

CONFRONTING CRISIS FROM WITHIN ORIGINS SERIES PART 2 - GOING VIRAL Ben Rudolph

Good morning Life Fellowship, and happy Mother's Day. It is so good to see all of you here this morning. Let's turn in our Bibles to Acts Chapter 6 because that is where we are going to be this morning. There are so many great things here about what we believe, and in what unifies us. And I think those are some of the things that we have to confront. Many times how this confronts us is through the test of what we believe, because the test of our unity is always shown through crisis. It is always shown through crisis.

So Acts Chapter 6 is where we are going to be. It is interesting as we go through these texts to see how the early church faced opposition. And we talked about this two weeks ago, and we are going to say it every week, opposition should lead the church to opportunity for the gospel. Opposition always leads to opportunity. Many times when we face opposition we feel like, '*Oh no, we can't do anything.*' Actually the way God has designed His kingdom to work is that when His people are under the greatest crisis, under the most pressure, that is when what is truly inside us should shine forth.

So far in our study of Acts we have been going back and forth seeing opposition both from within and outside. And we are back again to seeing how the church handles opposition from within. And today the early church is going to have to confront a crisis, a crisis that could have torn this church in two. And we are going to see how they responded, how they reacted to this crisis that they faced.

And today if the church is going to go viral, if we believe that the same God that is in the Word of God here in Chapter 6 is the same God we serve today, and if we believe the result of what they saw is still possible today, then that means we have to respond the way that they did. We have to look in this passage and see how they handled this, and then look inside of ourselves and ask how we are handling the same situations today.

So let's look at Acts Chapter 6 beginning with verse 1. "***Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint.***" Oh boy, a complaint, let's just stop right there. Complaints in churches - really? They just go together, right? I mean like cream cheese and bagels, like peanut butter and jelly, people are just going to complain at church. So we see for two thousand years that complaints are there. Now that is not my main sermon so let's go on.

"A complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution." Now here is what is going on. Every day the church took seriously their responsibility to take care of widows and orphans. There was no social structure, there was no social security, but when women whose husbands had passed away, and their family could not support them, the church took on

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the responsibility to feed them. So every day there was a collection taken and food was distributed to these women so that they would have something to eat.

We are going to talk a little bit later about what the difference was between a Hellenist and a Hebrew. But here we read that there were some widows getting neglected from having food to eat, so that kind of makes this complaint legitimate, right? So let's read on and see how the church responds to this complaint. ***“And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, ‘It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’”***

“And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.”

What we see here is this church was facing a crisis. And is the church going to become a Hellenist church or a Hebrew church, or will it stay unified. Here is what we know. What God is at work He brings unity, harmony and oneness. Amen? When Satan is at work, or when we are at work, we know that people love to divide. We love to get in our own little tribes and think that we are better than everyone else. That is just natural. So when you see groups divide with splits and disharmony it is not from God. When you see oneness occur it is from God.

The crisis that this church faced was how they were going to remain unified in the midst of this problem. What were they going to do? And we can see right here the priority of the disciples and how they were going to lead through this crisis. We see the priority and we see the convictions of what they really believed in this passage.

The main idea I want to give you this morning is this - where you find your answers in crisis shows what you really believe. You may talk all day long about how you believe this is the best way, or you believe this about God, or you believe this when persecution comes. You can say all the right things in church, or at your small group, but when you face something that you don't have the answer to - where do you turn? That tells a world what you really believe.

Here we see what the apostles choose. And one of the things we need to understand as we read the Bible is to always look for something called a chiasm. Now a

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chiasm is a big word but don't get lost in it. I want you to think of it as a sandwich. The ancient Hebrews and Jewish writers used to put the meaning and the main point of their narrative many times in the middle of the story. And the way that chiasms work is kind of like a sandwich. For those of you who are gluten free, I will explain that a sandwich has two pieces of bread. (*Laughter.*) And you can have lettuce or whatever, and then some kind of guacamole or something creamy on either side of the bread. I like to toast my bread as well. Any of you out here that like to toast their sandwiches? All right. Amen. Okay, we have some people right with Jesus. (*Laughter.*)

So you have your bread and your sauce, and then you have lettuce, tomato or onion, but then in the middle what do you have? You have the meat. And we call the sandwich by what meat is in the middle. For you vegetarians it would be whatever tofu or meat substitute you put in the middle of your sandwich. So my point is the main highlight of the sandwich is what is found in the middle.

And the main highlight of this passage is what is in the middle of the story. I am going to show you where a chiasm is in this passage. So when you are reading Scripture and you see that the same thing is mentioned over and over again, see if you can find a chiasm. In verse 1 it says the disciples were increasing in number. In verse 7 it says the number of disciples multiplied greatly. Boom, there is our bread. Then in verse 2 the disciples were saying that it was not good for them to leave the word of God, it was important for them to continue to preach the word of God. So the word of God is mentioned there and then in verse 7 it says, "***And the word of God continued to increase.***" So there is our sauce.

And then in verse 3 we see seven men were to be chosen from among them to handle the ministry, and in verse 5 we see they make the selection of the seven men. So there is our lettuce and tomato. And then in verse 4 we find the meat: "***But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.***" What Luke was saying was the main point of how this church, and how these leaders were able to navigate this church through the crisis was to be led with the word of God and prayer. And that is the meat.

If you were to buy a book about the greatest thing that is going to help your life and your church to do something that is exponentially amazing, and you open it up and the first page tells you to get in the Bible and pray, most of us would want our money back. What does that mean? That's it? But yes, that is it. That is the main point. The main point God is trying to show us, not just with this early church but every church that follows after that, is that how we respond to the questions we don't have the answers to is

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to go back to the word of God and to get on our knees. That is how God wants us to lead through crisis.

Here is what I do when I face crisis. My natural response when I am facing something that I don't have the answers to is to get out a piece of paper and I start writing down solutions. I start strategizing and planning and Googling and doing all kinds of stuff. And then when I figure out a great plan and a great strategy to fix this problem, then I pray. *'God, I have a great deal for you.'* (Laughter.) *I wrote this whole plan up and I need you to sprinkle some blessing dust on that and I will go on my way.'*

We do that, don't we? We have a problem in our marriage, so we will read this book and come up with our own plan on how to fix this, and then we will pray to God to bless our plan. God is not interested in blessing our plans. He is not interested in our strategies that are not grounded with the word of God, and they are not birthed from prayer to Him. If we are going to be a church that knows how to lead through crisis, we have to be people of the word and prayer. Maybe that doesn't sound sexy, it doesn't sound exciting, but it is real and it is transformational.

I know what some of you are thinking, *'Ben, I've tried that. I was in a crisis and I broke open my Bible and Jehoshaphat begat... But God, I don't need genealogy today, I need a special word from you.'* Listen, here is what most of us do when it comes to prayer and God's word. We treat it like a pill and not a seed. There is a difference between pills and seeds. I take pills when I get a headache. I go to my cabinet and I pull out the ibuprofen and I take a couple of them. Why do I take ibuprofen? It is because I am expecting within fifteen minutes for my head to feel better.

And many times that is how we handle God's word, and that's how we handle prayer. We get on our knees, *'God, I need something from you right now. God, I need something from your word right now.'* And we treat God's word and prayer like a pill that we take. *'God, you have to fix this immediately.'*

Seeds aren't like that though. I am not sure how many of you garden, but my wife loves to garden, and we have this beautiful little garden by our house. She goes out there every spring and does a lot of planting with seeds. And then we will have stuff growing after a few days. Right now our strawberries are looking awesome and we have radishes about to mature. But seeds take time and seeds need to be planted in the right soil.

And this is the actual picture that Jesus uses most. He used the parable of the seeds to compare His word to people. What He wants us to know is when we plant the word of God into the soil of our hearts it takes some time to get a strong root system of

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knowing who God is, to have a deep understanding of who He is, to know His character and to know His desires for our life. The disciples were not saying they wanted to find the greatest plan to feed widows. That is not what they did. What they did was to study His word in order to see His heart, to understand the way that He thinks, to know how He wanted them to handle these things. And the greatest thing they had was they had had the person of Jesus so they could remember the things that He had taught.

The disciples remembered that when Jesus was in the wilderness facing the trial of His life in confronting Satan three times, He had responded, “*It is written.*” That was how Jesus handled His own personal crisis. When Jesus was about to face the cross, and He was experiencing the anguish of being separated from God when He took on our sins in order to pay the penalty of sin with His own life, what did He do? He went to the garden and He got on His knees, He wept, and He prayed to His father. The disciples saw Jesus do this. They saw Jesus model this.

Why do we think that we have a better plan than our Master? We don’t. The disciples knew that where to find the answers in crisis shows what we really believe about God’s word and prayer. It shows what we really believe about Him. So we see four outcomes in this passage because the disciples chose to be grounded in the word of God and in prayer to God. If the word of God and prayer is going to shape us and mold us, and if we are going to have outcomes in our lives that are shaped by the word of God and prayer, this is what we have to do. This is what it looks like.

The first outcome is this - exponential love. We see here in this passage that there were some widows that were being neglected. And that sounds pretty harsh, doesn’t it? It is pretty harsh when you are not feeding old women. What is wrong with them? But what this exposes is something that is true for almost every single one of us, we just have to be honest, because every single one of us has cultural bias. Every single one of us have feelings in us, whether it was because of the way we were raised, or just from experiences in our own lives, that when we look at a group of people we think to ourselves, ‘*I don’t like them. I don’t understand them.*’ And this is normal, it is natural.

I know we live in a world today that is trying to say, ‘*We all need to appreciate and love everyone,*’ and that is a really important message, but we won’t know how to do that if we don’t know Jesus. We won’t know how to really love people because the world equates love today as meaning approval. And that is not love according to God’s word. Love does not equal approval. Love equals grace and truth.

One of the things that we see in this passage is they were having trouble loving people who were different from them. And why was that such a big deal? It was because there were these Hebrew Jews and these Hellenist Jews, and they couldn’t get along, and

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I will explain to you why. When we think of Hebrew Jews they were people that grew up kind of following the Old Testament ways, the Old Testament Laws. They read the Torah, they went to the synagogue, they worshipped at the temple, and they observed the feasts and festivals. They were people that we would consider Jewish by culture, Jewish by nature. They dressed like a Jew, they ate like Jewish people, and they lived in houses like Jewish people. It was a cultural expression of who they believed they were, and that they were the people of God.

The Hellenists Jews were a problem for Hebrew Jews because Hellenism had arisen through a man named Alexander the Great a few hundred years before this time. And Alexander the Great was truly magnificent, because not only did he conquer most of the known world at that time, but he did it and kept it conquered not with force but with culture. And Alexander the Great created a massive shift in the way that people viewed the world. Up to the point that Alexander led his conquest, almost every person in the world would have agreed about this one principle and that was people existed to serve and please the gods. Every person would have believed that. It didn't matter what culture you were from, it didn't matter what continent you were on, and it didn't matter the color of your skin, every single culture from Assyria to Babylon believed that we existed to worship God or the gods.

Hellenism came around and taught that there was a new way of thinking about life, that gods exist to serve us. They did not put God in the center; rather they put themselves in the center. They had their stories and their religions being all about how God was able to make their lives better. Does that sound familiar? We still haven't escaped that.

In fact here is the other thing that Alexander the Great taught because he didn't want to put an army in every single city. Instead his way of conquering these people and keeping them conquered was to appeal to the desires of every single person and to give them four areas of life that they could not deny. And those four areas of life were better health care, better education, better entertainment and better athletics. So athletics, education, entertainment and health care - does that sound familiar? How much time do you spend thinking about those four areas in your personal life?

And so these Hellenists Jews looked at the Hebrew Jews ways of doing things with the laws, the restrictions and the worship, and they preferred their way of a simpler life, a better life, and a more pleasurable life. So the Hellenist Jews had adopted a Greek culture, and the Hebrew Jews did not think very highly of them. They thought the Hellenist Jews were everything that was wrong in this world. They thought they were the

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reason God was not happy was because the Hellenists had chosen a false way, a different culture and they had turned their backs on God.

And what happened, because the Spirit of God was working, was some of these Hellenist Jews started to follow Jesus. And the church didn't know what to do with that. The church didn't know what to do with people that weren't like them. And the apostles had to confront this idea that they needed to love people that were different from them. They needed to learn to love people that were not easy for them to love.

Listen, because this is also where we have to confront our own hearts, our own bias, and ask ourselves what is inside of us that is keeping us from loving someone. There are all kinds of people out there and we are talking about exponential love. We are not talking about natural love, normal love, loving people just like us, loving people that look like us, or loving people that have our same values. We are talking about loving people that act differently, dress differently, come from a different culture, and people who we think the problems of the world are produced by. Those are the people that God wants us to love.

And the reason why the word of God and the prayer to God is so important is because it is only when we open up His word that we see His love for us. And we will never be able to love people with a supernatural love until we understand the love that Jesus has for us. The love that was enough that He died for us, the life He lived for us, and the sacrifice He gave to all of us. That is the love of God. But we will never fully understand the love of God until the seeds of God's love start penetrating our hearts as we read His word because His love is amazing.

We will never be able to love people the way God wants us to love them if we just keep looking at the differences in them. *'I don't like those people. They drive me crazy.'* To be honest some of the people that drive us the most crazy and the people we have the hardest time loving are in our homes. And there are a lot of great things we can do to fix our marriages, to fix family problems, but if we are not on our knees and in God's word there is very little hope for us. That is the solution. God has given us the resources to change us in His word.

There are all kinds of biases we have to confront over and over again. Think about this morning when we were singing songs because I am sure some of you did not like one of the songs. *'That was so loud.'* While others probably thought, *'Oh, that was so awesome.'* What are we doing? We have our biases, right? I grew up in the church because my dad was a pastor, and I have lived through decades of churches ripping themselves apart because of cultural bias over music or over dress. One generation likes

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music this way and another generation likes music that way, and so for three decades the devil has people distracted over music while people are dying and going to hell.

We have to ask ourselves what kind of church we are going to be, because the biases are going to keep coming. The cultural biases are never going to end, and we have to confront them so that we can love people that don't look like us, or dress like us, vote like us, or talk like us. When we can show them the love of Christ that is when we will see God do something great. That is a church that is formed by His word and by prayer.

Another outcome we see is exponential leadership. The disciples decided they had to care for all the women. Yes, they didn't like Hellenists, but God loved them, so they knew they needed to get over it, because God cared about the unity of His church. I can almost imagine the apostles hearing in their minds the voice of Jesus in John Chapter 17 and verse 21 when He said, ***"That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you."***

So what did they do? Their response was, ***"Pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty."*** This was so beautiful because they picked out seven men who were Hellenist Jews. The names of these men who are mentioned in verse 5 are Hellenist Jews. They chose Hellenist men to feed all of the women, not just the Hellenist widows, but to oversee the entire distribution of food. We need to be above reproach, so what we need to do is confront our own biases culturally. Who do we see as someone who shouldn't lead?

Now I have to be honest with you. We don't know how to do this. One of the things I was very passionate about, and I am still passionate about, is seeing churches collaborate and work together. When I was in Denver we did a lot of things with a number of churches and all different kinds of denominations. There was a very historic black church in Denver that dates back to the late 1800s, and I developed a really good friendship with that pastor. We were doing some things in the community just to try and bring some unity.

During the election of 2016 we sensed there was a lot of division in our community, so he rallied all the pastors of the black churches, and I started gathering all the pastors of the white churches, and we just started meeting every week to pray for our community. We just wanted God's name to be glorified. This was before the election results. In fact the day after the election fifteen pastors got together and we didn't pray for Republicans and we didn't pray for Democrats, we prayed for the glory of Jesus to be made known in Lincoln County. (*Applause.*)

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And here is what my black friend Franklin told me, and I will never forget it. We were sitting together and talking and he said: “*You know one of the things that hurts me the most is that when a bunch of white pastors and white churches get together, the only thing they ask me to do is to bring my choir.*” That hurt. And I had to look inward at my own cultural biases.

So what I love about this passage today is that the disciples were modeling Jesus. Jesus empowered and equipped all people. If you look at the disciples that Jesus had you will see that they were a motley crew. There was a zealot and a tax collector in the same group. Do you have any idea how much zealots and tax collector didn’t like each other? They didn’t like each other at all. In fact they would rather have killed one another. And yet Jesus was able to bring people from opposite political spectrums together under Him and together they were going to spread the kingdom of God. That is what Jesus does and His disciples saw that.

Another thing I love about this is seeing the qualifications the disciples put in selecting the seven men to minister to the widows. And this is something we have to confront as well, because many times when we look for leaders to do things, do you know what we look for? Primarily we look for competency. Next we think they should probably be people of good character so we look for that. But the disciples were looking for something that we don’t normally look for. Do you know what they were looking for? They were looking for people that were controlled by the Holy Spirit.

And if we are going to find people who truly are leaders in the kingdom of God, the control of the Spirit of God in our lives trumps competency and character every single time. We need to look inward. We need to ask ourselves if the leaders that we look up to the most, as well as the leaders that we want to become, have the quality of being a person controlled by the Holy Spirit trumping everything else. That is what should matter to us.

So we see this exponential leadership that they are creating because they are going to the word of God and praying. The next outcome we see is exponential truth. Here is what they said, ‘*We can’t leave the word of God to go serve tables. We can’t neglect our duty to be on our knees and to be in the word, because if we do that it is going to take away from our primary responsibility to teach and preach.*’ So here is what they did, they kept dedicating themselves to the word of God and prayer.

And then we see in verse 7, “***And the word of God continued to increase.***” So what is going on? The more we rely on the word of God and prayer, the more it produces fruit and people want that fruit. Remember when I was talking about seeds. The more seeds that are planted in our own lives, the more fruit it produces of the character of

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Christ in us. And more people are going to see Christ in us and they will want some of that.

One of the things that my wife loves to grow is a favorite tomato. They are these little tiny yellow tomatoes called Sun Sugar Tomatoes. And they are amazing. They are so good. If you can't grow tomatoes you can't grow anything, because they are the easiest thing to grow. And my wife has collected a bunch of seeds from past years of this Sun Sugar Tomatoes. And what happens when people come over and we give them these little yellow tomatoes to try is every person usually says they are just SO good. And usually they want some of these tomato seeds to plant, because these seeds sell out early every year. So you either have to buy them early every year or you have to save them for the next year.

And I know when people taste these little Sun Sugar tomatoes that they are going to want more, and they will want the seeds. That is how the word of God works. When the word of God truly is planted where the root system of His word gets into our lives it will bear fruit. And when the fruit of the life of following Christ starts showing up in our lives do you know what people are going to want? They will want that life too. So do you know what you get to do? You get to point them back to your seed source. *'Hey this is what you need. You need Jesus.'*

Do you want to bring more people to God's word? It is not about having them hear more sermons; it is when your life has been transformed by the truth of Jesus Christ. So we see exponential love, we see exponential leadership, we see exponential truth, and finally we see exponential fruit. I love verse 7; it is one of my favorite verses in the entire Bible: ***"And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith."***

Now I want to say something, you don't get Acts Chapter 6 and verse 7 without doing Acts Chapter 6 and verse 4. You don't get it. The outcome of what they are seeing is truly supernatural. It cannot be explained because here is the line that throws me off. ***"A great many of the priests became obedient to the faith."*** Have you ever thought about this? There should be a question mark popping in our mind over this line. How is it that when you feed Hellenist widows that the Hebrew priests want to follow Jesus? Does that make any sense?

In fact here is the problem I think we see in this passage. If we were running our churches today the way they were running this first church, we would sit down and try to figure out a strategy to reach priests. Instead we would probably come up with our own ideas, our own plans, our own budget and our own strategies and it would not do

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anything. But when you do things God's way, God produces something that only He can produce. And if we are going to be a church that is like this church, if we are going to be dedicated to the word of God and prayer, then we will begin to see things that have no human explanation.

Where is that in your life? Can everything in your life be explained with human explanations? Or are there things in your life that can only be explained by God? This is what you and I are taxed to do. This is our responsibility. This is where we need to look at this verse and know if we want to see disciples multiply greatly at Life Fellowship, then we have to do Acts Chapter 6 and verse 4. We have to prioritize our time on our knees. We have to do things differently, and this is the thing I pray for every single day. I want to invite you to share my prayer that I pray for this church. I am praying that God does something in us and through us that no man gets the credit for and there is no human explanation for it. (*Applause.*)

And we can desire that, but if we don't do it God's way we are never going to see it. We are just going to keep reading our books, and we are just going to keep coming to our strategy meetings, and there is nothing wrong with those things. But do we pray first and most? Do we start our meetings on our knees? When we have a problem in our marriage we need to pray for a solution on our knees. When we have a problem with one of our children, we need to start seeking a solution with God on our knees.

Listen, this comes to the root of what we really believe, because where you go and what you do when you face a crisis shows what you really believe. Do you really believe that the word of God is enough? Do you really believe that prayer is enough for your life, your family and this church? I will tell you that I want to be part of a church that strips back doing some of the things we are doing and does more of this.

I love this great story in Scripture in II Kings Chapter 19. I was reading it the other day in my quiet time. It is the story of Hezekiah who was a godly king. And Assyria was a giant nation that was conquering and mowing through other nations. They had just captured the ten northern tribes of Israel and now they are knocking on the door of Judah. And Sennacherib the king of Assyria sends a letter to King Hezekiah and tells him he is coming to get him and that his God can't save him. He tells him that his God and Judah will be just like all the other nations and gods that they had conquered.

And I love Hezekiah's response when he gets the letter. After he reads the letter he takes it into the temple and he lays it down before God. Then he gets on his face before God and asks Him to save them for His glory. Hezekiah knew they did not have the resources to win without God's help. And maybe that is part of our problem today because many of us have all the resources to make things work. And what God does to

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save Judah from a nation ten times stronger than they were can only be explained by God.

I want to leave you with some questions as we close. Number one - where do you turn when crisis hits? Some of us just turn to yourselves and say, *'I am going to solve it. I am going to fix it.'* Others of us turn to other people for help. Others turn to medication or substances. Others turn to Google to find an answer. I don't know what you turn to, but where do you turn first and most in your crisis?

Number two - what cultural bias that is inside of you do you need to confront that keeps you from loving people? What bias do you have when you look at a group of people and think you can't love them, you can't sacrifice for them, and you can't serve them? What love is absent from your life because of that bias? If we are going to be the people of God and do the work of God we have to confront our own hearts and minds.

Number three - what would stop if you stopped praying? What in your life would stop if you stopped praying? What would stop in your marriage if you stopped praying? What would stop in your children's lives if you stopped praying? And this is the question that haunts me - what would stop in this church if we stopped praying? We have to decide what kind of people we are going to be. We have to decide what kind of church we are going to be because we will know when crisis hits. Let's bow our heads and close our eyes.

Some of you this morning are in crisis. It might be a crisis of faith, it might be a crisis of health, it might be a crisis in your marriage, it might be a crisis in your family, it might be a crisis in your job. Where are you turning? Where do you turn to the most? Where do you turn first? As we get ready to sing these last songs, I don't know what the Holy Spirit is inviting you to do, but I would invite you to do this. Maybe you need to pray with someone. Maybe you have been trying to carry this burden and walk through this crisis in your own strength and in your own way, and you just need to pray with someone. We have people up here in the front that would love to pray with you. You do not need to go through this alone.

Maybe you want to come to one of the crosses up here in front and pray for whatever God is burdening your heart about. It could be this church, it could be our nation, it could be your family. We have stations around the room for you to take communion, to remember the broken body and the spilled blood of Jesus. Maybe you want to take some time this morning to remember and worship Him at the table.

Maybe you have questions about God or questions about your faith. We have our Next Step Station and our prayer room available with people who would love to talk with

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you about questions you might have. Whatever God is calling you to do, let us be people, let us be a church that continually devotes ourselves to the word of God and prayer.

Father, I pray for every single person in this room that we would humble ourselves before your authority, under your presence. God fill us with your Spirit. God show us the way out. I don't know the hurt, I don't know the pain, I don't know the crisis, but God I know this, you are a God who provides. You provide the answers, you provide the solutions, but more importantly you provide yourself. So may we seek you, may we want your heart, may we have your desires. Shape us, God, and mold us. Give us a root system in our hearts and in this church that is shaped and molded by the word of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ. God, I pray that we would see an exponential fruit and exponential outcome in our community by what we do on our knees, with no man to get the credit, only you. We pray this in the name of Jesus, 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.