

THE GREATEST THREAT TO GOD'S MOVEMENT

ORIGINS SERIES PART 2 - GOING VIRAL

Ben Rudolph

Good morning Life Fellowship. Let's turn in our Bibles this morning to Acts Chapter 5 because that is where we are going to be today. We are continuing our series in Acts. (*Amen.*) Okay, good I hope you enjoyed the first part of this series, and today we are starting the second part.

We spent the first couple of months in this year going through the first part of the book of Acts. Then we spent six weeks doing mission emphasis and our Easter series. And now we are back in Acts Chapter 5. Let's try and get on the same page and remember where we were, and then point to where we are going to go. This is a new series called 'Going Viral.' And when you hear the words 'going viral,' you usually think of some internet clip, or some meme, or whatever it might be. But I love this story of the gospel in the book of Acts, because it truly is one of the first things we ever see going viral, and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So what has happened is Jesus has risen from the dead, He brings His disciples together, and He tells them they are going to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. We found that in Acts Chapter 1, and then He promises them the Holy Spirit is going to help them do it. The Holy Spirit comes in Chapter 2, He revolutionizes God's people, and thousands of people come to know Christ. And we start seeing this movement of God on display within the city of Jerusalem, among the Jewish people.

And here is what we know, God wants to see all people worship Him. And so what we are going to see from Chapters 5 through where we end in this series, we are going to see the fulfillment of Jesus telling them they are going to be his witnesses beyond Jerusalem, and we are going to see it happening in Judea and Samaria. We are going to see this thing starting to spread its wings, and it is going to be beyond ethnic groups, and it is going to be beyond a regional area.

We will be studying how God's movement is going to take over the world. We are going to be studying the narrative history of the early church. And as we study this, we need to realize this is something that is exciting to hear, not just for the history, but about how it happened. How did the movement of God totally turn the world upside down?

And what we are going to see in Chapter 5 is the beginning of opposition. And whenever you try to stop something, whenever you try to stop a movement, the best way to do that is to cause corruption from within. God's enemy, Satan, has always been doing this. He infiltrated the Garden of Eden, he infiltrated the royal line of David, and he just does all kinds of things to attack the work of God. And in this passage we are

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about to read today it is no different, because we are going to see Satan's first attempt to infiltrate this new church.

Here is what we know. To slow down a movement, or to stop a movement, you have to have corruption from within. For example, how many of you have ever heard of the video game, 'Fortnite?' Anyone? Are there any Fortnite people in this room or has any one ever played Fortnite? Maybe a few young people in here have. I was really hoping there would be a fifty year old woman in this room that would raise her hand, because that would have been the greatest thing ever.

But Fortnite is a video game that came out a couple of years ago, and it went viral. My teenage boys have played it, and I wondered why this game was so popular, because it seemed like everyone was playing it. I talked to other parents and they were saying, 'I can't get my kid to stop playing this game.' And then I found out why this game went viral. First of all it was a free game. And then it was easy to play, so anyone could play it. You didn't have to be an amazing gamer to play it. And then it was easy access because you could get it anywhere, and it was incredibly simple, so it went viral.

And here is the thing, I know a lot of parents that have tried to stop Fortnite in their homes, and they have not done so well. They tried time restrictions and barriers, but the best way to stop Fortnite was to put a virus in the game. I see some of you parents nodding in agreement. But here is the thing, the moment a bug starts being introduced in a game like that, people will stop playing it because they know it will corrupt their computer hardware.

And here is what Satan knows. We have read in the narrative already how Satan has already tried to stop the movement of Jesus through threats and physical violence from the religious forces; and it has not stopped. So Satan's idea now is to corrupt from within, and we will see this in Acts Chapter 5 and verses 1 through 11. Let's read this story of two people, Ananias and Sapphira, who were part of the movement of God, but who Satan used to try and disrupt the movement. Let's read these verses:

“But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.”

Now Chapter 5 starts in an awkward position because it starts with the word 'but.' And there is a reason for that because if we remember back to six weeks ago we read about how there had been a spirit of generosity. People were selling their property, giving the money to the church, and thereby showing radical generosity. And there was an amazing sense of oneness and sacrifice. We learned about a man named Barnabas

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who sold his property and laid the proceeds at the apostles' feet. So today's passage is continuing on with this. Ananias and Sapphira saw this happening and they decided they wanted to do that as well. So they do it, but they kept back part of the money for themselves. Let's read on in verse 3.

“But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.’”

“When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.” Now here is proof that there was no social media in the first century church. This man died at church that day and three hours later his wife still hadn't heard about it - that is insane. But that was their reality.

And Peter said to her, ‘Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.’ And she said, ‘Yes, for so much.’ But Peter said to her, ‘How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.’”

“Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.”

This had to be a scary church service, right? I am hoping that no one drops dead today after the offering, because that is essentially what happened here. Ananias and Sapphira sold this piece of property, but they hold back some of it, and only give a portion of it to the church. Now we are going to try to understand what is going on here. What was the big deal? Peter told them they could have kept back part of the portion because it was completely up to them. But there was something going on in the church that Peter had to confront. The Holy Spirit gave Peter special dispensation to see into this matter.

So here is what was going on. Here is how Ananias and Sapphira became corrupted. They wanted to be a part of God's movement. They wanted to be a part of God's community. They wanted the blessing from God, but they did not want to give God entire authority and autonomy over their life. That is what was going on here.

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They were acting like they wanted to be a part of this movement, but they wanted to do it their own way. They wanted to still have control and ownership over areas of their life. Listen, if there is one thing that is holding back the church from being everything that God wants it to be, it is not outside forces. It is not political parties. It is not laws. It is not social agendas. There is nothing that is keeping the church of Jesus Christ from acting as the church of Jesus Christ and being a movement of God - nothing but ourselves.

The greatest hindrance to God's movement in this church and out in our community is you and me. Now that is hard to hear. That is hard to think about. That is hard to wrap our minds around. We wonder why we aren't seeing more of a movement of God, why aren't we seeing more people come to know Christ, and we wonder what is going on. And this is going to be a hard sermon for me to preach because I am a positive person and I like talking about positive things. But when we come to God's Word and we see some hard things that need to be said, then we have to say them.

And what we see here is a church that has the opportunity to go sideways because it is potentially being corrupted with its own agendas. And God is going to confront that every single time. We have to look inside ourselves this morning and ask, '*How has my heart been corrupted?*' If we are not seeing God move, if we are not seeing God's Spirit transform people's lives, if we are not seeing the things happen that we know God wants, then we have to realize the first place we need to start looking at is ourselves. '*God, what is it that I am not doing?*' '*How am I becoming corrupted?*'

Ananias and Sapphira wanted to join God's community while retaining their personal autonomy from God's authority. And listen, we do the same thing. I want to share three areas with you where I think we can become corrupted and cause a barrier from seeing God's movement in our community and in our church.

The first area of corruption is corrupted worship. Listen, we know that giving is an act of worship. So Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of property, and trying to pretend that it was an act of worship, they lay some of it at the apostles' feet. But this was not about God anymore. There was an external act that looked like worship, but it was not really worship.

And here is the thing - we don't know what transpired in the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira. Maybe they had good intentions at first. Maybe they had inherited a piece of property, and they were inspired and motivated to sell it, and give all the money to the church. Maybe they had seen how blessed the church had been by what Barnabas did, so they wanted to sell their property and give it all to the church as well. And that would have been a huge sacrifice.

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Most of us who give are not giving a hundred percent of everything. Most of us give a percentage of what we have, but Barnabas sold a piece of land and gave everything to the church. That was huge. So maybe Ananias and Sapphira sold their property with great intentions of giving it all to the church, but once they had the money in their pockets it just changed. It changed them, because they then developed a greater love in their hearts for the money. \

Maybe they had this property for sale and they thought it would bring X amount of dollars and it sold for much more. And they thought, *'Listen, maybe since this brought more money than we thought it would, we should keep back a portion of it for ourselves.'* And here is what we know - whatever was going on was not worship. The sacred act of laying this money at the apostles' feet, this act of giving, which should have been done in worship, became corrupt. And that was because all of a sudden it was not about God anymore, and it was not about the church anymore.

Do you know why we know that? If we look at what was going on we see that people were laying money at the apostles' feet. Aren't you glad that we are not doing that today? Aren't you glad we don't have to bring up our money and lay it at people's feet today? I am glad we don't do it like that anymore. But here the act of worship was in laying things down, they were placing them down.

There is a verb there in the Greek that describes this act of placing it down, putting the money down at the apostles' feet. And this same word is used in verse 4 when Peter says, ***"While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal?"*** Peter was saying they could have kept the land, or they could have sold the land, kept the money, and it would have been no problem. He further said that they could have sold the land, kept a portion of it for themselves, and laid the rest at their feet, but without the façade of pretending to give it all.

The problem came when they pretended to worship. The problem came when they pretended to give it all. Peter asked, ***"Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart?"*** That word 'contrived' should be underlined or highlighted, because that word 'contrived' is literally the same Greek word as is used when talking about 'laying down' the money at the apostles' feet.

Here is what Peter is saying - *'You have laid down some money at our feet, but really what you laid down is money at your own feet. You really laid it down inside your own heart. You may be outwardly worshiping; it may look like everything is all right, but inwardly there is something that you are doing for yourself and not for God.'*

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So we need to confront our own idols because there will be times that they puff up and we think we have them under control, but instead they can get control of us. We don't know what we would do if we were put in Ananias and Sapphira's situation. We can really look down on them, but we don't know what we would do if we had similar circumstances.

When our kids were younger we would sit around the table and ask questions like, *'What would you do if you had a million dollars?'* And one of our kids said, *'I would buy a beach house,'* and my wife is still holding him to that promise. She asks him every couple of months, *'Are you still going to buy that beach house?'*

And we like to think what we might do with a million dollars. And we think, *'Oh, I would give to this charity, and I would help this person, and I would do this and that.'* But we don't know what we would do if we got it. We like to think, *'If I was in charge, if I was in control, if I had this position at work, this is what I would do.'* But we don't know until we have that position. We may have all these moral standards for our lives, but we don't know how we would act if we had that freedom. We do not know how our hearts would respond if an opportunity was presented to us.

But here is what we do know - we have the opportunity at that moment to not pretend any more. We have that moment to decide how we can really worship. The true test of worship is when we have the opportunity to lay something down at the feet of Jesus, and not let it be fake.

And that leads us to our next point which is corrupted truth. Ananias and Sapphira corrupted their worship so now there is a corrupted truth. And the corrupted truth is the virus of selfishness is starting to take over. Peter had some harsh things to say to them, but they were real things. ***"How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?"*** There was an internal struggle going on in the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira. There was a massive battle going on. The battle that was going on inside of their hearts was this - who was going to be the hero? Was it going to be Jesus, or was it going to be them?

Ananias and Sapphira probably thought this, *'We sold the land and we can keep back part of the money but we will still lay it down at the apostles' feet and we will look so good. Maybe we will get a nickname like Barnabas.'* Barnabas' real name was Joseph, but he received the nickname of Barnabas because of his gift. Ananias and Sapphira wanted a nickname as well. They wanted the popularity and for everyone to look at them and say, *'Wow, look what Ananias and Sapphira did.'* They corrupted truth because they were trying to appear to be someone they were not.

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And that is so dangerous for us. We can walk into a room, fellowship together, and pretend to be someone that we are not. And God wants us to confront those things. There was a battle going on in Ananias and Sapphira and Peter asked him, "*Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?*" Every time the word 'filled' is used it is talking about control. Satan controlled the decision that Ananias and Sapphira made, and not the Holy Spirit. They lied to the Holy Spirit. They lied to God.

There was this moment inside of them where they had a temptation to think, *'Man, we could look really good. We could be the hero of this church. We could be the ones to fund even greater mission work than Barnabas. People will look at us and think if it wasn't for us where would the church be?'* And they took the bait that Satan offered. All of a sudden it stopped being about Jesus and it started being about them and what they wanted.

The truth of who they really were was no longer hidden and they showed the person they wanted to be known as. It isn't hard to do the right thing like being in church this morning, or serving in a ministry, which are good things, but there is nothing more deadly to your walk with Jesus than doing all the right things for the wrong reasons.

Do you know why I know that? It is because it is my story. I could stand up here for a long time and tell you the surgical work that God had to do in my own heart. I remember where I was ten years ago planting a church. We were a young, small church and I so wanted to see God do some great things. But the problem was I was doing all of these ministry things but the motivation was for me. And I will never forget when the Holy Spirit showed me that I was the greatest barrier to seeing God move in my church.

That was a hard thing. When God shows you that you are the greatest barrier to seeing Him move in your children that is a hard thing. It is a hard thing to learn that there are some things that you need to confront. And I didn't want anyone to know about them, because I wanted to look good on the outside, good to my friends and good to my church. But let me tell you that living that lie has an expiration date. And if we live the duplicitous life, pretending to be someone we are not, I promise you that God will win. We can either humble ourselves, and stop pretending, or we can learn it the hard way.

The story could have been so different after Peter confronts Ananias about lying to the Holy Spirit, because we know the Holy Spirit had tried to persuade Ananias not to pretend, not to lie to the apostles, and not try to be a hero. Ananias and Sapphira's motivation for doing this was for people to look at them and be impressed, so they ignored the Holy Spirit and they lied.

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The story would have been different if they had looked at the church as a place of openness, mercy, grace and truth. Ananias could have come clean with Peter and told him that they had every intention of selling the property and laying the money at the apostles' feet, but then they started struggling with it. And he could have been completely honest with Peter and told him that they struggled with the choice because they loved money too much, and it was hard for them to give any of it let alone all of it. He could have been honest with Peter and told him that they wanted to give publicly because they desired people to look at them and to be impressed with their giving.

That would be the kind of honesty we need in our churches today. The reason why we are not seeing the Spirit of God move and work in churches and communities is because many of us are trying to pretend. There is so much fakeness in people, so much hidden, so much façade. Listen, because of Jesus we should be the most open people in the world. He died for the most wicked parts of us. We need to fully understand the gospel, and the implications of how much God loves us, and how He died for us, so that we might walk in the freedom of the newness of life. And because of that we should be the most open, honest people about our struggles.

If we are going to be a church that sees the movement of God, and who joins God in His movement, we have to be honest, we have to be truthful, and we can't pretend anymore. We have to stop the façade. Let's not be one way on Sundays and another way throughout the week, because God wants His people to be fully His. He wants our motivation to be to serve Him and to live righteously for His glory and not our own.

So there was corrupted worship and there was corrupted truth, and finally there was corrupted mission. Whenever we are reading the Bible there are some things that we should always be looking for, because the Bible is always connected from Genesis to Revelations. When we read the Bible God wants us to always connect the dots. The Bible is a beautiful book that He has written about His redemptive plan for mankind.

And when we read this story about someone who kept back something, and then paid the penalty with his life, it should remind us of a story in the Old Testament. Do you know what that story is? It is the story of Achan. Maybe some of you are not familiar with the story of Achan, but here is what we know. The children of Israel are going into the Promised Land. Joshua is leading them, and they face their first battle test to conquer the city of Jericho. The children of Israel are to walk around the city so many times, and then God crumbles the walls, and the Israelites are to go in and take the city.

God's command was that everything in the city was to be His. And all the Israelite did that except for one man, and that was Achan. He went into the city and he saw the money, and the beautiful garments, and he took some of it, and he buried it under

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his tent. And the next time the children of Israel went out to battle they lost against an inferior opponent. Joshua is crushed, and he asks God what is going on. And God told Joshua that there was sin in the camp and he needed to get it out. Joshua confronts Achan, and then Achan pays for it with his life.

So this is a very similar story to the one we are studying today. Ananias and Sapphira had told God they were giving Him all the proceeds from the property. But then they kept back some of it, and then lied. And we know that it is not normal to see people dropping over dead in church services. God doesn't do that often anymore. Amen? And we are thankful for that. We see in Scripture whenever God is doing something new, and where He has displayed an incredible amount of His revelation that there is a higher level of accountability with that.

Now maybe you are wondering why Ananias and Sapphira had to die back then when there is so much worse stuff going on in churches today. Well, it was because God was making a point. He was making a point to this early church that He cared about the purity and the glory and the holiness of His name. And God has every right to keep doing that, but the reason why He doesn't is because He is a merciful God. But never forget how holy God is, and that He cares about the holiness of who He is. The question we have to ask ourselves is - do we care about His holiness that much?

We first have to hyperlink this story to Achan because there is something that God is doing throughout the narrative of the history here. Another thing I see in this passage is that there is so much talk of feet there. *'Laying stuff at the apostles' feet and then the feet of the young men going out to bury them.'* I don't know about you but I wear shoes on stage. When I was a pastor in my other church I wore sandals all the time because I stood on the floor. But I do not want you to be looking at my feet. And we usually just want to keep our feet covered up, so what is the deal with feet in this passage?

Many times when we just read a story like this we forget there are things before and after that connect the dots of what is going on. The author, Luke, is making a point here. There is another passage in Acts Chapter 2 where Peter quotes Psalm Chapter 110 and verse 1. And it is also quoted by Jesus in all of the synoptic gospels, because it is a Messianic Psalm, and it predicts the authority of Christ that will be on display when He comes to earth. This is what is said in Acts Chapter 2 and verses 34 and 35:

“For David did not ascend into the heavens, but He Himself says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’ There is the mention of feet again. What is going on? This prophecy is showing that God is placing everything under the feet of Jesus. And the feet were a sign of authority. In the

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gospel of Luke, Luke talks more about feet than any other gospel author. Five or six times he tells about people who are worshipping Jesus and how they would fall at His feet. Falling at the feet of someone was a sign of submission; it was a recognition of authority.

There is something else in Chapter 7 of Acts regarding feet. There is someone else's feet that is going to be mentioned. Do you know whose feet that is mentioned in Chapter 7? It was Saul. When they get ready to stone Stephen, who is the first martyr of the early church, they lay their coats at a young man's feet by the name of Saul. And Luke is trying to tell us that there was a battle for authority going on right there. Who is really in charge here?

The reason why they mention Saul's feet in Acts Chapter 7 is because Luke is foreshadowing someone who is not living under the authority of Jesus, and that Jesus is going to have a battle with. You are going to see this man who has something placed at his feet is about to go to war with God, and we know how that turns out. Whenever you go to battle with God, whenever you say, '*No, God, I want things under my feet. I want things under my authority,*' you need to get ready for battle.

So we have to confront that every single time we walk into a church like this, every time we join God's community, it is not about us. It is not about what we want. I know I mentioned this back in the fall, but one of the things that I have learned over and over again is that people who are part of the movement of God must submit to one question and that is, '*God, what do you want?*' The more we submit to His authority and to what He wants, the more we will see God move.

The problem is we bring our own agendas. We bring our agendas to this church and we bring our agendas to our own lives. We want the benefits and certain blessings from God, but we are only willing enough to give Him certain portions of our lives, because we want to maintain authority over this area or over that area. We are not willing for God to touch those areas in our lives, so we are doing war with Him.

My wife always warns me whenever I talk about Hobbits that I will lose half of the audience. But I love Lord of the Rings, okay? I have read that book many times and I have watched the movies, so I have a Lord of the Rings illustration. So if you are not familiar with that, I apologize. But one of my favorite characters in that book is a Hobbit by the name of Samwise Gamgee. Samwise was Frodo's partner and they set out to destroy the ring of power. And the ring of power represents the evil in the world, and it corrupts everything it touches.

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And Samwise, for a brief moment in the story, gets the ring and he puts it on. Now Sam is a gardener which was pretty non-threatening, but the moment he puts on the ring something happens to his mind. He starts thinking, *'What if we made the entire world a garden, and what if I become the ultimate gardener?'* He starts having this vision of controlling the world with this massive garden, and everyone being a gardener. Then he takes off the ring and he returns to normal.

And here is why I love that story. It is because inside of every one of us there is a potential to desire something like that. *'I want to be a part of the church and what God wants to do, but I have this dream, I have this desire that I want to see happen.'* And we don't need to put on a ring to corrupt the mission of God. We can just bring our own agenda.

So what we have to do is confront the areas of our lives where the authority of God is not there. We need to confront the areas where we have not submitted, or placed under Jesus. Remember Jesus said He would place all enemies under His footstool. This is what He said would happen. This is the story of creation. This is the story of humanity. This is the story of life. God is going to get the authority, He is going to get the power, He is going to get the honor, and He is going to get the glory of every single thing in this world. We may not see it entirely in our lifetime, but it is going to happen. And what we need to do is decide if we want to join God in what He is doing, or do we want to do our own thing? Many times we will fight and wrestle against God and become the opposition of seeing God move.

Again, this is difficult for us, but there is also great hope. Even though we can mess things up, and we can be the speed bump in seeing God work move, what we also see in this passage is God continuing to work and move in spite of the opposition, in spite of the corruption. Look what it says in verse 12: ***"Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hand of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women."***

Listen, God is going to keep working. He is working, and He is moving. We just have to ask ourselves if we are going to join what God is doing. God is going to work and move in this community. Do we want to join Him in what He is planning on doing, or do we want to do our own thing?

The more that you and I place ourselves under the authority of Jesus, the more we can unite under the God mission and God's movement and God's worship, the more we will see God move. There is hope, there is redemption for all of us because what God

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loves to do is take those agendas, to take those motivations, to take those idols, and He likes to transform our hearts so that we will start desiring the same things that He does. What you and I have to do is learn how to lay it at His feet.

I have a couple of questions for you and then we are done. Number one - at whose feet are you worshipping this morning? Yes, we sang songs about worship, and I love those songs, but were you worshipping? We have our offering ready to give this morning, but who is it really for? That ministry you volunteered for - who is it about? Are you using your talent, giving your money, giving your time so you can place it at Jesus' feet, or is it for yourself?

Number two - who genuinely knows you? Are you someone who is known by someone in the body of Christ who genuinely knows you? Who knows your struggles well enough to see you as you really are, and not your façade?

Number three - are you helping the mission of Jesus or hindering it? God is looking for partners. And here is what we are going to see over and over again, week after week, over the next nine weeks, and that is the church in Acts going viral. And we are going to see opposition to the church, to the mission of God. But here is what we will also see - that opposition creates opportunity for the gospel. Opposition created opportunity for the gospel over and over and over again, and people were added to the church daily. People still came to know Jesus.

Listen, God is still working and He still wants to work here in our church. And the opposition that maybe you have felt in your own heart and life, you need to believe that God can use that as an opportunity for incredible growth and transformation. We can see God change us and those around us. There is hope and His name is Jesus. Let's bow our heads and close our eyes.

This was a hard sermon to preach because in it we are confronted to look at our own hearts and see our idols. And we need to ask ourselves, '*God, is it all for you? Is it all about you?*' This morning I don't know where you are at, but I believe God wants all of us to learn how to lay it down at His feet. If you are sitting here and maybe you have questions about God, maybe you have questions about what it means to follow Jesus, then we would love to talk with you this morning. We would love to answer any spiritual questions that you have, questions about the Bible, questions about God, or even questions about this sermon.

We are going to have some counselors up here to your right and you can come forward and talk to them. Maybe you just need someone to pray with you. You can come up here, or you can go into our prayer room in the lobby. Maybe you just need to

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pray for submission to the authority of Jesus. Listen, do not go through this journey alone. God is inviting you to lay it all at His feet, but don't do it alone, do it with the church.

Maybe you want to want to spend time at one of the tables having communion and worshipping the Lord, remembering His sacrifice, and what He has done for you. Whatever God is calling you to do, please don't leave this room without responding and laying it all down at the feet of Jesus.

Father, we ask that you would rule and reign in our hearts. God, any area of authority that you are not over I pray that we would learn how to place it at your feet. Help us to be people who are open and honest, who don't cover up. And that God, we would be a people where the arms of grace and mercy are wide open. Father, I pray that you would transform us. We want to see you work. We want to see you move. We want to see you transform, not just this church but this community. We want to see a movement of God across Lake Norman. And God, we pray that every man, woman and child in Lake Norman, the two hundred thousand plus people that call this area home, that they would have the access to hear the gospel. But first there has to be a change in our hearts. Oh God, help us not to hold back, but that we will learn what it means to submit all things to you and you alone. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.