

This message was presented to the Calvary Chapel family of pastor's at the West Coast CCA "Stay the Course" conference in April 2017.



TRANSCRIPTION

Hi. It's good to be with you. What a wonderful conference we're in the middle of. I came needing to be filled and needing to hear from the Lord, and God has been doing it. So let's stand together and let's turn to Acts 2, the single verse tonight. It might be familiar. Acts 2:42, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers."

Let's pray together now. Father, we bless you tonight. Thank you for songs like we just got to sing to you. Thank you for worship leaders. Thank you when you inhabit our praises the way that you do, and even that is an expression of your grace. We bless you tonight and we ask that you would continue to work now in our worship of you and the study of your word. Continue to speak to us. Take this message and put it together in kind of the tapestry of messages that you've been speaking. I pray for my life. I pray for each man and woman before you. We pray before the conferences over that you will have spoken something very personal to each of us and ministered to our deepest needs, Lord. Continue to move in our midst. We pray by your spirit and we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated.

My comments tonight are not directed at anyone, except myself and all of you in this room and everyone who's watching on the internet. This evening, I would like to take kind of a personal walk down my Calvary Chapel memory lane. And I don't do this kind of thing very often, and I just pray that you would indulge me as I do. Many years ago now, I was attending a pastors' conference and I heard one of the best statements I've ever heard at a pastors' conference, when Don McClure declared in the course of his teaching, "One of the most miserable places to be in all of life is to be in the ministry looking for a vision."

And when I heard him say that, it set me back really in my seat and my mind rolled off for a number of minutes as Don continued his study. And that took me privately to explore kind of the emotion of that even just a little bit. And when he said it, I thought to myself immediately, "Wow, isn't that the truth," thinking about how miserable it would be to be in the ministry without a vision, that is, without absolute clarity, first concerning what we're aiming at in pastoral ministry, and then second, how to get there.

I don't know what your experience is like in the ministry, but this is the hardest thing God could have ever called me to do. I suspect it's the same for you. The ministry to me is hard enough when you do have a biblical vision, but I think it becomes absolutely impossible if we do not know unshakably, unmistakably what we are aiming at, number one, and then number two, how to get there. And of course, I think this miserable condition of being in the ministry without a vision is, without a doubt, a widespread condition.

You think about the number of ministry conferences that are hosted every year in the United States with the purpose of providing us as pastors with vision concerning the churches that we lead. And this lack of a biblical vision for ministry can really, really create such a desperation in us as leaders, to where we just become tempted to grab a hold of every new theory, every new idea that comes through year after year and then to implement it in the church in the hope that this is the thing that is somehow going to get us some traction here.

And I remember very vividly one church in particular that was completely destroyed under the weight of this very thing. And every few months, the church would morph into something new based upon whatever new book the pastor had read that particular month or the latest conference that he had attended. And so the church tried all kinds of new things until people ultimately became exhausted at being pulled in one direction after another every six months to a year. And then ultimately, it began to dawn upon the congregation that the pastor didn't have the slightest idea what he was doing in terms of what he was aiming at and how to get there, and then they began to quietly leave. And ultimately, the church was completely dissolved, and it was a miserable experience for the congregation and also for the pastor.

But thankfully, as we read the word of God, in what is, I think, a miserable sea of confusion in this regard, the vision for the local church is spelled out for us in the scriptures. And so let's ask ourselves this evening, in the privacy of our own hearts, "What is the purpose of the church? What is it that we are aiming at?" Don't shout the answer out. Just formulate it in your own mind. What is the purpose of the church? What are we aiming at here?

And the Bible teaches that we have been given as pastors a commission by Jesus, and a commission that is so great that it's called the great commission. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

So the call is to make disciples, to make mature followers of Jesus Christ, maturity being defined as the ability to reproduce themselves spiritually. And not to get a big church or all these things, the measures

of success today that I have to fight every bit as much as you have to fight, but to look at and say, "That is the commission that we have been given, and it is a great commission." The end product, so to speak, that God wants to have coming out of a church are solid, mature Christians that can then disciple others to become the same. That is what we are aiming at.

So terrific. We know what we're aiming at. That's the commission. But that then raises the next question of how does one make a disciple? And that's exactly the question that the apostles faced on the day of Pentecost, the context of the passage, that verse that we've read here in Acts 2. Peter preaches that great gospel message on the day of Pentecost, and here 3000 people get saved. But now what do you do with them? How does one make a disciple out of them as the great commission commands that we do?

And of course, thankfully, Acts 2:42 gives us the answer. They continued steadfastly in four principal things. Number one, apostles' doctrine. The church was marked by a strong emphasis upon the teaching of the word of God. And then fellowship, providing a place where God's people can develop deep and spiritually meaningful relationships in their life. The church is a teaching center, but it isn't only a teaching center. It is also a spiritual family.

And then the breaking of bread. And this refers, of course, to the Lord's Supper. And so that's a time I think that is spent remembering Jesus, what he's done for us in his death, in his burial, and in his resurrection. Jesus said in the gospels as he instituted the Lord's Supper, "Do this in remembrance of me." And to me, the partaking of the Lord's Supper is one of the ways that God keeps the themes and the realities of the cross in front of us as a church and as leaders on a continual basis, the themes of love and forgiveness and grace and redemption and a relationship with him, not forgetting him.

And Jesus can get forgotten in a church looking forward to his return. And to be reminded that what he has done in that death, burial, and resurrection has completely overwhelmed our past and our present and our future. And to me, it is God's way of keeping the main thing in a church that all of this is about a relationship with God that has been made possible through the indescribable sacrifice of Jesus upon that cross and through his resurrection so that this never becomes supremely about church or so that Jesus somehow gets lost in the middle of all of this and then finds himself on the outside knocking on the door to get in as he did in the church of Laodicea, and nobody inside had the foggiest idea that there was something wrong with that picture and something wrong with that church.

And then the fourth thing that's listed here is prayers, the importance of providing an environment that places a high priority upon prayer, instruction concerning individual prayer, but then also opportunities to receive prayer from others, and then to engage in prayer for others. And I think that this certainly would also include our praise and worship part of our services as well.

So these four things are absolutely vital, of course, but I think it's important to notice that there's three other things in Acts 2 that have already happened there before we get to Verse 42. And these things, I think, are worthy of some consideration to be adding to the list in terms of a healthy emphasis and focus of a local church, the importance of evangelism. Peter, his sermon was preached on the day of

Pentecost. You cannot have disciples without evangelism, without converts. And then the baptism with the Holy Spirit that also occurred on the day of Pentecost, and then in Verse 41, water baptism.

And so this is how they made disciples in the early church. And God was so pleased with this that he (Verse 47) added to the church daily such as should be saved. And as we have been very well taught, when the church becomes what God wants it to be, then he is free to add to that church daily such as should be saved.

There are so many models for the church and for church growth floating around today. It used to be, 30 years ago when I was starting, these things would come down the pike one at a time and like a six-month breather between the previous one. Now it's like an oozy. These things are just coming so fast, and so many ideas, so many theories, so many formulas and models. But here is the one that we can be confident in because it comes from God's word and it has worked for 2000 years.

Now, I don't say anything that I have just said because I don't think you don't already know it. I say it simply to declare how thankful I am for just this tiny little slice of my heritage as a Calvary Chapel pastor, that this vision was given to me at some point in time in my growth as a pastor and as a Christian, and that this was the vision that I was raised in and that I saw practiced all around me by my fellow pastors in the movement.

And the reason that means so much to me is that I can honestly say that if it were not for this biblical vision concerning the purpose and the focus of the church, if I was in the ministry without a vision, without this vision, trying to figure all of this out on my own, and without the confidence that I was giving God what he wanted from a pastor to work with and to bless in a local church, I would have become a casualty in the first two years of my pastorate and probably earlier and many, many times afterward. If I had not been able to process the micro of the week in and the week out of ministry in the light of the macro of this biblical vision, I would have quickly become filled with so much self-doubt about my direction, about my effectiveness. And ultimately, I would have succumbed to the discouragement and I would have burned out.

And I think about how many, many times through the years I have been so deeply discouraged in this calling, wondering what in the world I was doing. Doubts, doubts, doubts everywhere, inside and out. But in the midst of all of it, I knew this was sure. This never came into play because of my heritage, that this was a rock and an anchor when I questioned everything else about myself and about my calling. And while so many new visions for ministry coming and going through the years, this kept me safe and it kept the people attending Calvary Chapel Modesto safe as well.

If there were no other blessing to being a Calvary Chapel pastor, for me, this would be enough. And because of what it has meant to me, I want it to be there for many generations of pastors after I'm long gone. Honestly, I do not know how people survive in the ministry and in the pastorate without this vision. Without it, I can confidently declare that instead of being with you here this evening, I would be finishing my 43rd year as a cable splicer for the phone company, and I would have left this behind long ago.

And I thank Pastor Chuck, and I thank the Lord for him, that the Lord put him through all that he went through for his 17 years that we know all about, in order for him to learn this biblical vision for the church, and so he could then impart it to people like me and like you, so that we could hit the ground running and we wouldn't have to individually invest 17 years learning the same lesson. I thank God for just this part of my heritage as a Calvary Chapel pastor.

And I never take it for granted that we are, that I am in the ministry. We're not in the ministry without a vision. We are in the ministry with a vision that comes from the scripture. One of the most miserable things that a person can experience in life is to be in the ministry searching for a vision. And we are not on those ranks, and I say praise the Lord, hallelujah for that tonight.

And then I think about our distinctives and our philosophy of ministry and our emphasis upon biblical exposition, the expositional teaching of the Bible through books of the Bible. By the way, if God called me next week to do a topical series, I don't have a problem with topical messages. But as a characteristic of us as a movement, the teaching of the Bible through books of the Bible and then through the entire Bible, just allow me please to tell you what happened to me in Calvary Chapel of Napa with Pastor Mike Chaddick in 1980 in this regard.

I slipped into the back row on a Wednesday night into a Calvary Chapel just like yours, in the one that I pastor, just to check it out. And I heard him teaching from the word of God, reading a passage, explaining the passage, and then applying it to our lives. And when I heard him do that, it was like a bomb went off inside of my head, this revelation from God. And the revelation was this. For the first time in my life, I realized the Bible could be understood, that the Bible was meant to be understood.

Maybe I'm just thick and I didn't have that figured out, but that light went on for me and it meant the world to me. I was understanding the Bible in a way that I had never experienced before, and it simply revolutionized my life. I can understand the Bible. I'm supposed to understand the Bible and the whole Bible. And that teaching that was going on, it was more than merely teaching from the Bible. This was actually teaching the Bible. And with this understanding, this light going on for me, and I needed somebody to model that for me, but when that went on, I couldn't wait then to study the Bible, learn the word of God, what it had to say, what it was revealing to me.

And each time I stand before the congregation that I pastor on Sunday mornings and on Sunday evenings, I pray for anyone coming in that door and slipping in the back row that thinks that the Bible is this incomprehensible 66 books given with all of the verses to just give us kind of sermon father at our whim, but for them to sit and to realize in some way that, no, this is intended to be understood and that that light will go on for them in the same way that it did for me and revolutionize their Christian life in the way that it did for me as well.

But expositional teaching doesn't merely help me as a Christian. It does something great for me as a pastor because it causes me to teach the whole counsel of God, and thus, to address the truths in proportion to which they are represented in the word of God. And it keeps me away from my hobby horses. And I have hobby horses just like everyone else does. And it keeps us safe as pastors, assuring

that God's people are being fashioned by the entire word of God as opposed to our pet themes and our pet interests.

I think of another distinctive. And I use the word "distinctive." I'm not saying that nobody else in the body of Christ does these things. I'm just saying that they characterize us as well. But I think of the distinctive of our concern for God-centered worship and how thankful I am for that heritage in Calvary Chapel as well. This understanding in emphasis that worship is not supremely about me, it is not supremely about us, but it is supremely about God.

And so when people leave the services in the morning and they say, "How did the worship go?" I don't know. Ask God because that's who it was for. It wasn't for me supremely. You're never going to outgive God. But the reinforcement, the modeling of the fact that he is the supreme and sole attraction of our services. And in terms of worship, there's no striving. There's no manipulating. And here we come into a church where we can be free to worship the Lord in song without having that uneasy feeling that these people are trying to do something to me rather than for me. I get my guard up when I sense that somebody is trying to do something to me. When it's done for me, I can relax.

And this worship, as we've been led in worship here in this conference, we're pointing us to God and then getting out of the way, and then allowing God to inhabit our praises, and then providing us with what is a genuinely spiritual experience as opposed to a soulish or merely an emotional experience. And once we've experienced a spiritual experience in worship, we can never ever be truly satisfied with anything else.

I think also of our love for Bible prophecy and living in the daily expectation of the coming rapture of the church. I love my Calvary Chapel heritage in this regard. That has taught me to live each day watching and waiting for the Lord's return. Listen, if I needed that at age 35, I need it even more at age 62 in the condition I'm in. I mean, I'm looking for his return more than I ever have. It's not something I've outgrown or something that's become dead to me. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. A daily prayer of mine reminding me that today could be the day.

And it is a blessed hope, as the apostle Paul described it. And I'll tell you, as you already know, that hope is very precious stuff and it is very finite stuff in this crazy world that we live in. I don't want anybody to take away that hope that I have that today, in the next hour, in the next minute, he might return and take us into glory with himself. So I have found that it does provide a needed influence in my life to live up your life. It also does produce a needed urgency in my life concerning the great commission in our Christian service. And it is also a source of great comfort.

I remember watching. We were feeding in a prophecy conference that was being held at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa, and they were kind enough to put everything together so we could beam it into Calvary Chapel Modesto. Tommy Ice got to speak and he was speaking on pre-tribulation rapture. And he got up and you just know this guy is going to be fun. But he got up into the pulpit, and before he said anything in terms of moving to his subject, he said, "What problem do you have in your life tonight that wouldn't be solved by the rapture?" I mean, we laughed. I laughed. Every one of my problems are going to be solved by the rapture of the church.

And it's done nothing but good in my life, and I see it doing the same thing in the lives of those I pastor. And it helps us again to process the news every day, the events of the world every day, and to see them not for what they are in and of themselves, but to see that history really is marching toward its God-appointed end and to view life with that kind of confidence.

I also think about our emphasis upon grace, that Christianity is a response to God's grace, both in our salvation and then also in obedience to his commandments after we're saved, that our obedience to God's commandments comes not out of works. It doesn't come out of legalism. I mean, I didn't know anybody to lead me down that path. My flesh wants to go there all the time. But here we've been taught that the obedience to God's commandments comes out of the highest and most inexhaustible motivation of all, in response to the love and the grace of God toward us. We love him because he first loved us. And I think to myself, "It could have taken me years to figure that out on my own." And instead, it was given to me as a part of the biblical vision and distinctives and emphasis of this movement.

I think then about our emphasis upon the person and the work of the Holy Spirit, including the baptism with the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts. After the revolution that the word of God produced in my life, this area of the Christian life completely revolutionized my Christian life, that this life is lived not on the basis of human effort but in the power of the Holy Spirit. And it took me out of the misery of Romans 7, and it took me into Romans 8.

I remember my first afterglow like it was last night. I remember being baptized with the Holy Spirit. I remember the night and how I received the gift of tongues. And all of that was simply just the start of all of this. And I think to myself, "Who can oversee a church or prepare a sermon adequately without the wisdom and the revelation and the direction of the Holy Spirit?" We are dead in this calling apart from the Holy Spirit, the fullness of how as he's revealed in the scripture, and the fullness of what we need from him and he imparts to us in his grace.

And what this understanding of the Holy Spirit does for the congregation is immense. When people come into... Excuse me a moment. I'm a little pumped. There's a little spirit of Ryan's still up here, and I'm trying to channel it. But when people come maybe from another church in the Calvary Chapel Modesto, if they stay, probably the most common comment that they'll make is "I've learned more from the word of God in x amount of time than I ever learned in x amount of time." But right behind it is the comment, "Coming here absolutely opened up my eyes and my life to the fullness of the Holy Spirit." And it has revolutionized so many lives, this distinctive and this emphasis of Calvary Chapel.

Concerning our form of church government, I don't put down other churches for being board-run, but a lot of people want to put Calvary Chapel down for being this kind of servant authority given to the pastor of the church as it does. And I understand all of the pros and cons, at least I think I do, of all the various forms of church government. But from my personality and from my temperament, without the freedom to hear and obey God, and the way that we are allowed to do, there's no way I could thrive. There's no way for who I am that that board would not somehow become a mediator or a constant thought for me. I would feel like a hireling. I don't say that everyone in a board-run church feels like a

hireling. I only say that I would feel like that, and I'm thankful for this model that was there for people like me.

And I do think there's a difference between a pioneer mentality with pastors and a settling mentality with pastors, and I think this just fits a pioneer mentality a lot better. I could go on and on. I could speak of servanthood or quipping the saints from Ephesians 4 or evangelism, including missions and all of these kind of things, but we'll stop in terms of looking at these kind of distinctives. But as powerful and as impactful as these things are individually, to me, when they're all put together as God has done in raising up Calvary Chapel, they are spiritually explosive in their impact.

And I tend to look at our vision and our distinctives like a recipe. I happen to like curry chicken. But if you've ever had a favorite recipe, and my wife tells me, "Hey, we're going to have curry chicken tonight," I sit down with an anticipation to taste curry chicken the way that she has made it and the way that I love it. And then if I sit down one evening and it doesn't quite taste right, in fact, it just tastes awful, and then you ask her, and then she informs you that she didn't revamp the whole recipe but she didn't have one or two of the items in the recipe and so she made it without that, and it completely adversely affects the taste of everything.

And I view our God-given vision and distinctives in the same way. I simply don't take Calvary Chapel for granted. I don't take what God has done through Calvary Chapel for granted. I don't take the favor he has chosen to pour out upon this vision and these distinctives for granted. We are a part of a miracle of God, born out of revival. And those of you who have studied revival know how priceless they are. They don't just happen and you can't make them happen. Entire generations of Christians in church history have prayed for what has been our portion, our entire Christian lives and ministries, and they never experienced for a day what is our daily portion.

So I don't take revivals for granted and I don't feel the freedom that some people do to play fast and loose with this. I know we all want another revival, but in the meantime, I think it is very wise to hold on to what God blessed in the last one while we're waiting, especially when those things are so solidly biblical. I simply do not see a reason to fix what is not broken. [applause]

And when anyone comes anywhere near to putting any of these things into play, it concerns me because I know God blesses this and I am not as confident in some new adaptation of this recipe born out of man's wisdom or boredom or a need to leave my mark in the world. I would also like to say that this movement belongs to God and it doesn't belong to anyone else. It doesn't belong to you. It doesn't belong to me. It belongs 100% to him. We are mere men and women entrusted with this stewardship. It is not ours to change or to tinker with or to experiment with on a whim.

And here I'm talking about our Bible-based vision and distinctives. I'm talking about the foundation. I'm not saying there isn't room for broad expression within the movement in terms of curtains or paint colors or carpets or landscaping in accordance with the location of the church or the gifting of the pastor or the personality of the pastor. I'm talking about the foundation. I think that each of us as pastors have a role to play in this work of the Holy Spirit remaining a work of the Holy Spirit.

And that responsibility does not rest solely upon the CCA council or upon the regional teams. Our role in all of this has to do with our personal integrity. What do I mean by that? For instance, through the years, I have heard of Calvary Chapel pastors who have become reformed in their theology, completely contrary to our distinctives, our theology, what God has chosen to bless in Calvary Chapel, and then to demand to be accommodated within the movement, even though it would require a radical change of our foundation on so many levels.

And let me say this. By the way, I have no problem at all with a reformed church being a reformed church. If that is their convictions, they should hold them tightly. But I would never affiliate with a reformed denomination or affiliation by stealth as a Calvary Chapel pastor and then holding an entirely different view of the five points of Calvinism and then expect them to change their foundation to accommodate me. What a stunning sense of entitlement and self-importance would I have to have to demand that? [applause] And I'm just preaching to me.

Or when a Calvary Chapel pastor becomes a cessationist concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or becomes mid-trib or post-trib concerning the rapture, as opposed to pre-trib, and then to cry bloody murder when someone, as if they don't have enough to do in their own life, is then forced to address it with them, and then the person plays the victim. They blame everybody else. They make [40:43] of the person that has to talk to them when in fact, it is their lack of personal integrity that created the problem, rather than just simply admitting that their personal convictions have changed on a foundational issue within Calvary Chapel, and then with humility, recognizing the need to then affiliate with someone who holds those new positions.

John Adams, the second president of the United States, also a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, he wrote concerning our constitution. He wrote this. He said, "Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." Well, in the same way, the Calvary Chapel movement works without becoming a denomination or blowing up because it rightfully assumes each of us possesses a kindred spirit with Calvary Chapel and we possess this kind of integrity. And each and every one of us, myself included, as Calvary pastors, have a responsibility for the health of the whole in this regard, without which nothing will work, and holding this together and moving us forward.

Let me close with, in my remaining 40 seconds, my final two points. They are brief. And yet, despite the importance of what I've just said here in terms of our Bible-based vision and our distinctives, and I don't minimize them at all, but these are not the explanation for the blessing of God upon Calvary Chapel. The only explanation for that is the grace of God.

And Gayle Erwin tells the story, and it's another thing how these different things stick with us, about his time in ministry, when he was with a denomination and he was part of a magazine in that denomination. Many of you have heard it, but everybody has got a right to hear it once, so bear with me, which I could say about the whole sermon. But he talked about the fact that they would feature within this magazine a feature upon the fastest church within the denomination, and they would do a story. It would be in the magazine and then be published.

And one time, he was traveling and he went into a motel, sat down, turned on the TV to Christian Television, and there was on a Christian show an interview, a Christian interviewing a pastor who had been recently featured as the pastor of the fastest-growing church in the United States in that denomination. And the person said to the pastor, "What do you attribute all of this to?" And in that half-second, Gayle thought in his mind, "If he has any other explanation than the grace of God, it's over." And he had a different explanation than the grace of God. And within a year, it went back to its former size.

If we lose sight of this truth, then the temptation will be to reduce all of this to a formula, and the formula will then become our focus instead of God. The formula will then become what we talk about and depend upon more than God. And it will then become the explanation we offer for the success and the fruit rather than God. And then like the Church of Sardis, the Holy Spirit will simply depart. But now we have enough ministry experience and talent to give the appearance of life for a time even though we're dead. If there is any other explanation other than grace, it is over. To God be the glory. Great things he has done.

I close with this. Just a word about the importance of Calvary Chapel remaining a gracious ministry environment. I think it's important that Calvary Chapel maintains this kind of a ministry atmosphere of grace where we have room to try to hear God, to try different things, to fail and to fail epically, and then to learn from it and get up, and then to move forward. And God has done it with each of us individually so many times. He's been so patient with us, and we need to be patient with one another; otherwise we will create a very, very sterile ministry environment in which everyone is afraid of making a mistake, and no one, and certainly not creative people like pastors, will ever be able to thrive in that kind of environment, nor will we be able to survive in such an environment.

And sometimes, because of the interconnectedness of our world, somebody can make a mistake as a pastor or as a leader, and it will be on a blog within 24 hours. And sometimes I think to myself, with great frustration, but I jolt myself out related to the frustration. I turn it back upon myself to make it a teachable moment, but in terms of the ministry atmosphere and as a part of the culture as a whole. But I think to myself when somebody makes a mistake and then they get slammed, I think, "He just made a mistake." That's all. He just made a mistake. Can't anybody make a mistake anymore without it being the end of the world? When did perfection become the standard for anything other than God?

And I don't know what would happen with the apostle Peter today. "Get thee behind me, Satan," denies Jesus three times. I mean, in today's ministry environment, he has been drummed out before the day of Pentecost. And Paul, even afterwards, he's got to deal with him in Antioch and so forth. And yet each time he failed, each time he missed the boat a little bit, he got his bearings and he ended up doing pretty good, I would say.

There has to be room for us to make mistakes, be given room to learn from them, between us and the Holy Spirit before someone else interjects themselves too quickly in that learning process. Nobody handles that more cleanly and more effectively than the Holy Spirit. So let's remember what Calvary Chapel has meant to each of us tonight. And that's my whole intent. It's not intended to be a rant, but

just to look and say what this has meant to each of us and how much we have to be thankful for, and not the least of which of being delivered from the pure misery of being in the ministry without a vision.

So let's not take this revival for granted by changing the foundation of what God has chosen to bless, changing what obviously pleases him to bless. Let's remember that the explanation is God's grace. Let's remember to keep this an environment of grace where people can try things. They can fail. They can fail epically. They can learn from it and get up and move on. Not one thing I've said to you is new, but they're just some things that I thought I was supposed to say.

And let me also say thank you for... And I'm not a schmoozer, but thank you for the place that you play in this family called Calvary Chapel, and what it means to me to be a part of this thing with you, and what you quietly bring to this and don't even realize it. Just with your presence and your perseverance, I tell you, I pinched myself for the chance that I was given within Calvary Chapel and to be a part of this movement and a part of this family. Let's pray together. [applause]

Father, thank you so much for our heritage. Thank you for your goodness. Thank you for your grace. Thank you for your patience. Thank you for your long suffering, Lord. Thank you that you saved us. We can't believe that. Thank you. And then to call us into being representatives of you. Incredible. And Lord, we pray that you would put a great mantle of integrity and vision and hope and confidence upon each one of us and our part in this movement. We honor you tonight and we bless you, Jesus, as the head of the church and as the head of Calvary Chapel. And how we love it to be so. Father, we bless you tonight as you sit upon your throne, as you participate in this service tonight. We bless you. We bless you. We bless you for who you are and what you have so graciously done. And we do so in Jesus' name. Amen. [applause]