

## THREE GREAT WORKS GOD PRODUCES IN TRIALS ORIGINS SERIES PART 2 - GOING VIRAL Ben Rudolph

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Good morning Life Fellowship. It is so good to see you here this morning on a holiday weekend. I am so glad you made it a priority to come to church. We are going to be in Acts Chapter 8 this morning. As you know we are in a series called ‘Going Viral,’ and we have been looking at the origins of the early church. We started this series back in January and we are now in Chapter 8. This is picking up right after the first martyr of the church, and that was Stephen.

Someone told me this after last week’s sermon that this was actually a question on Jeopardy this week. There was a question on Jeopardy of who was the first Christian martyr and the correct answer of course was Stephen. And we are going to be picking up right after the passage where Stephen lost his life.

We will be reading the first eight verses of this passage and I want you to see the flow of this, because many times when we are reading the Bible we are most concerned about what the text is saying. And that is very important. So what we are going to read here is important, and I want you to notice the words and the phrases that are there. Many times when we hear teaching on God’s Word it is a lot about the content, and again that is very vital.

But I want you to see here how Luke says something else, because many times the writers of Scripture are also saying something to us by how they write it, how they structure the narrative. They are saying something even in their structure. So let’s look at verse 1 of Acts Chapter 8 which is right after Stephen is murdered.

***“And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem.”*** Now listen, we have seen the church threatened, we have seen the leaders beaten and threatened, but now the persecution of the church has hit on a grand scale. They went from murdering Stephen to deciding it was time to go viral with their persecution. They were now attacking the church at large.

***“They were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation (or mourning) over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.”***

***“Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.”***

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Now I want you to see the structure of this narrative. The first three verses of this passage, verses 1 through 3, are a hinge moment. What I mean by hinge is that piece of hardware that opens and closes a door. When you turn the knob to open the door the door works on that hinge. So what we see in these first three verses is a hinge moment for the church.

In fact many scholars when they are reading these passages are not sure whether to put the first three verses of Chapter 8 with the Stephen narrative or to put these first three verses with the Philip narrative. And I believe that Luke was doing that for a reason. If you look at the first three verses you will see persecution going on, there is mourning, and there are people being thrown in prison. These are not good things going on. And yet this was the moment in those three verses that sets up what happens afterwards.

What Luke was saying is this - this dark moment of suffering, attack, trial and pain that the church is facing is either going to define the church or it was going to propel the church into something greater. So this is a hinge moment. Either the suffering and the persecution is what will kill the church, or the suffering and the persecution will allow it to become greater and go farther than they could possibly imagine.

And the reason why that is in the text is because you and I face the same challenges every single day. You and I face our own challenging hinge moments where something happens in our lives, there is some kind of tragedy, there is some pain or suffering, there is some kind of dark moment that we are facing. And in that moment we have to ask ourselves if we will be defined by the suffering or we will be defined by the victory.

That is what Luke is portraying for the church and that is what we have to face as well. Will the adversity, suffering, trials or disappointment determine the narrative of our lives or is there something greater at work? What we see in this passage is that God is at work and He is at work even in the trials and even in the attack. And even when Saul was brutalizing the church God was at work.

I think many times when it comes to us personally going through trials, when it comes to our suffering, we have the mentality of we just have to hunker down and get through it. And that is not the message that God wants us to have. What He wants us to understand is this - it is not about hunkering down; it is about seeing God do something greater. God is at work in our lives this morning. If you are facing a dark moment this morning, if you are going through suffering, if you are going through pain, if you are going through a trial, what this passage shows us is that God is doing a greater work than the darkness. And that is what we have to hold on to.

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We are going to see three greater works that God is producing in the midst of trials. And I wanted to share with you a little bit about how I have seen God do this in my own life. And the reason I share this is because I think a lot of times these moments that happen can either shut the door to God's work, or open the door to God's work. For those of you whom I have had a chance to sit down and have a coffee or a meal with, you have heard me share my story.

But there was a hinge moment that happened in my life a little over two years ago. I have been here on staff for the last 14 months when God brought us here from the other side of the Lake. We crossed the Jordan River and we made it to the right side of the Lake. Now I am just talking directionally. But two years ago I was in a prayer meeting and I was going through a dark period in my own life. I am not sure if you have ever been at that place in your life or not, but it is where you feel like maybe God is done with you here. Like there is a career issue that you are going through. It just felt like for me that God was turning the lights off in the house - that is the best way I can describe it.

This was at a church that I had planted, and I loved these people. And I couldn't understand it but there was this wrestling I was feeling, this emotional wrestling I was having with God. I wasn't sure if God wanted me to stay, or if He wanted me to go. The problem was every time I thought about leaving was this one issue - no one was offering me another job. Have you ever had that happen where you felt like God was leading you to something different, but there were crickets on the other side? That is always a hard issue to wrestle with.

But we were in this men's prayer meeting that we had early every Monday morning at our church. And there was a gentleman who was praying with me, and this is what he prayed: *'God, many times you don't part the waters until we step foot into it.'* And it was at that moment the Holy Spirit said, *'Ben, that is for you.'* When I sit with Life people and I share this story with them and about how God brought me here, I always bring up that hinge moment.

Likewise when I was meeting with all of my church family and the individuals I had invested in for over a decade, when they asked me why I was leaving, I would tell them about my hinge moment. That was a hinge moment when God was leading me to walk away from a ministry that I loved and opening a door for me to come here.

I share that with you to say some of you may be walking through something like that right now. Maybe you are going through a trial, or you are going through this uncertainty, and the thing that I want you to walk away with today is for you to believe that it is not all on you. God may be working on something greater for you even in the midst of darkness.

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So we see these three greater works here in these first three verses we read. We saw what Saul was doing, what was happening in the church and we see how God was propelling them to something that was even greater. The first greater work was the work of proclamation over security. Listen, you and I love our security don't we? I mean security is one of the greatest values that Americans hold on to. We have Homeland Security, and we have home security like ADT, and many other security systems. We love our home security systems, and many people even have these little cameras on their door bells. We have all kinds of things because we love security.

And we also love financial security. We love job security. When security is taken away from us we always think, '*God, there is something wrong.*' We don't think this should be happening. And another thing we want security for is our children. We see a lot of helicopter parents who never want anything bad to happen to their children and they want a secure life for them.

Many times we can trace this wanting security issue back to 9/11. There was something that happened during that time that brought us to the realization of the important value of security. But what happens when God doesn't have the same security system for us as we do? See, that is what He is doing here with the church. God was not as interested in the security of His church as He was in the proclamation of the gospel.

We see Saul here, and this is before he is converted, and he is bringing havoc. It says, "***And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem.***" So people are getting scattered everywhere. Look what else is Saul was doing in verse 3, "***But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.***" So Saul was going house to house where they were meeting. He was beating down the door and taking them off to prison.

Now I love the fact that Luke says 'men and women' because what we see here is that Christianity is not just a male dominated religion. I believe the reason why we see Saul not discriminating between men and women was he realized it wasn't just the apostles doing the work but that it was both men and women doing the gospel mission. So Saul's attack was across the board, house to house, and both men and women. The security and comfort they had had up to this point was now gone.

What did that do? How would the church respond when their security was gone? We see their response in verse 4, "***Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.***" So we see that Saul's attack on the church to squash this movement did not work. It didn't stop the movement of God.

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There was a moment this past week that illustrates this perfectly. I walked outside my house Thursday morning at 4a. It was a long story why I was doing this at 4a and I don't want to get into all of it. But I had to take a moving truck full of my parent's stuff up to my brother's house. Now it is not very fun to have to get up and go to work at 4a, and when you walk outside at that time there are all kinds of insects and bugs flying around. So I walked outside and there was this giant spider on my front porch. And it was a National Geography worthy spider.

So this spider and I are both just stunned. She wasn't moving and I wasn't moving. Now I have a natural reaction when I see a spider. I squash it. I am not like one of these people who go, '*Oh it's a little spider. Go and find your nice home now.*' No, that is not me. Now spiders are pretty fast, but this morning I was faster. I just took my big size twelve shoe and squashed it.

But now there was a problem because suddenly the ground started moving after I did that. And there were hundreds of baby spiders going everywhere now. And I thought, '*What have I unleashed on my house?*' One spider is bad enough, but now these tiny little spiders are all over the place. They are going into crevices and holes and I can't begin to squash them all because they are running everywhere. What have I done?

And that is exactly what is happening here in these verses. Saul thinks he is squashing the church, but people are going everywhere. And when they go everywhere what do they do? They proclaim. They proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. So what we see here is God working. And even when Saul is thinking he is getting his will accomplished, God is getting His will accomplished.

Do you know how we know that? Look what it says again in verse 1 of Chapter 8. "***And they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.***" There should be a ding going off in our brains right now. When is the last time we heard Judea and Samaria? It was in Acts Chapter 1 and verse 8. What did Jesus say to His disciples? He said, "***You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.***"

Where have the apostles already been? They had checked off the box of Jerusalem. They had seen thousands of people coming to know Jesus. Now God had something better for them, so after the persecution in Jerusalem began, the witnesses spread out and they went to Judea and Samaria. Isn't that fascinating?

Here is what we have to understand. God, in order to accomplish His mission, will choose events for our life that we would not choose for ourselves. See, if it was up to us to write our stories, we would not write in the dark moments. We would not bring

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in the persecution. We would not bring in the suffering. We would not bring in the heartache and the pain. Yet it is God in this moment that is working, and He is producing something greater. No one in the church of Jerusalem would have chosen for Stephen to be martyred. No one in the church of Jerusalem would have chosen to see people thrown into prison. Yet God is using the evil of men to accomplish His work. And that is how God works. And if God was working that out back then, He is going to work that out in your life as well. He is working through us to bring about the proclamation of the gospel.

So we have to confront our own value of security today. When security feels it is fragile to us, like when we go through a job loss, or when we have financial stresses, or when we feel like a level of comfort is being taken away, what is our natural reaction? What is the first thing that we do? We think, *‘God, you need to make this better. God, you have to fix this. God, I know it is not your will to take away my security. God, I know it is not your will to take away my comfort.’*

God in this moment in Scripture does not restore their security. And in the moment when we lose our security are we still going to proclaim His name? When we lose things that are precious to us, will our value of what is important to us take over? Here in this passage we see that God has allowed the disruption of their security. And if we are going through a dark moment such as our marriage not feeling secure, or our finances not feeling secure, we will realize there is this fragileness to life. And God may not be necessarily most concerned about restoring the security. He is most interested in seeing us proclaim the goodness of Jesus. What He wants us to do is proclaim the name of Jesus to those around us.

When you think life is dark and horrible and you want God to rescue you from the situation, know that God wants to work in you and through you to never stop proclaiming the name of Jesus. That is the first work that God is doing.

The second work that we see God doing is the work of ownership above dependency. The work of ownership above dependency is so important because what we see here is another hinge moment. Up to this point who has done most of the talking? It has been the apostles. Up to this point it has been the leaders, the apostles, that have done most of the preaching, and most of the ministry.

And we see a hinge moment here because look again at verse 1 of Chapter 8. It says, ***“They were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.”*** What? What is going on here? Why did the apostles stay put? Now here is what we don’t know. We are not sure why the apostles didn’t go. It could have been the fact that they felt the fragileness of the church, and they felt like if they left the church it would fall apart and they didn’t want that to happen. That could have been it.

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Or it could have been that their mindset, as Jews and Judaism, was to have their religion center around a singular location. Maybe they could not wrap their minds around the fact that God wanted this kingdom to go viral, that He wanted the movement of God to spread to all people and to all lands. And even though many times Jesus had taught them over and over again, they may still have believed that the central hub of Jerusalem was vital to the mission of God.

But what we see is something different, because now it is not the apostles who are doing the work; it is not the apostles who are doing the preaching. Look at verse 4 again. ***“Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.”*** It is unnamed people. It is second generation leadership. The reason why the mission of God, and the movement of God, and the church of God is going viral is because every single person in the church has a sense of owning the gospel responsibility to take it to the world. They are owning it. They are not depending on the leaders any more.

And this is the thing that we see over and over again. I remember hearing a great quote that Dr. Jim Slack made years ago. I am not sure if any of you know who he is but he was the missiologist who worked for the International Mission Board. He was very well known and a very respected missiologist. A missiologist is someone who studied the mission of the church, who understands the mission. And Dr. Slack has studied movements that have happened across the world historically and globally. These movements are still happening across the world.

Someone asked Dr. Slack what was the one common characteristic when he had seen a movement of God go viral globally. When he saw a church go viral, when he saw rapid salvation and baptisms, and the tide turn from a nation that doesn't know God to a Christian nation - what was the common denominator? And without batting an eye or even thinking about it Dr. Slack said, *“When God's people own the lost-ness of their place, God moves.”*

What we don't have today is a sense of ownership of the mission. You have heard me talk about this over and over again. We have to confront this idea of dependency that we are dependent upon the professional pastors in the community to get the work done. That has never been the intention of God. That has never been the intention of Jesus. When He came He came to call and equip and commission every single of us to do the work of the ministry.

So yes, is it my responsibility as a pastor to proclaim the good news of Jesus every Sunday morning? Amen. But we will never see a movement of God across Lake Norman, we will never see a movement of God in this nation, if we inhibit the only proclamation of the gospel to this moment alone. What we have to do is make the

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primary access point for the gospel be with every single one of us. We have to own it. We have to understand that it is our responsibility to be sure that this person hears about Jesus and he may not hear about Him unless we share it with him.

And ownership is hard while dependency is really easy. I don't like talking about this a lot because we live in a lake community, but I am not a good swimmer. I have never been fond of water my entire life. But as a child of someone who grew up in Florida I was forced to take swimming lessons as kid. And I remember as a kid my mom would sign us up for swimming lessons every single summer, but they would never work for me. Do you know why they would never work for me? It was because I am a scrawny person that sinks. *(Laughter.)*

There is no floatability to my body. And I remember being in college when they were doing all these body fat measurements, and I had only three percent body fat. And I thought, *'No wonder I always sink. I just go straight to the bottom.'* And my swimming instructors would tell me to just lie back and float, but when I would lie back I would just sink to the bottom.

But about the age of 6 I discovered these beautiful little orange floaties. Do you know what I am talking about? Do you remember these little colored floaties you would blow up and put them on your arms? So even though my mom would send me to swimming lessons every summer I knew what I really wanted to do. I wanted to put those floaties on. Then I could lay there all day long with my floaties on. I was dependent on those.

Maybe you are wondering if I ever learned to swim. Yes, I actually learned how to swim, but it took an eye opening moment for me. I was ten years old waiting in line with a bunch of five year olds coming up to my hip and I thought I should probably learn how to swim. That was the moment, and I finally took ownership of it.

And I think maybe you and I need the same thing. The orange floaties of church are like, *'Pastor, you are doing such a good job preaching Jesus. Yay!'* But there comes a moment when we have to look around and ask ourselves, *'How will they know about Jesus unless I tell them?'* So we have to move away from this dependency on the professional structure of church and take ownership of the mission of God.

This is one of the biggest shifts we have tried to make as a church since January. We shared our vision to be a sending church, to be more than a collecting church. We are not interested in collecting the most people. What we want to do is send the most people. And so we developed this idea of a one hundred, ten, and one strategy plan. And what we want to do is one hundred represents 100 percent of us. Every single person, every

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single day, every single place that you and I are to go we are to take ownership of going out and declaring the gospel of the kingdom to the darkest places of this community. We need to be willing to take responsibility for God's telling us to go.

Or maybe God is calling you to be the 10 percent that will leave this church and go start another work across Lake Norman. Or maybe you are part of the one percent and God is calling you not just to leave this church, but He is calling you to lead the context, He is calling you to leave the Lake Norman area and go to some place in this world to declare the good news of Jesus.

But here is the reality. All of us have to ask ourselves if we are taking responsibility for one of those numbers? Are you part of the one hundred percent, the ten percent or the one percent? God is calling us to own it. He is calling us to take ownership of His gospel mission. And the church will never go viral until we do.

So we saw this work of proclamation in the early church, we saw this work of ownership and then lastly we see the work of joy from mourning. This is probably the hardest one, but it is the most important work that we see God do. In the first three verses of this passage remember the hinge moment when the darkness was going on. There is some content we have to look at because Luke is saying something in these first three verses that he is going to answer in the last couple of verses.

In verse one we see, "***And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem.***" And then in verse 2 we see, "***Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation (or mourning) over him.***" So there was great persecution and there was great mourning. That word 'great' is translated from the Greek word *meGas*. Do you guys know what *meGas* is? *MeGas* means big. It means great. It is talking about size.

So Luke is saying that the size of the persecution was immense. The size of the mourning was immense. These people were beating their chests mourning over the death of Stephen. These were dark times. This was a difficult situation. This was not good. You see this great persecution and this great mourning happening and you are wondering, 'God, what is the answer for that?' See, that is what maybe you and I are stuck in. We are in the middle of that, we are in the middle of the *meGas* problem. We are in the middle of the *meGas* disappointment. We are in the middle of the *meGas* pain, the *meGas* suffering, the *meGas* confusion. And we do not know how God is going to answer this problem.

But then we see if we look at verses 7 and 8 that Philip does work down in Samaria and he is leading this mission, he is leading the movement of God, he is

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declaring the good news of Jesus Christ. And look what is happening. People are getting healed. “*So many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.*” So we see that many are healed. And then verse 8 says, “*So there was much joy in that city.*”

So in this text there is mourning balanced off with joy. We see this contrast of these two things. How can mourning lead to joy? And that is the biggest question that you and I have to answer. How does mourning lead to joy? How does our suffering actually lead to something that is joyful? And I believe it is in these adjectives. We have the *megas* of the persecution and the *megas* of the mourning, the deep, intense, dark things that are going on in their lives. And then the two words to describe healing and joy is the Greek word *pollaplous*. And *pollaplous* is a word that means multiple.

So if *megas* means deep then *pollaplous* means wide. It is where we get the word polygon meaning many. And I think this is what Luke is trying to say, and what the message is that God has for us. That many times the deeper the pain, the deeper the suffering, the greater impact it can have in the kingdom, the more people it can touch. And I think that is the promise that God has given us, because this is what God does.

How do we know that He does this? Not only do we see this happening in the life of the early church, but the ultimate hinge moment of all humanity was the cross. Where there was the ultimate injustice, the ultimate pain, the ultimate suffering, the ultimate act of sacrifice. The sin of the world placed upon the sinless Son of God. He was innocent but He died the criminal’s death. He took your sins and my sins in the deepest dark moment that history has ever known, and then there came a resurrection morning of joy. And the joy that has flowed through millions if not billions of people from that darkness is exponential.

And this is what God does. God is always in the work. He is always in the work of taking what is deep and dark, healing it and making it into something greater. God is working in this severe pain. He is working in this severe suffering. There are all of these issues that we have to walk through in life. And again I don’t know what that is for you. We come into a room like this where we all look happy and smiling, but for many of us there are some deep wounds, maybe even from years ago. Your hinge moment may have happened for you ten years ago, and you are carrying around that heartache, you are carrying around that darkness. And it is defining who you are. It is defining your today. And it is going to define your future unless you give it over to the Lord and you let Him heal you from it.

We need to understand that God is trying to do a greater work in us. God is always doing something greater. I am reading a great book right now by an old Puritan. It is one of those old books that you have to read a page, then put it down, and then think

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about what he just said. Thomas Moore wrote this book, 'Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices.' And he talks about how the enemy is always relentless in his attack on God's people. There is a point he makes in this book I thought was very profound. He says this: "*Satan is miserable. He is miserable. Ever since Satan rebelled against God he has been in a state of constant misery. And one of his greatest goals is to make us miserable as well.*"

I truly believe that the enemy was behind what Saul was doing. He was after them. He was behind the persecution. He was behind the death of Stephen. And he is behind all those dark moments that are in our story. But we have to believe that as much as Satan wants to make us miserable, God is working to bring joy. He is always working to bring joy.

So we saw the work of the Spirit, the work of God that was happening here. No matter what man can do, no matter what the enemy can do, we have to understand that God is doing something greater. He wants us to hand over that pain. He wants us to hand over that suffering. He wants us to hand over that trial. And He promises if we give it to Him, and we let Him do His work in us, He can do something great. He can bring us joy beyond our comprehension.

I think about those devout men, those devout men who really knew Stephen. They were his friends, they were his family and they mourned his death. But then I think about the people of Samaria, all those hundreds if not thousands of people that were rejoicing after hearing the good news of Jesus. They probably had never heard of Stephen, but it was through his death that they could hear the gospel. And sometimes that is the way it is. Sometimes we may never see the joy that comes from our mourning, but the promise of God to create joy from mourning is sure. It is something we can take to the bank because it is true.

And joy always has to be tied to something. I believe if you are sitting here and thinking that you want that joy, you want to move forward, you want healing, you are wondering what you should do. I believe the simplest step you can take is the step of obedience. What I mean is that many times we wait for the sky to part, or lightning to strike, or we wait for these great epiphanies, instead of simply walking forward in obedience.

What I find so profound about this passage is that the people of God and Philip were simply being obedient to God's call. All kinds of stuff was happening around them, all the darkness, all the broken relationships, but they just kept being obedient to God. And I believe the people who are the most joy filled people I have ever met are the ones who are the most obedient people to God's word.

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I am going to take you to that hinge moment that I shared with you in the beginning of this sermon. I would like to tell you that I went home that day and talked it over with my wife, and we decided we were going to move forward. No, it took me another six months to obey God. Six months of wrestling. Six months of doubting. Six months of battling fear. But eventually I submitted. And what my family and I got to experience when we stepped out on faith was something that to this day has brought a lot of joy to my life. I am thankful for it.

I want to leave you with one question this morning and that is this - How are you submitting yourself to the hinge moment that God has brought in your life? How are you submitting, how are you yielding, how are you responding to that hinge moment God has brought to your life? Will you yield? Will you give it to Him? Will you allow Him to do something greater than you can imagine?

Let's bow our heads and close our eyes. What does God want you to do this morning? How does God want you to respond? Maybe it is just that simple act of submission. Maybe this hinge moment that God has brought in your life has been met with you personally just digging in your heels. And maybe you are running from God. Maybe you are hiding from God. Would you make the bold step to move forward? What does that look like for you?

Maybe you are unsure about what to do. We have counselors all around up here this morning. There are people up front that would love to talk with you if you have questions, or maybe you just need prayer over your own hinge moment, that dark moment in your life. Listen, you are not alone. We are a family. Don't carry the burdens that you feel with you. We are to bear each other's burdens.

So there are people up front, or there is a station called Next Step Station as you walk out if you want to know what the next steps are for you. We have a prayer room at the side of the lobby if you want to pray with someone. Listen, we don't want you to walk through what you are going through alone.

Maybe you want to come up front and just pray. There were a number of people that came up to pray during the first service. You can just go to one of the crosses in front or on the side. Maybe there is just a moment of yielding you need to give over to Him, because your security is gone, or the attacks are heightened, and you just need to submit to Him. Maybe you want to go to one of the tables for the Lord's Supper with the bread and the cup representing the work that God has done for you, and the joy that Jesus has won for us. Maybe you just want to participate and rejoice in that joy that Jesus has provided for you with His blood. Whatever God is calling you to do, however He is calling you to respond, let's embrace the greater work of God this morning.

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**Ben Rudolph**

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*Father, fill this room with worshippers. Fill us God with a sense of your presence. Fill us with the sense that you are a God of greater. God, show us that what the enemy means for evil you mean for good. That God, we are not going to be defined by our sin, or the suffering, or the trials, but that we are going to be defined by a people that are bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. God, do something in us. We believe that the gospel changes lives, it has changed ours. God help us to leave this place to own the lost-ness of our workplace, to own the lost-ness of our schools, to own the lost-ness of our neighborhoods. God, we want to see your work happen, not just in this building but across Lake Norman. Oh God, help us to yield to that today. Give us the sensitivity, Lord, we need to obey you and to listen to you. God, we crave to see what happened in Samaria happen in Lake Norman. God, we come before you today as a hungry church, asking you to send us out, fill us up, lead us on. 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.*