

Romans #22 - Predestination Problems Uncaring?

- Well, howdy guys, we're in Romans chapter 10. We're going through a great book of the Bible. One of the most significant pieces of literature, honestly in the history of the world written by one of the world's most brilliant minds, a man named Paul. And we've been in Romans nine, 10. And just to catch you up where we find ourselves at the end of Romans 10 today. He's answering this question, how do we start or enjoy a relationship with God? So God's in heaven, we're on earth. God's Holy we're sinful, God's good we're bad because of sin, we die. What happens after we die? How do we go to heaven and be with God? Who makes that decision? Who makes that choice? That's kind of the big concept that he's unpacking in Romans nine and 10. And there are basically three options. Maybe Satan decides who goes to heaven. If so, that's bad for us 'cause none of us are gonna make it. The other option is maybe we choose. Maybe some of us get to choose whether or not we go to heaven. He already told us in Romans three, 10, and 11 no one seeks God, no one finds God, no one chooses God. So, those two options were all kindling. Good news, there is the third option. God could make the choice who goes to heaven. And the point is that none of us have the right to go to heaven, but God in His love and His grace chooses or predestines or elects some of us into this loving, eternal relationship with Him. Now in saying all of this, Paul understands we're gonna have some questions and or objections. Wait a minute, if God chooses us and we don't choose Him, isn't that loving? Is that fair, is that right? I got a lot of questions. So he answers five potential objections in questions in Romans chapter nine and 10. We're dealing with number five today and the basic question is about God being uncaring. And the point is if God chooses some people but not all people and if God has everything under control if He's got everything locked down, He knows who He's gonna save and how the future's gonna play out. Why should we care? Why should we try? Why should we pray? Why should we give? If God's got everything under control then our lives are sort of meaningless purposeless and pointless. That's kind of the objection or question. And that's not the true case that your lives matter, my life matters, our service to God matters and it's all part of God's plan. But I'll give you one simple example of this sort of mentality. I'm 50 and I've been a senior pastor 25 years. And the first church that we planted I was 25 years of age. And I pulled together the original core group. This is a group of people that you're hoping wanna do what you're asking them to do. And you hope that they're nice and you hope that it works out, but you just don't know. So you pull them together and you cast your vision. I was 25 and I wrote out the vision. It was over 40 points. Here's 40 big things we're gonna do to change the world. And there was like 30 people. So I had more points than people. It was kind of a big vision. And they're all looking at me like that's a lot right there. And so after the meeting, most of my core group left and they all went outside to smoke cigarettes 'cause they're all punk rock kids, they had no money or ambition. There was one guy, however did come up and he wanted to talk to me. He was like, "I wanna talk to you about your vision." I was like, "Okay, good." Here's my guy, he's probably gonna write a million dollar check, give his life to Christ and he'll read a book about me. This will be awesome. This sturdy comes up and what he says is, "I didn't like your list." I was like, really, the one guy wanted to talk to me, he came up to discourage me. He was a religious guy. I said, "Well, what's wrong with my list?" He said, "First of all, it's too long. That's

a lot of things." I was like, "Well, I know I'm 25, like I got a 50 year run. I'm trying to put some stuff on the to-do list, you know?" And he said, "Plus it demonstrates a lack of faith in God." I was like, "What do you mean?" He's like, "Oh, plant a church and write books and do this and do that." He's like, he said, "It just shows me you don't really trust God." I was like, "What do you mean I don't trust God I've got a whole list of stuff?" He's like, "No, no, no, if you trusted God you wouldn't have a list, you wouldn't need to do all this. You'd just trust God to work it out. If God wants to save people, He'll save people. If God wants to get stuff done, He'll get stuff done. He doesn't need you." Kind of rebuked me. And so I thought, okay, great. Maybe I don't trust God. Should I have a plan? Should I be ambitious? Should I be aggressive? Should I be asking other people to join what I believe God has called me to do? And I came to the conclusion yeah, no, I do trust God. I trust that God saved me. I trust that God called me. I trust that God has a great future and a destiny that I can invite other people to pursue with me together. I trust God for all of this. That's why I'm gonna get busy and I'm gonna stay active and I'm gonna move forward. But his was an excuse. And sometimes when you hear that God is in charge that God is in control, that God's got this, it can lead to an attitude of laziness or indifference. It can even lead to a life of sort of passivity and there's an excuse for. Well, I just trust God as if people who are getting up and going to work didn't and they trust God too. So this is the big idea that he's gonna unpack. And here's the question that he answers. In Romans 10, 14 through 17. Why should we evangelize? Why should we talk to non-Christians about Jesus if they're predestined, if Jesus is gonna save who He wants to save, why do we need to be involved? And here's how he begins. How then will they call on whom they have not believed? Like, how do you have a relationship with somebody you never heard of? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have not heard? They can't know about Jesus unless we tell them about Jesus and they can't meet Jesus unless we talk to them about Jesus. And how are they to hear without someone preaching? So we need to talk to people or we get to talk to people, I should say, about Jesus and how are they to preach unless they are sent. So God's gonna send you to talk to some people about Jesus as it is written 'cause the Old Testament how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. But they have not all obeyed the gospel for Isaiah says, Lord, 700 years before Jesus walked the earth. Lord, who has believed what he has heard for us? So faith comes from hearing and hearing through the words of Christ. Let me summarize this for you. So in the ancient world, there were kingdoms and over every kingdom was a king. And sometimes the king would have a really good message, a message of good news, that's what gospel means, to get out to the kingdom to encourage or to unify or to instruct all of the people. And in that day they would send out a messenger or a herald. They would be sent with a message from the king to the kingdom. And so what he's saying here is Jesus is our King and heaven is our kingdom and the world needs to hear some really good news. And the good news is about Jesus. That there is a God, His name is Jesus. He created us and our planet, His name is Jesus. We are loved by Him, His name is Jesus. We've sinned against Him, His name is Jesus. He still had a heart for us even when we didn't have a heart for Him and His name is Jesus. And He came on a rescue mission to our planet and His name is Jesus, and you're gonna see a theme here. And then He lived without any sin, a perfect life. The only perfect human life ever lived on the earth. And His name is Jesus. And we hated Him and we killed Him and we crucified Him and His name is Jesus. And He rose from death and in so doing He

forgives our sin and He conquers our enemy of death and His name is Jesus. And He ascended into heaven where He rules and reigns and He's alive right now and His name is Jesus. And He's coming again to judge the living and the dead. And if you belong to Him, you're going to heaven and if not, you're going to hell and His name is, His name is Jesus.

- [Congregants] Jesus.

- And so, you know, the message is about our King. And the good news is that our King forgives, and our King pursues, and our King loves and our King saves and our King is a really good King and you really do need to know this King. And so we go out and we tell people about Jesus. That's what missions in ministry is it's talking about Jesus. In the same way, that we have human relationships this is how people build their relationship with God. So I'll give you an example. At the age of 17, I saw this cute blonde gal named Grace. She's now my wife is still cute, still blonde. So I saw her at 17 and I didn't know her but I knew a gal who knew her. So what was I hoping? That the gal that knew her and knew me would introduce me to her. That's what I was hoping and it worked out. That's why she has my last name today. This all worked out really well. So the point was, she had a friend and I had a friend and we didn't know each other but we had a friend in common and the friend introduced us so that we can start our relationship. If you know Jesus and you know someone and they don't know Jesus, what he calls preaching is talking to them about Jesus. It's introducing them to Jesus so that they can begin that relationship. So then the question is how does someone become a Christian? For those of you who are not Christians this is how you become a Christian. For those of you who are Christians this is how you help other people meet Jesus. And he says, it's a threefold process. Hearing, believing, and calling. Hearing, he says, is that someone has to be sent to talk to them or preach to them, or discuss with them who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. And so there are different ways to do this. How many of you you're really good one-on-one? You're like a counselor. You meet for coffee. You ask questions. You listen, you can talk to people one-on-one, you're really good talking to people one-on-one about Jesus. How many of you, that's kind of your style? How many of you, you're better in a small group? There's 10, 12, 15 people, you ask questions and listen and you can coordinate dialogue. How many of you that's you? Just so you know, I can't do either of those. I just preach, I just do this. Somebody asked me one time, they're like, "Can we have a counseling session?" No, but we can meet and I can preach for an hour and then closing prayer 'cause I only got one, I do one thing. I'm a band with one song. Like if it's counseling, you get a sermon. If it's a small group, you get a sermon. If it's a big group, you get a sermon. Guess what you're getting? You're getting a sermon, that's what you're get. I do monologue, I don't do dialogue. I just don't. I would never think to ask a question. I'm too busy talking. So, I'd be a horrible counselor and small group leaders. Some of you are really good at that. How many of you are more like me? You like to be in a group and you like them to be quiet. How many of you you would like it more formal? Like there's a class, they're all sitting down, you're standing up, you're saying things and they're writing them down. How many of you that's you? Okay. You're arrogant. But I can't judge you 'cause I'm just like you. So we all have different ways that we can talk to people about Jesus and different people benefit from different styles and different personalities, and God's very gracious to use us all.

The point is just to simply tell people, talk to people about Jesus so they can hear but then they need to believe. So it's not just enough to hear, he says, then they need to believe that who Jesus is. He's God, Savior, King and Christ, and they need to receive that information as something that they agree with. And then lastly, this third step, he says they need to call on the name of the Lord. And so if you're here you need to know that you need to call on the name of the Lord. If you're not a Christian, the same way that you begin any relationship is you invite that person to be in relationship with you. So it is with the Lord Jesus. So at the age of 19, I called for the first time on the Lord, Jesus. I was like, Jesus, I'm a sinner, you're a Savior. I've heard about you. I believe in you. I'm now calling on you. In the same way, when I wanted to first get to know Grace and begin a relationship with her, I literally called her. And that's where we started. When you call on the Lord that's where the relationship starts. And as you're calling on the Lord you're inviting Him into your life and you're agreeing with Him that He now gets to be in charge of your life. And all three of these are important. Ultimately, it's not enough just to hear. Jesus had 12 disciples. All 12 of them heard Him preach and teach but one of them it benefited him in no way. What was that guy's name? It was Judas. He heard the same thing as the other 11 but he didn't believe or call. It's not just enough to hear and believe. If you don't call it doesn't benefit you. In the New Testament, there's four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And they tell the life story of Jesus. And as you look at people interacting with Jesus they have all kinds of opinions of Him. Some say, He's a prophet, He's a Holy man. He's a liar, He's a conman. He's a good guy, He's a bad guy. Everybody's got a different opinion about who Jesus is. The one group that tends to get it right most often are the demons. They get it right more than the disciples. See, they've heard about Jesus and they believe in Him but they've not called on Him. They know who He is, but they don't love who He is. So they'll say you're the Christ, you're the Holy One, you're God, you're Messiah, you're Savior. So they've heard about Him and they know who He is but they don't have a relationship with Him because they haven't turned from sin, trusted in Him invited Him to be their Savior and Lord. The point is, some of you have heard about Jesus but have you believed and called on Him? Some of you have been in church or ministry or youth group or Christian school or Christian family. You've heard a lot. You may even know some true things about Jesus. You may know some Bible stories, some historical facts some truisms about Jesus Christ. That's great, that's step one, step two. Have you crossed the finish line and begun the relationship, step three, and called on the name of the Lord? We do this in prayer and we do this together collectively in song when we sing we're calling on the Lord. So let me just say this. If you have never called on the name of the Lord, you need to do that. And that's where you begin your relationship with Jesus Christ. And you do this either vocally or in your heart or in your mind, He can read your thoughts, He knows your heart. And it's simply saying, I hear about you, Lord Jesus and I believe that you are God and Savior. And I am calling on you to forgive me of my sin. And I'm inviting you to have this new relationship with me so that I can have this relationship with you. And if you've never done that, I would even encourage you you could do that right now. That Jesus is alive and well, He hears your longings. He knows your thoughts. And if you call on Him, I promise you that He will answer yes, that He will love you, that He will save you, that He will forgive you, that He will change you. And how many of you would testify that this is your story, that you heard about Jesus, that you believed in Jesus and you called on Jesus and Jesus came and changed your life, amen.

- [Congregants] Amen.

- That's why we're here. That's what it's all about. That's what it's all about. Let me, let me say one other thing for those of you who are younger. He calls the gospel here the good news and he uses the language of gospel, that's what gospel means. If you are younger, you have been lied to and deceived in large part. And that is that the gospel is something that we do rather than something that we tell about what Jesus did. Oftentimes there is an old church leader named Saint Francis of Assisi who is falsely quoted. And he has this statement that has been attributed to him. That is fake news, he never said it. And it is, we should preach the gospel at all times and use words only when necessary. Okay? He didn't say that he was a preacher. He didn't believe that. But the point is some young Christians would say, well, we don't need to just tell everybody about Jesus. We just need to love people. We need to serve people. We need to do good works and social justice. And we just need to bless people. No, no, no, good works will help people but only good news will save people. And the gospel is nothing that we can show because it's not about us, it's about Jesus. It's not about what we do for others, it's about what He does for us. So the gospel is this Jesus Christ is God. He lived without sin. He died on the cross for your sin. He rose from the dead to conquer death and forgive sin that He is the way the truth and the life, and unless you repent of sin or turn from sin and trust in Him, you do not have eternal life. I can't show you that by making a sandwich. I can't show you that by digging a well. I can't show you that by organizing a protest. None of those things will get you to the point that you understand who Jesus is and what Jesus does. To understand who Jesus is and what Jesus does, it takes verbal explanation. Somebody's got to articulate this. And what happens with cowardly Christianity, they just wanna do good things but they don't wanna say hard things. And let me say this, Jesus got crucified not because of what He did but because of what He said. He fed people who were hungry, He healed people who were sick and He hung out with children and nobody crucified Him for that. When He said that they were sinful and He was God that's when He got in trouble. And the reason that a lot of cowardly Christians don't talk about Jesus is we don't wanna get in the kind of trouble that He did. And let me tell you, if you talk about Jesus you're gonna get yourself in some trouble but it's good trouble to get in. Okay? And so it's being willing to have the awkward conversation with people about Jesus. And while everybody else is coming out of the closet God's people need to have that same kind of courage. Okay? So, how many of you, your family, your friends, okay? So here's what we're doing now. We record the Saturday night, not the Sunday morning so I'll say whatever I want. Okay? It's gonna get worse. So if you've not been offended, just wait. I'll get to you, I'm busy. Okay, so. How many people in your life don't know that you know Jesus? 'Cause you've just, you just like, I don't like the awkwardness. Just have the awkward conversation 'cause it's a lot better to have an awkward conversation for a moment than for them not to have the opportunity to hear about the Lord Jesus. And I tell you guys, I do this all the time. Like, every time I jump on a plane I know it's gonna be an awkward conversation. I sit down, they're like, what are you doing? I'm like, here we go. I am a Bible preacher for the Lord, Jesus Christ. Ding, I need a new seat. That's what they always do. But let's just have the conversation. So, that's how God saves. And then how does God send? 'Cause God's not just in charge of who is saved but who is sent

to be part of the process of saving them. Okay, so my first question would be uses the language of sending and this is about, sometimes we use this for missions and missionaries. There are people all around the world that don't know Jesus but Jesus knows them and they don't love Jesus but Jesus loves them, so He sends us to introduce them to Him. This is what missions is. Who has God called you to support? There are people who are missionaries they're on the front lines, we can be on the supply line. We pray for them. We fund them. We support them. And because of their work more people are learning about Jesus and as a result Christianity is the most global, diverse, multicultural, bilingual movement of any sort or kind in the history of the world. The Bible is the most translated book. Christians are creating entire written languages and literacy so that people who don't know Jesus can read the Bible and learn about Jesus. And so you and I, we need to always remember that we're invited to be part of the supply line to the frontline. For our family, we sponsor kids internationally. We sponsor missionaries. We sponsor missions organizations, Bible translations. There's a portion of our budget that we've just always given away to help those who are on the front line. In addition to supporting those who are sent my question is where's God sent you? Okay? Wherever you are, if you're a Christian, you've been sent there by God. So when you go to work, the question is okay, who can I talk to, pray for, serve? When you go to the grocery store, when you go to the coffee shop, when you go to the dormitory when you drop your kids off at little league or your grandkids, the point is always, okay, I must have been sent here. There's probably someone here that doesn't know Jesus and I could talk to them about Jesus. Now some of you have a hard time having this conversation. Let me tell you the easiest way to get it started. Just ask people, well, first of all, just love them and care and get to know them and then ask if there's anything or anyone you could pray for. Generally, people will give you an answer. I recently did this with an atheist. Dude's like, "I'm an atheist." I was like, "Is there anything I pray for?" He was like, "I'm an atheist." I was like, "Is there anything to pray for?" He was like, "Well sure, can't hurt." I mean, he's like all of a sudden a flare you know you're not, it can't hurt. I was like, "Actually it can hurt. It depends on what I pray for." But yeah, okay, you know, so. But even if they don't know Jesus most people don't mind having you pray for them, and it opens the conversation and then later on you can circle back up, I've been praying for you. How's that going? I want to check in. It's how to love and care for people and bring Jesus into the conversation. In addition, who has God given you a concern or a burden or a heart for? Some of you, you say, I'm not sure who I'm sent to. Well, who are you drawn to? How many of you, there's a group of people that you really have a heart for? How many of you love children? You just love them. My wife loves, loves, loves babies. That's why we had five. She loves babies. And my wife loves single mothers. So our whole life she's always been given groceries and money and help and cars to single mothers. That's she's got a heart. I've got a heart for men. So I just, I love to see men get the father's heart and love their wives and kids with the love of Jesus. That just means the world to me. One of my daughters she loves those who are Spanish-speaking. So she went and got her master's degree in Spanish and teaching English to speakers of other languages so that she could minister to those who were Spanish-speaking. One of my daughters, she's got a heart for the deaf community. So she's learned sign language and she's able to have conversations with people who otherwise she couldn't converse with. Who's God given you a heart for? How many of you love junior high kids? See, that's a miracle. That's a mi... I met someone who said that, I love junior high girls. I

was like, you're a unicorn. I heard about you, but I didn't know you were real. That's amazing. How many of you love high school kids? You love high school kids. Some people love senior citizens and those who are in hospice and on their death bed. And they go there to share Jesus with them at their last hour or minutes. Some of you have a heart for different people groups. Wherever you have a heart that could be the beginning of your calling and God sending you. Okay? This is not something that we have to do it's something that we get to do. And then the question is, how can you help them learn about Jesus? This can be talking with them, praying with them, sending them a podcast, inviting them to church so that I can offend them and then you could apologize and have a conversation, stuff like that. This is just what ministry is. This is how ministry works. And ultimately, sometimes when we hear that God is sovereign over that He's in authority in charge over the outcome, we can overlook the fact that He's not only in charge of the ends but the means. Not just who meets Jesus but who is sent to be part of the process that they would meet Jesus. And so the apostle Paul demonstrates this for us. He is a man who believes that God saves people but it causes him to be very bold and active. He, in course of 10 years walks upwards of 20 miles a day. He preaches a heated message. He starts riots. He is beaten repeatedly. He is arrested and he spends time in jail. He's not a guy who's home on the couch saying, God's got this. He's the guy who gets out of the couch and says, God's got me and God sent me and God's got this so I wanna be a part of it. Okay. So that leads to the next point. If people are not seeking God, how does this work? Well, God is seeking people. Let me just preface this. How many of you have heard people are seeking God, they're on their spiritual quest. They're not. People aren't seeking God they're seeking the blessings that God gives but not God. You ask somebody that you wanna be healed? Yup, I do. Would you like to see an angel? Absolutely, I would love to see two angels preferably with some wings, I'd love to see that. Would you love to see a dead guy rise? Depends on which guy. Yeah, there's all kinds of stuff that we would like to see God do. But if you ask people, do you want to turn from sin, repent to God, have a change of heart, mind and life and Jesus be your boss telling you what to do? No, I just, I just wanna see the angel. What we want is we want what God gives we don't love who God is. And so the point is not that we're looking for God that God is looking for us because let me tell you this, God's not lost. I had a guy recently tell me I found God, I was like, really? How did He get lost? Like he wake up one day and he's like, Oh, gosh, I thought I was in Florida. I mean, you know. God's not lost, we are. God didn't wander away, we did. Jesus says I came to seek and save the lost. We're the lost, He's the one who seeks the lost. Here's how Paul articulates it. But ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have. He says for their voice has gone out to all the earth and their words to the end of the world. But I asked did Israel, God's people not understand? So a lot of Jewish people heard about Jesus not all the Jewish people love Jesus. He quotes Moses, first five books of the Old Testament says I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation with a foolish nation, that's us, I will make you angry. Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, he's quoting the Old Testament. I've been found by those who did not seek me. Well, if you have a relationship with God and you weren't looking for Him, it must mean that He was looking for you. I've shown myself to those who did not ask for me. But of Israel God's people He says, all day long I've held up my hands to a disobedient and a contrary people. Let me unpack this. First thing he tells us is that God's word needs to go out to the whole world. So the whole world needs God's word. This is how it works. And the point is

this that our God speaks, first and foremost with authority and power through His word. And as a result this is why I love preaching through books of the Bible. My hope and goal is to increase in you an appetite and desire to learn the Bible for yourself. I also wanna take away some of the fear or anxiety so that you have some measure of hopeful confidence that you can study and read it for yourself. And I love it. And I love what I get to do. And I thank you for the honor of being able to do it. And what's really cool for me is as God's word goes out from the Trinity Church, technology now allows this prophecy to come true and it goes out to the whole world. I mean, right now, just through all kinds of opportunities, Sirius XM, and pray.com and YouVersion, and different platforms and social media and Salem radio, millions of people a month are hearing God's word from the Trinity Church all around the world. In December alone, it was over 10 million sermons listened to on planet earth from the Trinity Church. And so, we're really committed to this. We're really committed to this. And we believe, and we know that as God's word goes up God does incredible things and we don't have a full accounting of that but we don't need to. God knows exactly what He's doing with the power of His word. He goes on to say that as God's word is taught it's not always understood. He uses the language, not understand. How many of you you've read something about and you're like, I don't know what that means. I don't get it. You know what, let me just say this. That's where we all start 'cause God's ways are not our ways and God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts, the scripture says, and the Bible says that we see a no in part. So we all start with, I don't understand. But you know what? Sometimes we just need to keep praying and learning. Sometimes we need to be humble enough to ask questions and do research. And sometimes when we explain God's word to someone and they don't understand it we don't need to take it personally. It's not that they're rejecting us or that they're stupid, it just may mean that they're in a process of learning and understanding. And if in opening the Bible some of it for you is hard to understand, don't feel bad. The guy who writes this, his name is Paul. There's another man named Peter wrote two books of the Bible, first and second Peter. He is the head of Jesus' disciples, spent three years being trained by Jesus. And he has this line about Paul. He says some things that Paul writes are quote, hard to understand. Peter wrote two books of the Bible and he's like, yeah, I was reading Paul and I'm like, what the heck? What are we talking about? What the head coverings, predestination, speaking in tongues? Was I predestined to wear head covering and speaking in tongues, what are we talking about? How many of you have read Paul and you're like, I don't, you know, I went to public school. That's big, I don't know. All right. Don't feel bad, just keep trying, you'll get there. He then says that sometimes people who have been with God for a while they tend to take God for granted. He talks about Israel. These are people who it was Christian believing, I should say, believing families for generations. How many of you, you know, your family has known the Lord for generations and for you, it's just kind of become not good news but a little bit of old news? Well, it used to be good news after a while becomes old news. And he says, then he started saving a new group of people and they got jealous. God's older saints got jealous of God's younger saints. The point is this that sometimes a new believer has an enthusiasm that an older believer should have but somehow has lost. I talked to a guy recently, he's like, Pastor Mark, you never guess what? I was like, he's like, I got forgiven. I said, yes, that's what Jesus does. I mean, that's our thing. You know, I guess this is not a shock. He's like, I didn't know you could be forgiven. I was like, why am I not that excited? 'Cause I'm

forgiven today too. Did I sin today? Yeah, like 15 minutes ago. So, I mean, you know, I should be as excited. And the point is sometimes you can get so familiar with God's presence in your life that you're no longer astonished by God's presence in your life. And what He says is I love these people for a long time and they kind of just stopped caring. And then I started loving these people and then these people got jealous and they realized what a good relationship they had. This is why it's important for those who are older believers to be with those who are newer believers. Okay, the worst thing you can do with all the old people is just sequester them into a grumpy old religious group. Okay? And sometimes the worst thing you can do is take all the enthusiastic new believers who have no idea what they're talking about, but they're very excited and to just leave them to themselves. Okay. The good thing is to put them together 'cause these people tend to have the sale and these people tend to have the rotter and together they can really get something done. Okay. Another thing that he's articulating here is that sometimes God saves people that we wish He wouldn't save. He says, I saved some people and he says my people got angry. That's what He's saying, He uses the word angry. Now let's just be honest. How many of you, when you hear that some people are going to hell, there's a certain list of people you're like, awesome. You're kinda excited about that let's just be honest, be honest, right? Don't name names. Right? But if they got saved, he'd be like, ah, dang it. Forever we're together? I was hoping they're gonna be on fire, you know. And what can happen is that we get so committed to our group, that if people get saved from the other group we're sort of frustrated, right. So let's just do this. Okay, we're in Scottsdale. Most of you are Republicans. Okay. Okay, so how about if revival broke out in the democratic party, somebody would be like, oh, okay. See, you're clapping 'cause you're in church but in your heart, you're lying. Okay. You're lying in your heart. Right now if a bunch of liberal blue state governors started going to church, you'd be like, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, they're faking it. Okay. But if God's heart is open toward a person or a group of people, we need to keep our heart open toward a person or a group of people. Okay? And the good news is that even if someone isn't seeking God, God could be seeking them and even if they're not calling on God, God could be calling for them. And the point is this, you never know. You just never know who God's working on. You never know who God's gonna save. I'll be honest. If I'm totally honest with you, I wouldn't have picked me. If I was God, I was like, I'm picking my team. Mark is not a draft pick. Okay? I wasn't seeking God, God was seeking me. I wasn't looking for God, God was looking for me. I wasn't calling for God, God was calling for me. For those of you who don't know my story. I was 17 years of age and I was sleeping with a pastor's daughter. Now that I'm a pastor with a daughter, I see this differently than I did at 17. If I'm totally honest. At the time I was like, this is fine. I'm like, this is not fine. Okay? And God just showed up in my life and He changed my life. I wasn't looking for Him, He was looking for me. How many of you, this is your story, God just showed up. He just showed up. And it was not that you deserved it, 'cause we don't and it's not because we're good but because He's good. And the point is this, if we think that God's grace is too gracious for them we may have overlooked how much we also need God's grace. And what He says is this that God's, His hand is open. That not everyone who hears about Jesus takes Him up on this offer for a relationship. When they're a strain in a relationship, the way you fix it is you keep your hand open. See, this is when we're enemies. This is when I'm inviting you into relationship. When God says that His hand is open what He's saying is that His heart is open, right? When

your heart closes, your hand closes. When your heart's open your hand's open. What He's saying is this that God throughout all of human history thus far has kept His hand open. There is a day when the Lord Jesus comes back to judge the living and the dead and that's the day of judgment. But until then His hand is open. So my question to you would be, who do you need to keep your hand open to and your heart open to? Just keep praying for them, keep loving them, keep talking to them about Jesus, keep trying. You can't save them but you can serve them and speak to them. And as long as there's breath in their lungs there's still a chance for their soul, right? That's what he's saying. Now in articulating all of this, the reason I tell you this is I wanna ultimately unburden you. If you can serve people and speak to people but only God can save people, I want the burden of their salvation off of you. I want the blessing of ministering to them still available to you. I'll give you an illustration. So I was talking to somebody not too long ago here at the church that Jesus loves them, they love Jesus. God showed up in their life, done some great things. They actually should be really happy. Like what God's done in their life is really awesome. But for some reason they haven't told their face. So they're always just sorta, they're always sorta sad. You know just know I'm sad. And I asked them, I was like, hey, Jesus showed up in your life, He's done some great things. Why are you so burdened? Why are you so heavy-laden? And they said, last year within a few months my mom and my dad died and they didn't know Jesus. They went to hell. I said, first of all, don't put anybody in heaven or hell. There are people in heaven and hell but let Jesus decide 'Cause let me just tell you this, we're gonna get to heaven, we're gonna some people and we are like, what are you doing here? What are you doing here? And they're like, I don't know, I was chosen. I'm kind of shocked myself. I was a little hung over when I showed up. I can't believe I made it. There's other people you get to heaven you're like, where's my small group leader? Like, I don't know, we can't find them, you know I just, we can't find them. You're gonna be a little surprised who made it and who didn't, okay. All the small group leaders are like, that was not funny at all. It was funny. I said, "Why are you so burdened?" They said, "You know, I just wonder where I failed my parents." I said, "What do you mean?" they said, "I wonder what I could have said or done that it would have caused them to accept Jesus." So they were, they were riddled with guilt. And what I told him was, I said, "That's between them and Jesus and it's not like there's a magic phrase that you missed. It's not like there's a secret deed that you overlooked and had you done that they would have loved Jesus." I said, "You can speak and you can serve but only Jesus can save." So what I want you to do I want you to love everybody, serve everybody, I want you to talk to anybody and everybody but I don't want you to carry the burden of the results and the outcome. That's up to God. That's up to God, God and them need to sort this out and you can talk to them about God but ultimately they need to talk to God. That's how this works itself out. So in all of this, as Paul is wrapping up. So Romans nine and 10 is about predestination, choosing, electing how God saves, how our relationship with God begins and is sustained. He then ends in chapter 10, verses 20 and 21 with sort of the summation thesis of his entire argument. You may have more questions about this issue. You can go to realfaith.com/store. There's a free ebook there called Duck Duck Doom. It's a commentary on these two highly-debated chapters of the Bible. But what I wanna do now, I wanna pull us all out to the deep end of the pool. And we're gonna dive into what's a really complicated but very significant issue. And it is this, it is the debate about divine sovereignty and human responsibility as it particularly entails something called

evangelism, we'll get into all of this. So the Bible has two train tracks running parallel from beginning to end. God's sovereignty, that means that He is in charge. He is Lord, He is King, He is Father, He will get His will done. And human responsibility, we make choices, and we do things that are against God's will and as a result we are morally responsible agents for our decision-making. And what happens is certain people will emphasize one or the other. You need to have both. Some people actually see this as a contradiction which it is not. There was an old baptist preacher named Charles Haddon Spurgeon. And on this particular issue, they approached him and they asked, "How do you reconcile divine sovereignty and human responsibility?" He said, "I don't have to. You never have to reconcile friends." The point is we believe everything the Bible says and if it's in the Bible it's all friend not foe. It doesn't need to be reconciled, it's already reconciled in the mind of God. So this is where Paul goes though, he talks about first divine sovereignty and then human responsibility. And this is very, very important and significant 'cause God wants you to know that He is over history, but your life actually matters and the decisions you make are things that you are responsible for. So this is his summary statement at the end of his thesis on Romans nine and 10, chapter 10 verse 20 on the top divine sovereignty. Then Isaiah is so bold to say, I have been found by those who did not seek me, I've shown myself to those who do not ask for me. What God is saying here is I'm sovereign. And by sovereign, it means that He is the Lord that He is the highest authority. That there's no one alongside of Him and there's no one in authority over Him. And ultimately, I need you to know that God is not just sovereign, He's Father. This is really important. Okay, this is really important because if He's sovereign or King with all power it's really dangerous unless He's loving and good. Some religions have a view of God as sovereign but not loving, and He's not a father or a dad, He's a dictator. Islam would be an example of this. They believe that God is in charge but they don't believe that God is necessarily good. That's why there's a religion of imposition not preposition, convert or die. Okay, it's very different. Our God is, when it uses language like King or Lord or sovereign, I really loved the language of father, 'cause not only is God in charge, He loves us, He's for us. He uses all of His power and all of His resources to do good for us, not to harm us. And I need you, especially you men to grasp this concept. Any authority or power or leadership that God gives you it's to bless, love, serve, and protect others not to act in a way that is domineering but to act in a way that is like a dad. That's how God operates. Okay? And so when he's talking about divine sovereignty to be the sovereign means this, you have two choices. You can either control and determine the outcome of something or you can let other people make their own decisions. You're free to do either. To be the sovereign means you're free. So what he's saying here is that for some people God has just chosen to override their decision. They're like, I'm not seeking God, God's like well, I choose to seek you. Well, I'm not calling on God, God's like well, I'm calling on you. So what God is saying there is that He is overseeing the outcome of people's destiny hence the language of predestination. The second option if you're the sovereign is, you can choose not to control the outcome but just let people make decisions. And he told us this in Romans chapter one verses 24 and 26 he said that God handed them over or God gave them over. That God basically said, to quote that great casino line, you do you, okay. God said, you do you. You just do what you want I'll let you do what you want. So let me say this. Everybody who goes to hell is responsible 'cause that's the choice they've made. Everybody who goes to heaven it's because God made a choice to

override their choice. Okay? What this means that God is sovereign but we are also responsible. So in chapter 10, verse 21 he then talks about human responsibility. But of Israel, a nation, he says, all day long I've held up my hands to, and what are the two words, disobedient and contrary. You know what that means? They're not doing what God told them to do. They're making a choice to be rebellious and full and defiant. And what he's saying here is this, is very, very significant and important because we live in an age of lawlessness and the less we have law the more we kind of live hell up rather than heaven down. But the way God rules is through law. He told us this in chapter two verse 12 of Romans, all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. So what He's saying is this, that God has laws and that God's laws are ruling over all people. We tend to think, well, that's not my belief. That doesn't matter. You're not the sovereign. Well, that's not my culture. That doesn't matter, your culture isn't sovereign. Well, that's not how our group thinks or acts. Well, then you're wrong. See, this is where Christianity gets you in trouble because when God writes laws they're for all peoples times and places. See people say, well, why can't we change it? 'Cause God got it right the first time. So people are like, well, that was a long time ago. Right and we're not any better. Right, it said, don't do certain things and we're still doing those wrong things. So God rules through laws. God's laws do not change they are fixed like the law of gravity. It just comes to mind. What if somebody says I don't believe in the law of gravity? It doesn't really matter. If you fall off a building, you will believe in it. It's real. It's a real thing. So it's not whether or not we like it. It's whether or not it's true. And truth is that which corresponds with reality. So God rules through laws. And then He judges us. We're human beings that are morally responsible and when we sin, He says that is contrary and disobedient. He's like, that's not what I told you to do. You're doing exactly the opposite of what I told you to do. And so what he's demonstrating here is that you and I make choices and decisions, we are responsible moral agents, we are accountable for the decisions we make but that God is ultimately sovereign over human history and He ultimately is in control and in charge and these two work together. For us that should cause us to take our decisions seriously but then also thank God that even when we make mistakes or commit sins He's big enough to fix the mess that we've made. And that's what God does in the life of a believer. And that's what God does in relationship with a believer. Now, that being said God is judge. He's judging our behavior. This is in one of two ways. Number one, for contrary and disobedient people who have sinned against God by violating the will of His word, the first option is we go to hell. If you sin, you are choosing hell. You need to know that. Everybody in hell is there because that's what they chose. Now some people say, well, I didn't choose hell, I just chose rebellion. All rebellion leads to hell. Okay? So everybody who goes to hell, it is just and they are responsible for their personal decision-making. We're all sinners by nature and choice. Secondly, the other option is that Jesus chooses to override our choice. This is what Jesus Christ did for me. I didn't ask Jesus to come. He just came. I didn't ask Jesus to go through all that He went through for me, but He did. I didn't ask Jesus to die for me. I didn't even know that I needed it. He just did that. The Bible says we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Jesus conquered death, He saved me. Question, my sin is it Jesus' fault? No, it's my fault. God told me exactly what to do in His word and in the conscience that He put in me, we looked at this in Romans two. I had two witnesses, God's word and my conscience and I violated both, I have nobody to quote that great theologian Chris Stapleton, I got nobody to blame but me. Right, it's

all me. Even though it's my fault, Jesus went to the cross and this is what's shocking. He made it His responsibility. He said, you know what? I'm gonna live for Mark. I'm gonna die for Mark. I'm gonna rise for Mark. I'm gonna seek Mark. I'm gonna call out to Mark. I'm gonna save Mark. And I'll just be honest with you, I've never gotten over that. God saved me not just when I was undeserving but ill-deserving. God adopted me when I was His enemy at war with Him. That's just shocking to me. This is why the Bible calls this grace. It's just good news. It's something that I'll be honest with you if we just look at who God is and who we are and what God does to love us, we'll spend every day for the rest of eternity just sort of mesmerized by how good God is to save people as bad as we are. I've never gotten over that. Let me say this friend, the two things that are most important for you to learn is who God is and who you are. And once you know who God is and who you are you're shocked at what God does to make you like Him. This is an incredible insight. For those of you who are Christians, I want you to look at your whole life and just ask how was God pursuing me when I was not pursuing Him? How was God involved when I wasn't even aware? What was God saying even when I wasn't listening? And I want you to just to be overwhelmed at the love and the pursuit and the grace and the devotion that God has. And for people who don't know Jesus keep your heart open toward them, evangelize them, speak to them about Jesus, pray for them but don't carry the burden of their salvation. And so when it comes to this issue of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, divine sovereignty over history, human responsibility through history I wanna just emotionally touch on something as your pastor 'cause I love you. As I've been teaching this great section of Romans, here's the conversation I've had many times variations thereof. Generally, it's a conversation in two parts. Number one, somebody who's a Christian says I just am shocked at how much God loves me and now thinking about it, I just look back at my life and all He was doing to get me to have relationship with Him. And they're just sort of overwhelmed at God's love for them. And then they're heartbroken because they think of non-Christian family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, that they really wish knew Jesus and they don't. And their question is, is there any hope for them? Is there any opportunity for them? Is there any answer for them and they're heartbroken for people they love. Question, is this reasonable? Yeah. Yeah, I mean, Paul's told us a few times already in Romans, that his heart is broken for people who don't know Jesus and that he's praying for them and that he's ministering to them. And so, let me say this. What Paul is encouraging here, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news? He's encouraging something called evangelism. And this is the messenger going forth, delivering the mail written by the king. Evangelism is not, you saw somebody saved because you don't determine who gets saved. Evangelism is lovingly and faithfully delivering the message of Jesus Christ. That's it. If you lovingly and lovingly is, you know, I don't wanna just yell at you for Jesus 'cause it's hard to communicate a message of grace with a red face, screaming and yelling. God loves you. And they're like, right, well, I can't tell Okay, so it's lovingly but faithfully, faithfully delivering the message of Jesus and then leaving the results between Jesus and the individual to whom you communicated. So let me say this. God is sovereign not just over the ends but the means and ministry is God working for you in you and through you. God doesn't need you but God includes you because God loves you. Sometimes evangelism is very formal. You invite somebody to church and I offend them. And then you take them out to coffee and therapy and follow up. Okay? Sometimes it's very informal. You're just talking with them and praying with

them and building relationship with them. Evangelism as well is something that a group of Christians have as what's called a spiritual gift. Some people have the gift of an evangelist. They understand non-Christians and they can speak to non-Christians and non-Christians understand them. How many of you know somebody like that? You're like, they talk to people and people become Christians when they talk to them, it's just, it's something that God gave them. The greatest example of that is Billy Graham. You can put one guy up front and millions meet Jesus. You can put a million guys up front and nobody meets Jesus. That one guy has got a sacred, unique anointing on his life. I met him twice. He's now with the Lord Jesus having a great day but there's a uniqueness there. Some of you are like that. You can talk to people that don't know Jesus and they come to know Jesus. For the rest of us we need to do something that Paul tells Timothy and that's do the work of an evangelist. You gotta remind yourself, oh yeah, there's non-Christians, oh, yeah, I need to be praying for them. Oh yeah, I should talk to them. Oh yeah, I should buy them a Bible. Oh yeah, I can bring them to church. You need to actively be looking for opportunities head up. I've been sent here. I'm a missionary. I'm here on behalf of King Jesus to bring the message of salvation. That being said, what can happen is that we error in one of two directions when it comes to divine sovereignty and human responsibility. And some of you come from Christian denominations teams and tribes and traditions. One error is an overemphasis on divine sovereignty. God's got this, He's in control. You don't matter. You don't what you do doesn't move the needle. God doesn't need you. Okay, it's this overemphasis on divine sovereignty. When this happens, they tend to give the inclination that well, everything that happens is God's will. No, it's not their sin and rebellion that breaks God's heart. In addition, this can lead to a lazy, indifferent, unmotivated Christian. People will use the sovereignty of God as an excuse to not be on God's mission. Okay. I don't like to go super negative but I do have a real concern like so many churches are still closed. It's like, where's the sense of urgency? You know and churches that even could be open they're still not open. It's like well, people don't know Jesus and the church is the place where we have this great opportunity to love people and to serve people and to tell people about Jesus. And the answer is, well, we don't want anybody to get sick. Well, let me tell you this, 100% of people are infected with sin and will die because of sin and the only remedy for them is Jesus Christ. So, I mean, you know, ultimately their biggest... This isn't gonna go on the internet so I'll tell you what I actually think but like, sin is still a bigger problem than COVID. Okay, it is. And so to me, I want you to, you know, if you wanna wear a mask, wear hand sanitizer get a vaccine, get a tape measure, stay six feet apart. No judgment from me, here's what I'm saying. You're still gonna die because of sin and Jesus is our only hope and God's people can't overlook the one message that is our unique contribution to the world. There's a lot of places you can go to get a sandwich or a vaccination or an afterschool program, but there's only one place that can tell you about Jesus Christ and it needs to be open.

- [Congregants] Amen.

- Okay. And so what can happen is when we think God is in charge, we think that we don't matter and we do because God has chosen to work through us to love and to serve others. The other error is on the other side of the pendulum the overemphasis on human responsibility. It's

all up to you. It's all on you. How many of you have heard this? Maybe you are in some fired up college or youth ministry. They're like, everybody's going to hell and it's on you, go get them. You better get them, if you don't get them they're gonna burn forever, that's on you. You're like, that's a lot of pressure. That's a lot of pressure, I'm 17. Okay. And what this can lead to is something called legalism and works where it's just this performance treadmill that burns people out. Have you had any of the Jehovah's witnesses come to your house and knock on your door? They used to come, I argued with them. They don't come anymore. Somehow I got put on the no-fly list for the Jehovah's witnesses. So. But when they knock on your door it's because they have a requirement to go knock on a certain number of doors and have a certain number of conversations. They actually keep record of it. It's all housed and then it turns into almost a competitive situation. Well, I knocked on 171 doors. Well, I'm gonna do 173. I got 14 people to pray. Well, I got 17 to pray. It leads to this legalism, this works, it leads to burnout and it leads to seeking to manipulate and control people to get the right outcome. Right. It's almost like one of those... Have you ever sat in on one of those condo timeshare pitches? It's like a hostage situation. You can't get up until you sign. And like, I don't wanna sign. You are gonna sign. I mean, it's like, and what can happen is we can then turn evangelism into a sales pitch. Okay, now, for those of you who are salespeople this is where I offend you. I told you I'ma get to everybody so. When you're selling something, do you tend to tune up the benefits and downplay the detriments? That's what salesmen do, right? If you walk, you're like, tell me about the car. It's got great seats. Does it run? Radio's awesome. You just kinda overlooked, you overlooked the downside. Okay. This is what we can do when we don't understand that God is sovereign over evangelism. We're trying to change the pitch. So it's like, well, do you like sun? Yeah, heaven is a sunny place. You like wine? I do like wine. Jesus turns water into wine. Really good wine. Nice. Do you like meat? No. Oh, well then you can't go to heaven 'cause Jesus has the choices to meat. Oh, do you like to live forever? I do. See, what we do we sell heaven but we don't tell the full truth. Do you wanna repent of your sin, trust in Jesus as your savior have Him be your Lord, the boss over your life who gets to tell you what to do? No. See, but that's the whole truth. And if we think that we can manipulate the outcome we then change the message. Our job is not to write the mail but to deliver the mail that the King wrote. Okay. To deliver the mail that the King wrote. So, in saying this, let me just summarize why we do ministry. Our God is a Father, Christianity is a family and ministry is what God's family does because that's what our Father does. Okay. So let me say, God doesn't need you but God uses you because He loves you. I'll give you an analogy. My wife, Grace is a pastor's daughter so she grew up in ministry, I did not, I did not grow up in a ministry family. So we started our first ministry when we were in our early 20s. And we started our first church before we even had what is now five children. So when the kids were born, now I'm in ministry and I got to figure out like, okay, well, what do the kids do? Are they involved, are they not involved? Like what do they do? And what I decided was that we would involve the kids in ministry. So our kids have been on mission trips all over the world, Greece, Israel, Turkey, Australia, Scott they've been everywhere from a very little age. When I would go do men's events, stadiums, upwards of 10,000 I would bring my sons. They were little at the time and I'd bring them up on the stage. And I would let them pray a blessing over 10,000 men and their sons so that they were part of it. I didn't need my sons but I love my sons so I want them to be involved because it's a blessing for us to do it together. And

this is what ministry is, friends. Ministry is a double blessing. See when God blesses you, that's a blessing and then when you get to share that with someone that's a double blessing. 'Cause you're blessed and you're blessed to be a blessing. That's where the Bible says it's more blessed to give than receive. It is a blessing to receive but when you share the money, the wisdom, the energy the opportunity that God has given you it's a double blessing. I want my kids to be double blessed. This included, I didn't share this at the services but for a while I ran an all ages punk rock concert venue. They outlawed concerts for kids in our previous city because it was a lot of abusive minors. But they had an exception that churches could run shows, youth group. So we opened an all ages punk rock venue. Okay, and we let the kids come in and play their music and smoke their cigarettes and wear their converse and yell about their father. That's what punk rock is. Punk rock is what happens when you have a bad dad. That's what happens, it's punk rock. Okay, so. So Ashley, my oldest she now directs the Real Faith Ministry for me. When she was very little, I would take her to the all ages punk venue for late night shows. Usually that's not how you disciple a child. She had a little black vest, leather vest, black leather boots. She'd wear all black, just like the kids. She'd put her hair in a ponytail. Hey, daddy, let's go. So we'd go to the punk rock club and all the kids are outside smoking cigarettes, and we're talking to them. We'd go in and they're all screaming and yelling. She's like, "Dad, why are they so angry?" They don't know Jesus loves them that's why we're here. Right, when they realize Jesus loves them, they'll, I don't know what they'll do they'll start singing ballads, it'll just change. It'll get better for them so. And the point is what I wanted her to see was there are people who don't know Jesus. There are kids that don't know Jesus. There are kids that are angry and they need to know Jesus. And so let's just go talk to them. So my daughter grew up in a punk rock venue. Right? Which I would tell you is probably not best way to raise a child, but it worked out because we were there to do ministry. The point is everywhere you go just have a ministry mindset. Okay? I'll give you one example. My oldest son, Zac, when he was really little, he couldn't even read yet. He only had the picture Bible. I was jumping in my truck to go do a hospital visit. A guy had been paralyzed from the chest down and was bedridden in a hospital. So I was going to do a hospital visit and Zac, I call buddy Zac, he looked at me, he's like, "Dad, where are you going?" I was like, "I'm going to the hospital." He's like, "I'll go too." I'm thinking, not a good idea. He's little, he's active. There's wires that are important. Right, tubes, it's a little scary. I'm like, if he comes he starts climbing like, we're not gonna tell him about Jesus. We're gonna send him to Jesus. This is too risky. I said, no, little buddy, I said, dad's got to go to the hospital. It's a little scary. You know, it's a little different. He's like, "No, no, I'll be your associate pastor today." Little guy, grabbed his little Bible. I was like, okay, I can't say no. Right? Do I need him? No, but I love him. So I want to include him so he can be blessed. He jumps in the truck, so I'm explaining to him. All right, you're now my associate pastor. You need to sit there, no climbing, no jumping, no pulling any tubes or wires. It's gonna be a little uncomfortable. You've probably never seen a hospital. So I'm trying to prep him. We walked in the door and you got to sign in. They're like, "What are you?" I said, "I'm clergy, so I need a badge and this is my associate pastor." So, Zac got a badge and he's like, "Yeah, his associate pastor." So he's pretty, this feel real big boy got badge now. So we go in and we go to the bedside of this person. And Zac sat on one side, I sat on the other side of their hospital bed and I'm asking this person question, having conversation. And then Zac engages, "Hey, how are you feeling? How can we

pray for you?" He takes over the conversation. He does actually really, really well. So that at the end, this person said, "Well, I can't move from the chest down could you pray for me?" I said, "Yeah, I'll pray for you." Zac, my associate pastor, he says, "Dad, I got this." All right, I'll tag in believing buddy. He lays a hand, prays on the guy. The guy starts moving his feet and his legs. Okay. And ultimately that guy ended up walking out of that hospital. Okay. The point is this, I didn't need Zac, but I love Zac. So I want to include Zac. And you know the truth is, God didn't need me. God could have just said, I'm gonna heal him. And instead God sent me so that I could receive the double blessing of being involved in what God is doing. And then God didn't need Zac, but He included me and Zac so that He could double bless both of us. Ministry is just going to work with your father. And it's being part of the double blessing, okay. And this is how we view the Christian life. That ministry and evangelism is not something that we have to do it's something that we get to do and when we do it, we're going to work with our dad, okay. And let me just conclude by encouraging you. What Paul is talking about is beautiful people who bring good news. You are beautiful people that God is using to bring good news. It's an honor as your pastor to get up here and not tell you what to do but to tell you what God is doing and to thank you for being a part of it. It was about a month ago, I just called a kind of last minute prayer meeting. I said, please pray that we get more space for kids. God answered that prayer. Please pray we can get the backyard done so we can run swimsuits summer and let the kids play in a water slide all summer. And that happened. I said, please pray for more classroom space. And God the next day provided 7,000 square feet kitty-corner and we used it for students last night, we'll use it for women's this week. God absolutely answered. I said, please pray for a studio. God opened a studio within like a week or two. I mean, it's a unicorn of a property and you were so generous that we paid cash for it and we can get out more Bible teaching than ever. I asked you to pray that we could open a Saturday night six o'clock 'cause our four o'clock was full, and we did that last night. And, I asked you to give generously so we could tell more people about Jesus. I asked you to give above and beyond normal tithes and offerings in the month of March \$1.5 million, and you gave more than that. You gave more than that. And last weekend I asked you to pray for Good Friday and Easter, we had almost 6,000 people on campus. Our church is four years old and it was closed last year. This is God doing, amen.

- [Congregants] Amen.

- This is God, and God has a destiny for us and we're walking in it together. So as I bring the band up, I just wanna encourage you and I wanna share with you the 105 baptisms that we had just last weekend. And then we're gonna call on the name of the Lord and we're gonna sing and celebrate His goodness together, and we're gonna leave here to figure out who's next. Amen.