

I consider my life...

CCC Reach One More finale

November 19, 2023

## Introduction –

Today is a big day in the life of our church. It is a day that we resubmit our lives to the Lordship of Jesus and commit to our role in the next chapter of CCC. If you are new, we are in a climactic week! It is not a normal week at CCC. It is a week we have been preparing for for 2 years. We have been praying it up and planning for six months and preaching for five weeks and this is the week that we bring our commitments.

Today, most of us will identify our one more. And today, we will make our financial commitments to reach one more. Now, we are not the first to commit today. Actually, our students went first. About 200 middle school and high school students said they were going to put Jesus first at their high school retreat and Sunday evening gathering by their willingness to share their faith and give.

And, 10 days ago we had an advance prayer and commitment night where hundreds of adults – including your elders and staff – committed to this mission. Here is what some of them had to say:

Video of people who already committed

Kurtis Kammerer

**5 Minutes - Kurtis Kammerer – I can't believe we get to do this.**

- If a church told me they were going to reach 1000 kids through sports... I would say “your church has an awesome vision. That is a great way to reach people.”
- If a church told me they were going to create a Counseling center with 100 counselors in 25 locations....
- Reach 5 unreached people groups in Green City
- Plant 27 church plants in places that have no churches
- Etc.- whatever you are passionate about.
- But if you told me your church was doing ALL of that, I'd say you are crazy! But if this goes well, we get to do all of that! I can't believe we get to do this. If there is anything, any initiative, any giving moment that is worth it, this one is.

Thanks Kurtis. We are at a unique time in our church. Our building is built and renovated. We are debt free, so we are not raising any money for past spending. Our church is 102 years old, but still red hot and on mission. And it means we can do something that churches rarely get to do – allocate a large portion of our vision initiative to the ministry – not infrastructure or new buildings – but direct to reaching people. I had an astute donor ask what percentage of our giving in this initiative goes to administrative overhead – 20% is the industry standard. For us – 2%. Plus 23% to places that will help us get the mission done – like fields or the student center. And 75% straight to the mission of reaching one more. Most church campaigns are 90% buildings a 10% mission, but we get the opposite!

This creates a unique opportunity for commitments to generosity, but first, we must commit ourselves to Jesus. Acts 20. Turn there in your Bibles and we are going to look at it.

**Key Text:** Acts 20 esp v. 24

17 From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. 18 When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia..."

Backdrop of Ephesus – Paul spent two years there, more than any other church plant. He had friends there. The church was well developed with trusted elders. Apollos, Priscilla and Aquilla all taught there. And it was the regional church in the port city that was the gateway to six other churches that combined become the seven churches of revelation. Paul, knowing his future of persecution, wanted to stop by one last time.

MAP – Where Paul went after this – Jerusalem, Caesarea Maritima, Rome (off screen) to live and die...

Paul was delivering a gift. The Jerusalem church was in famine and he had money from Phillipi. But he anticipated getting imprisoned...and maybe worse. We don't know if this was his master plan, but from prison, he appealed his legal case to Caesar and got a free trip in the brig of a roman vessel to Rome to tell Caesar about Jesus. But looking forward to that, this is what he says to the Ephesian elders and it is our key verse for the day.

22 "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. 23 I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. 24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.

25 "Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. 26 Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. 27 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

I am coming to say goodbye and tell you what life is all about in just a couple of verses. You may never see me again. But here is what you need to know. This is the nut of it all, the secret of life according to the Apostle Paul:

24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace

- I consider my life worth nothing. This should not be a surprise for a Christian. Paul considers his life worth nothing. Because when Jesus, who died for you and me, when he calls us, he calls us to die with him. It is the principle of death and life. "If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross – i.e. go to his death – and follow me." Jesus also said "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it never brings life." And Paul said "I am crucified with Christ, therefore I no longer live. Jesus now lives in me." This is not just emotive talk, this is the basis of everything.
- So, when we come to Jesus, we do not just add "religion" onto the American lifestyle so that we have eternal fire insurance, nope. We come to Jesus and say "all my time, all my effort, all my

love, all my money, all my relationships, all my kids, all my EVERYTHING... belongs to you. "I count my life worth nothing to me... except that I might..."

- Finish the race, Complete the task the Lord Jesus has given
  - One life to live, one race to run and what is the task?
- Testifying to God's grace. The task of testifying to God's grace. Letting everybody know – here there and everywhere that God loves them! That God is on your side! That God is so crazy about you that he sent his son to visit! That He is so nuts about you that he would rather die than live without you! We have to get that mission to every boy, every girl, every woman and every man in Omaha. This is the 'everything' button.

Friends, there is nothing better than this! To give your life in testimony to God's grace. For you to be a fragrant aroma of the life of Christ to everyone around you. For your world to be the world of Jesus incarnate – being "Jesus in the neighborhood." Not obnoxious, not offensive. Just authentic in who you are in Jesus and loving the people around you.

You know, I think we will get to the end of our lives and take an inventory and ask "What was REALLY worth doing?"

- Investing in my kids and grandkids
- What I did for the kingdom of God – in witness, in service, in giving

I am NOT going to say – ya know, that Ford Taurus I drove back in 2008, that was really living! We are not going to say – that trophy I won in the racquetball championship... man, that was the pinnacle of life. OR.. I watched every episode of every season of "The Office" – man, that was time well spent!

You know, it is crazy how we spend time and money on SMALL things in this world!

We are so easily distracted by SMALL things! I do. You all know I love my lawn to be green – with minimal brown patches and diagonal stripey lines from the mower. Now, that isn't evil, it is just too small. Say "Too small!" I like getting a crossfit bod – not that I am succeeding, but I work hard at my failure. It isn't evil, it is just Too Small! I ask God that my body will be healthy and my kids will be safe and those are good things, but just "TOO SMALL". And Jesus tells us the same thing. In fact, he points out two things that are just too small. Food and clothing. Matthew 6

**"So, do not worry saying what will we eat or what will we drink or what will we wear? For the pagans run after these things and your heavenly Father knows you need them. But Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you as well!"** In other words, don't sweat the small stuff. Give EVERYTHING to the kingdom and the small stuff comes as a side bonus.

Guys, it is TOO SMALL of a thing for us to have a debt free facility and cool programs for our kids. We must also reach thousands of people with the good news testifying to God's grace.

It is TOO SMALL of a thing to say – we did that cool hospital sixteen years ago. Our mission is done. We must also bring the gospel to one more people group and one more until every group is reached!

It is TOO SMALL of a thing to live in a city with a church on every corner. We must also plant churches in cities that have no churches!!!

It is TOO SMALL a thing to take care of our own on the corner of Dodge and 680, we must also bring love and justice and grace to all of OMAHA - especially the kids – who don't have a CCC in their lives.

It is TOO SMALL of a thing to pray that our children be kept safe, we must pray that God would make them dangerous to the powers of darkness!

And it is TOO SMALL of a thing for us to keep our own lives, our own money, our own time to ourselves. It is TOO SMALL of a thing to keep the gospel to ourselves, It is TOO SMALL of a thing to enjoy comfortable churchianity while the world heads to a Christless eternity – we must not stop praying, serving, giving and leading until every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus is LORD, to the glory of God the father.

**We give ourselves first to Jesus, and then to his mission.** And that is why moments like this are necessary for our discipleship journey. They make us ask “What am I living for? The American dream? My own comfort? Living pain free? Entertainment and travel?” Or am I living for the gospel. Am I willing to rearrange my schedule to reach one more? Am I willing to rearrange my finances to make God first?

### Reflection Time

Time to fill out the card

- Grab one from online [cccomaha.info](http://cccomaha.info) – reach one more subdomain – cccomaha.org

There are only two boxes that really matter. The top box and the bottom box. The **top box** is your “One More.” This is one person who you want to reach with the good news of Jesus. One person who you will commit to pray for every day, to love on, to witness to and to invite to CCC when the time is right. It is the ‘first person on your mind’ as you think about Jesus’ dream to reach the world – ONE life at a time. Write their name at the top. Our prayer is that 100% of CCC people will commit to pray for their “ONE”.

The other box we want to ask you to fill out is this **bottom box** here. Our goal and prayer is that 100% of us will commit to Reach One More through our generosity. And as you look down at this bottom box before you make your final commitment, ask yourself that question: Does this commitment truly reflect that I am declaring that Jesus is first above all else? Is this commitment worthy of Jesus commission to reach one more here, there and Everywhere? It is Generous, Joyful and Sacrificial?

So, let me walk through this card with you, and let this be a guide to you as you think and pray through your commitment. Remember this includes a 13 month window from Dec 1 2023 to Dec 31, 2024.

The **top generosity box** says: What I/we normally give in thirteen months. This is where you're going to include what your typical giving is in a year plus one December. The Reach One More initiative includes our TOTAL giving, not just our extra or expanded giving, so we want to begin this journey by CELEBRATING what you are already doing in generosity. This amount matters! For some, this first box may be a monthly gift times 13. For others, you might give annually in December. That is great. Include both December of 2023 and December of 2024. Others might not have a number in it yet. And that is ok. You are beginning your giving journey for the first time through this initiative, and I want to affirm this very important step of faith.

The **second box** says: My/our expanded annual generosity for Reach One More. We want you to spend time praying and asking God, “how are you asking me to GROW and EXPAND so that I am truly giving my first and best in the area of my generosity?” Wrestle and ask the Lord the tough questions. Is my giving truly governing my spending and my saving? Or does my spending and my saving govern and direct my giving? Be as honest as you can as you seek to reflect here in this box the way in which God is asking you to EXPAND your generosity during this season.

Next is a **very important box** -- the Gifts from Stored Resources box.. Stored resources are the things that you HAVE currently. That God has already provided for you. For some of us, it might mean something like cash savings, retirement accounts, property, or stock. For others it is something you own, but plan to sell - I know many of you have been wrestling with that this month and some have said they are selling a personal item, or a closet full, or a car or an RV or a house for this. Amazing. Whatever Jesus has led you to give from the money, stocks or stuff you already have, put it in this box.

Finally, add everything together **at the bottom**, and this is your total thirteen month “Reach One More” commitment amount. Again, ask the Lord: “Does this commitment truly reflect you are the ONE that I worship and I am orienting my other priorities around YOU and not letting my pre-determined priorities affect what I will give to you? Is this truly demonstrating you are my king and my priority?”

Then proudly and confidently fill out the info box at the bottom so you can commit boldly to this initiative. This helps us as a church help keep you accountable in your commitment and help celebrate your progress with you. It is not a legal document, but rather it is a covenant with God and with your church. I know Kelle and I have wrestled through this and despite the fact that we are in the most expensive phase of life, God is leading us to give our most significant 13 month commitment we have ever made – we believe in it that much.

**Music starts here:** I am going to give you some time to reflect now. For some, you still need a few moments to pray through your commitment or talk to your spouse. Use your time for that. Some of you know the dollar amount already. You came ready to give. I want to encourage you to use this time to reflect on how good Jesus is. How he came from heaven to earth for you. How he told us about eternal life. How he died to take your place so you could be forgiven. How he rose that one day you might rise to be with him. And give your life to him once again – tell him he is your king. You are his kid. Everything you are and have belongs to him.

And for everyone here, I have a special bonus. I want you to write the name of your one more on the light bulb. I’ll tell you more later. But for now, take these four minutes to reflect, fill out your card and write your one more on the bulb.

#### **Four minutes reflection with music**

About five years ago, after we did our Beyond Belief campaign, we wrote down names of people who we wanted to reach. But we wrote them on the floor of this room. On the concrete. A few weeks ago, Kat Hope Jones had her friend. It took five years – but her friend came. And she brought the friend to ‘the spot’ and pulled out a picture of her name written on the floor and the prayers given for years. And there was hugging and joy.

These light bulbs are similar. Today, we are going to put them in the sockets on stage. Don’t worry, electricity is off! And our prayer is that the light of the world, Jesus himself, will fill your friends. And

that in so doing, they will become the light of the world! And after you put it in, we will hang them in the hallway and you can come, when God answers your prayer – and show them the bulb that is their name and your prayer. “I prayed for this day.”

“If you are joining us online today you can come in anytime and write the name of your “One More” on a light bulb, or we can help you do that today. If you simply Text your name and the name of your “One More” to (402) 915-3212 we will have someone in a Yellow Shirt write down the name of your “One More” and put it on the wall for you. So anyone you see with a yellow shirt represents someone joining with us online today and their commitment to Reach One More.”

And now, we are going to come and bring the cards and lightbulbs forward. This is a holy moment, but let me help with logistics to help the Holy moment to flow well. Everything will move across the stage this way... so everything in the seats moves that way. Got it? Balcony – that way to this staircase and down. Main floor to this staircase and up. And while we make commitments, we will worship Jesus! The band will be playing. And everyone not on stage can sing!

When you get on stage... three things 1. Drop your card in a reach one more box. 2. Screw in your lightbulb and 3. Grab a card that you can take with to put in your wallet or phone or mirror to remind you of your person you are committed to reach. Go ahead and sing now and come to these stairs only. There is plenty of time, so no rush to get in a long line. Come as the spirit prompts you.

Prayer of commitment

**Three songs**

**Close:**