I'm about to say next is even scarier than what Jesus just said. More than likely, none of you in this room right now think you're wealthy. None of us in this room think we're rich, because rich is always just a little bit more than what we have right now. We're not quite there yet. We're still saving. We're still working. We still have those goals. We're not there yet. Some of us are still a long way. Some of us are getting closer, but we're just not there.

What's scary is when you hear all about this rich young ruler guy walking away from Jesus, you're thinking, "That's not me. That's all those other rich people." When Jesus says it's impossible, that it's more possible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to make their way into the kingdom of heaven, you're thinking, "Well, that's not me."

That's scary, and so I want to rephrase Jesus' words so none of us leave ourselves out of the story. Jesus is saying the pursuit of money and the use of it for earthly treasures is a blinding obstacle to a better life. Let me say it a different way. In verse 27, when Jesus looks at them and says, "With man, it's impossible. With God, all things are possible," he's saying the pull and bondage to money and stuff is so powerful that it's virtually impossible without the gracious intervention of God to break free from all of that or to even see the danger of it all.

In Matthew, chapter 6, Jesus said, "**No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.**" That's what Jesus is saying. In 1 Timothy 6, Paul says, "**But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation...**" Notice he doesn't say, "Those who are already rich..." He just says, "Those who desire more, those who keep thinking, 'It's just a little bit more...'"

He says those who live and get caught in that trap "**...fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.**" Jesus is calling us

to invite people to something far better, a better love, a better happiness, a better lifestyle, and a better treasure.

E. *A better sacrifice.* In verses 28-30, the disciples remind Jesus, saying, "Okay, well, Jesus, I think we're on the right track, because we've left everything to follow you." That's what they say right there in verse 28. Jesus promises them that every sacrifice for his sake and for the gospel's sake will not be in vain. In fact, he says, "Whatever you sacrifice to follow me and to allow the gospel to go into all the world, the return will be a hundredfold." That's exactly what he says there.

He says, basically, "You will gain infinitely more if you sacrifice to follow me and to spread the gospel than you will if you keep it all for yourself and walk away." That's what he's saying. He says, "You'll have more family, more houses, and more brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and lands. You're going to have more than all of that."

I think the question is, "What in the world does that mean?" The evidence is in that most of God's people who are persecuted and who sacrifice their stuff and their very lives for the gospel's sake never get richer. That's the evidence that we have. Most of the people who give up any and everything for Christ don't just get richer, so what is he talking about here? A hundredfold... "You'll have more of all that stuff in this life," he says.

We don't have time to turn there, but I think the best picture of it is at the end of Acts, chapter 4, where the church is just being born and the persecution of believers is heating up immensely. It says there, at the end of chapter 4, that everybody in the church just started selling all their stuff off and bringing it to the church because they had to take care of each other.

I think that's what Jesus has in mind when he's saying this. "Whatever you have to sacrifice to follow me and for the sake of the gospel is worth it, because ultimately, all the brothers and sisters in Christ are your family and everything we have becomes each other's. We belong to one another."

Ultimately, it says, at the end of Acts, chapter 4, there was no one who had need amongst them, because they came together and sacrificed whatever it took so they could be faithful to Jesus and keep spreading the gospel. I think that's what Jesus is saying here. The return would be a hundredfold. Wow! That's what we're called to invite people to. That's what Global Outreach Week is all about. It's about a better sacrifice.

F. *A better suffering.* There are so many reasons why we suffer in this life. Some of them are natural reasons why we suffer. A world fallen and broken by sin has everything from disease, natural disasters, pain, to loss of loved ones. We also suffer because of evil things done by evil people. We also suffer because of the dumb choices we make, right? The source of most of our suffering and struggle is because of decisions we're making that aren't good.

There's one more source of suffering in our lives that's a better suffering than all of those, and it's in verse 30. You might have missed it. It says we will **"...receive a hundredfold now in this**

time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life." I read that and I said, "With persecutions? Wow!" I mean, that just kind of came out of nowhere, didn't it? "You're going to receive a hundredfold..." and at the end of the list is persecutions! That's an inviting gospel, right?

A life of following Jesus is a call to willingly suffer for the sake of the gospel, and that's a whole different category of suffering, isn't it? It's the category that's most like Jesus. He's saying, "Come follow me. Let go of whatever you have to do to follow me, because following me will be something far better than not following me, including the suffering. Your suffering will have purpose, power, and meaning. Your suffering won't be wasted." He doesn't flinch. He doesn't apologize. He just says it.

G. *A better reward.* He calls us to be willing to suffer for the rejection, ridicule, and losses, whatever they may be, for the sake of the gospel and for the sake of following him, because there will be a better reward. That's the last sentence in his statement here. It's a reward that this world cannot comprehend.

Jesus says, in verse 31, the farther down the list of great people the world keeps pushing followers of Jesus, the farther up that list in heaven God keeps pushing us. He says here, "**But many who are first** [in this world] **will be last, and the last first.**" He knows in this world, we're not going to be first, ever. We will lose. We will sacrifice. We will suffer.

Yet he said, "All of you who are last in this life are going to be first in the next one." That's the reward, and that's what this is all about. This is to remind us that we're inviting people to a far greater reward.

There are two challenges for us this morning that I pray you will take to heart. The first challenge I want to give you today, at the conclusion of our Global Outreach Week, is to *give to Global Outreach*. Inside your bulletins is a little card, and on the back side is a way for you to express a way to give.

The goal is that we would be a people who are willing to live a better sacrifice, to give for the sake of the gospel, for the sake of others to be invited to something far better. The goal is to have 100 percent of us look at this card and say, "Okay, I'm part of this story." I'm inviting all of us to take this home this week.

I'm not even going to ask you to do it right here but to take it home, bring it back next Sunday, and drop it in the offering, to look at your life and sacrifice and say, "I want to sacrifice. I need to be involved. I want to give so that the gospel keeps going." That little card is just an expression of that. Just drop it in next week. Pray about it. I do pray that all of us give. It's a better sacrifice. If it has to be one dollar a week, that's better than no dollars a week to give.

The second challenge is to *go*. Every year, 200-300 people in our church get up and go on what we call a Global Encounter Trip, a 10- to 12-day trip somewhere in the world where we take the gospel.

These aren't just random places. We don't just put you on a plane and say, "Hey, good luck when you get there. Call us if you need us." We go to places in the world where we have partners on the ground, our missionaries, our global partners. We link arms with them and we serve the gospel to the people in those parts of the world that we're giving to.

We have 14 trips next year. Half of them are already full, but there are ones starting next summer and fall that still have room in them. I want to challenge you, hundreds of you, to say, "Okay, maybe it's time for me to think about this. I've never done that before." I'm asking you to sacrifice 10-12 days of your life, of your year, of your vacation, whatever it takes, to go on a team with people here at the church.

On Sunday, November 12, at 2:00 there's an information meeting for you to say, "Hey, I'm not sure what trip I would work best on. I don't know what this is all about, but I'm open to hearing more." It's a one-hour meeting where you can ask questions and just listen. What do you need to do to prepare to go on one of these trips? How do you figure out what trip would best fit who you are? We're looking for a couple hundred more of you to go in 2018, those of you who have not gone before. That brings it a lot closer to home, doesn't it?

The good news is we're seeing the gospel gain traction in places of the world we never dreamed it would be, 5-10 years ago as a church. God is leading, providing, showing, and linking us to partners on the ground there where we are seeing amazing things happen. You need to be a part of it.

As I go back to what I said at the very beginning, if we don't see ourselves in this story, sadly, I think we're destined to just a lukewarm spirituality. I don't want that for you and I certainly don't want that for our church, so would you bow your heads just for a minute before we dismiss?

Father, I pray that today would be much more intense and serious in our hearts than we ever thought it might be. I pray, God, that you would open our hearts, wallets, and calendars to give and to go. God, may this be a church that never stops inviting people to something far better! I pray, God, for all of us, that we would be inviting the people who are right around us every day, that we would start right there, that we would listen, know their hearts, and learn from this rich young ruler what Jesus offers that is so much better. I pray this in his name, amen.

If there's any way we can pray with you before you go home today... Maybe you're going through something really heavy. We would love to pray with you. If you would like to know what it means to have Jesus as your Savior and Lord and to take that step of faith and surrender, we'd love to talk to you about that as well before you go. These people right up here would be glad to talk to you and pray with you.

God bless you. We'll see you next Sunday.