

# TRINITY

BIBLE CHURCH DALLAS

The Sermon

Dr. Steven J. Lawson

Luke 6:27-38

"The Hardest Commandment"

August 4, 2024

TRANSCRIPT

I want you to take your Bible and turn with me to Luke chapter 6. And today we're going to be in verses 27 - and we'll see how much time we have. I have notes through verse 38. We'll see if we can get there. Luke chapter 6, and beginning in verse 27. The title of this message is "The Hardest Commandment."

"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. Treat others the same way you want them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, and expect nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure - pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return." These are the words of our Lord. Let us go to Him in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, these are demanding words. In some ways, we would love to explain them away. But here they are, and they stand in front of us, and they require something of us as followers of Christ. So I pray that You would give us understanding, insight. Use me as an instrument, a tool, to shine a light on these verses. I pray that You would make us to be this kind of disciple of Christ. So, Father, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

In these verses that I have just read for us, this has to be the hardest commandment that is given to us. When Jesus said in Matthew 22, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength," I get that. God is flawlessly perfect in His holiness. And my heart, my regenerated heart, is drawn to God. I want to pray to God. I want to study God's Word. I want to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I read that I'm to love my neighbor as myself. Many of our neighbors are fine people who are easy to love. Some are a challenge, but others are easy to love, so that one makes sense to me. And then the apostle Paul says, "Husbands love your wives." That makes total sense to me. I'm attracted to my wife. My wife is my helpmate, my wife helps me and serves me, so I'm all in on that one. But when I read this, "to love my enemies," this is totally antithetical and totally contrary to our natural way of thinking; and quite frankly, my flesh rises up to push back on this.

Jesus is saying that we must love those who curse us. We must love those who mistreat us. We must love those who hit us on the cheek. We must love those who take our coat. This takes love to a whole other level, a whole other dimension. I mean, these other aspects of love are really kid stuff. To

love God and love your neighbor and love your spouse, that's kid stuff. This is one of the hard sayings of Jesus and it cannot be minimized for what it is saying.

And just put yourself into the sandals of this crowd, those standing there that day 2,000 years ago, and what they are hearing, "Love the Roman soldiers who are now occupying our land. Love the Roman rulers like Pilate. Love the tax collectors who are bilking us out of our money. Love your masters who are mistreating you. Love the Pharisees who are piling on all kinds of demands from their manmade commandments. Love the Samaritans who are really half Assyrians. Love Barabbas and other terrorists."

No, this was a big pill to swallow. And if we understand it correctly today, it's a big pill for you and me to swallow as well. So let's walk through this challenging passage.

I'll say it again: "The hardest commandment." I want you to note, first, in verses 27 and 28, "the imperative to love." You know what the word "imperative" means. It's a command – not an option, not a suggestion, not a helpful hint. It's a command that is backed by the sovereign authority of the lordship of Jesus Christ.

He begins in verse 27, "But I say to you." In other words, "Take this to heart. Listen very carefully to what I am saying to you." And Jesus will now give four commands – you can see it right there in your passage: love, do good, bless, and pray.

He begins by saying, "Love your enemies." When he says "love," He uses the word that you're familiar with, *agapaō*, which is the highest form of love that there is. There are other words used in the Greek language for a friendship kind of love or a romantic kind of love. But this is the highest form of love. It's an unconditional love by which you sacrificially give of yourself to seek the highest good in another person. And that's the word that

he intentionally uses. And He says, "Love your enemies. Love those who hate you. Love those who oppose you. Focus on the well-being of others. Get your eyes off of yourself."

Now, when He says, "Love, love your enemies," I want to break down this word "love" for you, because what you don't see in the English, in your English Bible, becomes all the more vivid when you read it in the original language with which Luke wrote this. Let me just walk you through this. It's present tense, which means, "Always love your enemies," 24/7. Day in, day out, love your enemies.

It's in the active voice, which means you can't sit back on your heels and wait for your enemies to come to you to make some kind of reconciliation. No, you need to take action. You need to take the initiative. You need to love your enemies regardless of what their attitude is towards you. It's in the imperative mood, which means it's a command. And it's also second-person plural, which means "every follower of Jesus Christ." This is how we must love: always, actively, volitionally as a choice of our will, regardless of what our feelings are.

And we have all kinds of enemies. There are political enemies. There are ideological enemies. There are relational enemies. There are vocational enemies. There are family enemies. There are all kinds of adversaries who oppose us, whether directly or indirectly, to love your enemies. It's not hard to understand, it's hard to swallow.

Then He says, second, "Do good to those who hate you." The word "do" here means "practice." And "good" here means "what will benefit them." "Do good to those who hate you." Could anything sound more countercultural than this? The word "hate" is *miseō*. It comes into the English language as "a misogynist." "To those who despise you, to those who loathe you, to those who detest you, you are to do good to them and serve them."

And then He says in verse 28, "Bless those who curse you." The word "bless" here comes into the English language as a eulogy, like a eulogy given at a funeral where you stand up and say something very good and very positive about the person who has just passed away. So, "You are to speak well of those who actually slander you and curse you and revile you and denounce you."

And then He wraps it up at the end of verse 28, "Pray for those who mistreat you." That's the greatest thing you could do for another person is to pray for them. And in this case, in the vast majority of the cases here, it would be to begin by praying for their salvation, that they would come into the kingdom of God and that they would enter into a personal relationship with the One who's issuing this command.

What we take from this is that we are commanded to love our enemies. And therefore, love is not dependent upon a feeling. We normally think of falling in love and the emotional adrenaline rush that comes with that. But that's not the word that Jesus is using here. It's an active choice of your will to love those who are seeking your harm, not just who oppose you, but who are seeking to do you harm. "Love, do good, bless, pray."

R. C. Sproul gives some good advice. He says, "If you want to put this into action, try this experiment for 30 days. If there is someone you don't like or someone you don't get along with, be it a coworker, your boss, or whoever, even if it's your biggest enemy, try praying for them. Try praying for them every single day for 30 days. Some amazing things may happen in your relationship with them or in your life. But you can be sure that things will happen in your heart because you will be heeding Jesus' call to pray for those who curse you."

I would imagine, as I've walked us through these two verses, that your mind is very active, almost thinking of exception clauses and, "Surely he doesn't mean for this person." And whoever is popping up in your safe space of your mind right now, that is exactly the one you need to be praying for to

follow Sproul's recommendation for the next 30 days. It may change them, but it will surely change you. So that's the imperative to love.

The second thing I want you to see is "the illustrations of love," and that's in the next two verses. Jesus now gives us four illustrations of what it looks like to put this kind of love into action toward enemies. So, illustration number one is in verse 29. He says, "Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also." And when He says "whoever," He's referring to those who curse you and hate you. "And hit you on the cheek" is not hit you in the nose, hit you in the temple, hit you in the chin to knock you out. To hit someone on the cheek is like a slap to the cheek. It's an expression of dishonor. It's an expression of disrespect. It is to belittle that person or to insult that person, which in reality hurts worse than if you were dealt a blow to the nose. So He says, "Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also, then let him belittle you again."

You know, Jesus received a lot of abuse, verbal abuse; and He was like a lamb that was led to slaughter, yet He did not open His mouth. The only time when Jesus went into a fury and cleaned house was when you desecrate the name of God. And if you desecrate the name of God, then He will take a bull whip and drive you out of the temple. But if you desecrate His name and slander Him, He will not respond in self-defense. And that is the idea of what Jesus is saying here: "If someone belittles you, then don't rush into an argument to justify yourself, then allow them, go the second mile with them, and allow them to belittle you more." It would be better for that than for you to get into a range war with that person.

And then the second illustration, He says, "Whoever takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either." Now, this needs some clarification. In this context, this is not saying that you shouldn't lock your doors at night, and if somebody breaks in, just let them clean house and then offer them the garage as well. That's not what this is saying. In the context, it's talking about lending.

You'll note in verse 34, the word "lend" is used twice. And in verse 35, the word "lend" is used again. And so if someone comes to you and has a need and you're able to lend to them, then you should lend what is yours to them. It's not talking about facilitating robbery and thievery, it's talking about sharing what you have with someone else. He says, "Do not withhold your shirt from him either." In other words, "Meet all of his needs to the extent that you can."

Then the third illustration is in the next verse, in verse 30. He says, "Give to everyone who asks of you, who asks for help." See here, the idea is not breaking in and stealing, the context is someone who asks for help where they are in life. And He says, "Whoever takes what is yours, do not demand it back. In other words, consider it a gift. If they don't repay you back, then don't take them to court, then just consider it a personal gift that you have given to that person; and there should be spirit of generosity within each one of us.

Now, those verses that I just read, I've had five weeks to think about it. And this must be seen in the larger context of what the full counsel of God teaches in the entire Bible. So to bring the rest of the Bible to bear on these two verses, "love your enemies" does not mean we must agree with them. It does not mean that we cannot confront them and correct them. It does not mean that you must give up your beliefs and your convictions. It does not mean that you must meet them halfway. It does not mean that you must pretend that your differences are unimportant. It does not mean that you must become a pacifist. It does not mean that you cannot protect yourself if you are physically endangered. It does not mean that they may touch your wife or your children.

Loving your enemies does not mean that there should not be the death penalty exercised by the government in severe offenses. It does not mean that there is never a justifiable war for the government to undertake in order to protect innocent lives. It does not mean that a man who can work but refuses to work in order to earn his own means of living is to be given entitlements and be allowed to remain lazy and unproductive. To take the whole rest of the Bible to bear upon this, it does not mean that we just dole

out everything that we have and people can come up and physically abuse us and our family and there is no self-defense, it does not mean that at all.

What it does mean is that we are to have a spirit of giving and generosity. It does mean that we are to love those who are unlovely and who offend us. It means that we are to give to our enemies who have a legitimate need and are unable to meet that need by their hard work. It means that we must let past offenses go. It means that we must refuse to retaliate with our enemies.

So what this means is you and I must hold all of our possessions with an open hand and be reminded that none of our possessions belong to us, that everything that we have has been given to us by God Himself. Whether through our hard work, whether through inheritance, whether through the gift of someone else; nevertheless, it has come from God, and we are a steward of what God has entrusted to us. Therefore, my coat is not my coat, my coat is God's coat. My shirt is not my shirt, it is God's shirt, and I am to share my coat and my shirt or my whatever with those who have need, that I can help them.

But in this context, what pushes this over the edge is that this is in reference to our enemies. And if you don't have any enemies, you're probably not following Christ. Jesus said, "Woe unto him when all men speak well of you." So if you don't have any enemies, it's because you haven't stood for anything. If you stand for something, then there will be pushback and you will have enemies of various levels. So this is the illustrations of love. I think we get the picture.

Now, the third thing I want you to see is "the ideal of love." Beginning in verse 31, here is the general operating principle of love. He says in verse 31, "Treat others the same way you want them to treat you." You're very familiar with this verse. It's also in Matthew chapter 7. It's known as the golden rule, that we are to do unto others, which is a more literal translation: "Do to others the same way you want them to do to you."

Now, it's not saying we are to do to others like they do to us, where it's just a tennis match where you return serve in like manner. No, "We are not to do to others as our" - and the "others" here in this context as our enemies. "We are not to do to others - curse, hate - as they have done to us," is to be the total opposite. We are to treat them not as they treat us. We are to treat them as you want to be treated.

So, how do you want to be treated? Well, you want to be treated with courtesy and dignity. Even when you are not receiving that, Jesus is saying this is how we must treat others. So rather than coming down to their level and playing ball on this lowest level, "If that's the way you want it." No, we are to maintain the high road and rise above how we would be treated by those who are our enemies.

And He goes on to explain why it has to be this way. He says in verse 32, "If you love those who love you," well, "those" refer to our enemies - or, excuse me, it doesn't refer to our enemies. He goes on to explain it: "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them."

Real love reaches out to those who do not love you. And if you only love those who love you, you're no better than a pagan. You're no better than an unregenerate heathen. That's what He is saying here. He says, "What credit is that to you?" meaning credit with God. God does not take notice of that. Yeah, He sees it, but He just doesn't take notice of that. That doesn't register in heaven as some extraordinary act of love if you only love those who love you. The answer to that question of verse 32 is "no credit."

And then He goes on to say in verse 33, "If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?" It's a rhetorical question. It anticipates a negative answer. A rhetorical question here is really a statement. It's not a question, it's a statement. There is no credit with God in heaven for you simply to love people who love you. That doesn't distinguish you in the least from an unbeliever. And He says at the end of

verse 33, "for even sinners do the same." You don't even have to be born again to love people who love you.

So in verse 34, "If you lend" - and that really I think encompasses this whole context going back to verses 29 and 30 - "If you lend." And it's only used three times in the New Testament, twice here - really, three times here. The other time is in Matthew 5 and it's translated as "borrow." "If someone asks to borrow." Here it's, "If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you?" Well, there's no credit with God.

He says, "even sinners," and sinners here refer to those who are unconverted, unregenerate outside the kingdom of God, and who have made themselves to be your enemies. "Even your enemies love those who love you. Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount." And so the point is that for us to stand out in this dark world as true followers of Christ, then we must show love to those who actually hate us; and it becomes a badge of our discipleship, that we are willing to be so opposite from how this world operates that we obviously are following Christ.

Now, before we move on, we need to remember that this is how God loved you. When you were a stinking rebel, when you were an enemy of the cross, when you were uncircumcised of heart and stiff-necked, when you were living in disobedience to God, God did not wait for you to get your act together before He would love you. God took action. God took the initiative. God pursued you. He had someone bring the gospel to you. God worked in you to open your eyes and open your ears to see and hear the truth. He opened your heart when you were a rebel, when you were so stubborn, to bring the gospel home to you. We need to remember that this is how God loved us; and we in turn must now love others exactly as God has loved us.

Well, this leads us to the fourth heading in verse 35, "the imitation of love." In verse 35, He repeats what He said earlier in verse 27 just to further

emphasize it. He says, "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return," - and all of this directed to those who hate you, and He says - "and your reward will be great." "Reward" here is parallel with or synonymous with "credit" that was mentioned in the two previous verses. The word "reward" actually means "wages earned."

We are saved by grace, we are rewarded by works. And your works matter to God. Your works will precede you to heaven. Your works will be waiting for you at the judgment seat of Christ. The books will be open, and your good works will be presented. And Christ will audit your life, and He will review how you treated your enemies. And if you love your enemies and do good to them even when they have not done good to you, this says, "Your reward" - what you have earned, what you have worked, a labor of love - "your reward will be great." It will not be small, it will be great. And some will receive greater rewards than others because some have had to live with an enemy. Some have had to work with an enemy. Some have had to be engaged with an enemy in a very close way; and even greater will be your reward for your perseverance and endurance in loving them.

And then He adds at the end of verse 35, "and you will be sons of the Most High." The Most High is God. It's a synonymous title for the Sovereign One. He's the Most High in the organizational chart of the universe. He is the Most High. Everyone and everything is under His feet. And when He says, "You will be sons of the Most High," He's not saying you will earn your sonship, He is saying, "You will give evidence of your sonship, and you will make it known before a watching world that you are a true follower of Jesus Christ."

And now He gives the explanation, and this explanation is huge. He says, "For" - which always introduces an explanation of what was just previously said - "For He Himself." We know who that is, that is the Most High. He's referred to later as "your Father in heaven." "For He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men."

You want to be like God? Then be kind to evil men. The word "kind" means "gracious," "giving," "good." And ungrateful men are those who would never say thank you when you help them. And they would never say thank you to God; and yet God continues to show love to them. And the word "evil" is translated elsewhere in the New Testament as "bad" or "wicked."

He says, verse 36, "Be merciful." That means be full of compassion for those who are in misery. And every lost person is in misery. "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." We can never rise to that level, but we are, nevertheless, to love in that manner. And what we see here - I want to just take a moment just to put a footnote here, something we've talked about before. This is what is known as "the doctrine of common grace."

There are two expressions of the grace of God. There is common grace, and there is saving grace. What is being referred to here by Jesus is common grace. Common grace is common to all creatures. It's extended to all people. It is non-saving grace. But it is just the overflow of the goodness of God's heart even to those who are unbelievers and who will die in unbelief. God has been so good to them.

He's allowed unbelievers to marry. He's allowed unbelievers to have children. He's allowed unbelievers to have a job. He's allowed unbelievers to travel, to see the beauty of His creation. He's allowed unbelievers to enjoy architecture and art and so many things in this world, sports. It's an expression of the common grace of God that is lavished upon God's enemies. In fact, God is so good that Job 39 tells us, "He feeds the animals," that "He changes the seasons," that "He causes the sun to shine on the just and the unjust. He causes the rain to fall on both believers and unbelievers." This is the common grace of God. It's real. And that is the reference here that Jesus is making, that even God shows certain benefits and certain blessings to unbelievers. So must we, if we're to love as God loves, of course.

Then there's saving grace, which began in eternity past and it extends through time and it goes without end into eternity future. The saving grace

of God is an election and predestination; and at the cross, redemption and reconciliation and propitiation and expiation, and leads to regeneration and sanctification and glorification. None of that is given to unbelievers, it's given exclusively to believers and believers only. But to all mankind, God does not extend saving grace to make it real, but God does extend common grace. And this is what He expects of you and me, that as we go to work, as we rub shoulders with unbelievers who may have a foul mouth, who may be dishonest in their business practices, who are stepping on you to get promoted beyond you, certain family members who are just agitators, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, we are to be like God, and we are to show mercy and compassion even to those who have opposed themselves to us because this is exactly what God has done toward His enemies.

This leads us, finally, to "the influence of love," and that's in verse 37. There are four commandments that are given here. He says, "Do not judge, and you will not be judged." When He says, "Do not judge," He's talking about a harsh, critical spirit, looking down your long nose at people who are still in their sin. He says, "Do not judge," meaning, do not have a condemning spirit – "and you will not be judged." He's not talking about not be judged by them. You will not be judged by God.

And He says, "And do not condemn," – meaning your enemies – "and you will not be condemned," because God's taking note. He says, "Pardon, and you will be pardoned." If you will say, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," then God will pardon you.

He says in verse 38, "Give, and it will be given to you." This leads now into this closing analogy. He says, "They" – and the "they" refer to your enemies – "They will pour into your lap a good measure – pressed down, shaken together, and running over." The imagery here is of a farmer who brings in his harvest, and he puts corn in a bushel and he shakes it so that the corn really sets down; and now he can pour more corn in. And he shakes it some more, and now he pours it all the way to the brim where it is now overflowing, and it's a picture, an analogy that Jesus is using here to say that if you will love unbelievers, your enemies this way, there is a good chance – I hate to use the word "chance" – there is a good probability

that it will win them over. And there could be ramifications of that, that their heart will so be changed, you will not be judged by them and you will not be condemned by them, and you will be pardoned by them, a possibility of a second layer application.

But He says in verse 38, "For by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you in return." What that means is to the extent that you are very gracious and kind to unbelievers, it may come back to you in that very same amount, that if you will cast your bread on the water, it may come back to you because of the influence and the effect of your love for others.

As we've looked at this today, I'm sure that there's not a person in this building who does not in some way feel challenged, maybe convicted. We can certainly pat ourselves on the back when we show love to widows in our church, to help those in our midst who love us and who love God. But what Jesus is saying here is even more of an acid test is how you respond to your enemies.

This is the hardest commandment, I'm convinced. And in order to fulfill this commandment, we must have the extraordinary power of the Holy Spirit at work within us. And it will be in a couple chapters that Jesus will say in Luke 11:13 to "ask of your heavenly Father to give the Holy Spirit to you." You and I already have the Holy Spirit. He lives within us. But we certainly need a greater manifestation of His supernatural love and power to be released in us and to have control over us, and really to give us a supernatural love for which there is no explanation except God is at work in our lives.

Today, as you find yourself here, as we've been talking about this, if you're an unbeliever, if you've not yet been born again, if you've not yet been converted to Christ, you need to know where you stand with God. You're not just standing in a neutral zone. You're not just sitting on the fence. Jesus said, "He who is not for Me is against Me." And if you're an unbeliever today, you are an enemy of God. You've been resistant to God. You've disobeyed God. You're guilty of cosmic treason against God.

But I have good news for you, that God demonstrated His love toward us, in that while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us. And the gospel is extending to the enemies of God mercy and grace and pardon, and the gift of eternal life. So if you've never believed in Jesus Christ, may today be the day that you step out of darkness and into light, that today would be the day you step out of this world system and enter into the kingdom of God, that you would step out of the family of Satan and enter into the family of God.

Today that could be true in your life. It could be true before you leave this building today, if within your heart of hearts you would pray to God and say, "God, I'm a sinner. I have fallen short of Your glory. I cannot save myself. And You have sent Your Son Jesus Christ into this world on a rescue mission for sinners." And right now, if you would but pray, "I repent of my sin, I turn away from my self-indulgent life, and I confess it to You, God, and I turn to Your Son, Jesus Christ." If you've never turned to Christ in the privacy of your heart and embraced Him as your Lord and Savior, then I urge you to do so today, this moment, this morning. And He will, if you come on His terms, He will save you, for He has come to seek and to save that which is lost.

As I bring this message to a close, Kent Stainbeck wants to come and make a presentation, and then I'll come back up. So, Kent, yeah, come on up here. Not a sermon, a presentation.

[Presentation by Kent Stainback]

Steve, you told me I could clean up what you left. Thank you, Steve. What a great message, and incredibly challenging.

Since we started this church six years ago, it's just been not the way we thought it would be. When we met in the home, the Lord decided to take us differently than we – we didn't have a blueprint. We just started, and the

Lord continued to lead. We need a chronology, really, a book. What we thought we needed, God thought we needed something different. And that seems to be the life of our church. I was thinking what Hudson Taylor said. He said, "God's work done in God's way will have God's provision."

And so we met, the elders, back in the spring, I think February or March. And as the church has grown and the body has grown, we decided that we needed to make a desperate decision: Were we going to stay here? Were we going to move somewhere? What does God want us to do as this church is growing?

And so we're in a meeting and we decided - we've done a lot of plans here on Dyer. And we decided that if the Lord wants us to stay on Dyer, then there will not be another location. And so I remember Matt standing up on the whiteboard and he drew the area that we needed to go look. There would be the tollway on the west side, Central Expressway on the east side, LBJ on the north side. And so what we said was if the Lord wants us to stay here, we won't find anything.

And so we sent the real estate guys out and we said, "Go turn over every rock, everything you can think of for a new location," and I thought in my own mind, "and then we'll come back because there's nothing. It's hard to find any real estate, and we will stay here." And I remember Kenan Cook, my son-in-law, coming to me with his iPhone saying, "What about this location?" and I said, "That'll never work." And so he didn't say anything.

And then about a week later, I get a call from my son Ford, saying, "We're coming to pick you up, Kenan and I, and we're going to drive by this property." And as we drove by this property, I went, "Huh, that looks pretty good. I didn't see it the way you saw it." And then we got the elders together and we went out, and all of them said, "Wow, this is beyond what we thought or even imagined. Not only is it an opportunity for a great church, but maybe even additional school or seminary or whatever," and we couldn't believe it. And I remember the elders saying, "We've got to pray."

We've got to pray. We've got to pray." And so I want you to watch this video, and then I'll come back.

[Video playing from 0:54:19 to 0:56:42]

We're thrilled to announce that we purchased that property last week. There's been hundreds of hours of work, architects, engineers, people working outside the church, inside the church. It's just incredible. That property was the former Brinker International Headquarters. They own Chili's, Macaroni Grill, Maggiano's. And it's a gorgeous campus setting, three two-story buildings. It's on a quiet street, has ample parking. And what we're going to do is we're going to work on the first building called the Creekside Building, and we've designed that to start where we would put our magnificent worship center.

And you look at that, if you drive by and you say, "Well, how are you going to do this?" It's a two-story building. What we're going to do is we're going to cut out the center section of the worship center where the concrete is. And so we're going to have two stories in the worship center. And the rest of it, we will have Sunday School. We're going to have a beautiful view, which is incredible – I hope you go by and look at it – of the outside, the worship center. From inside looking, you will see trees and foliage. It'll be the most gorgeous worship center you've ever seen. We're going to have world-class nursery, childcare, and it's going to be unbelievable.

But before we can do that, obviously we need a lot to happen. We've purchased the property, and I've put it here, really, the five P's. Number one, we've got to finish the plans. There's going to be plans and design work being done the rest of this year through the fall that we can develop and design detailed plans, mechanical engineering, plumbing. We've got to, in the spring, get permits from the city of Dallas; that takes a long time. And before we can start construction, obviously we've got to have the permits. And if we can obtain the permits in the spring, then we will start construction and the renovation of the property, and it'll probably take a year, hopefully, and we would be in in the spring of '26.

However, the elders are convinced, if the Lord wants us to go forward in phase one, that He's going to have to provide a couple of things. And number one, He's going to have to provide the personnel. Obviously, we're going to need more personnel for the ministry and for the administration of our growing body; that's super important. And obviously, the second thing is He's got to provide the funds. We've got to have the additional money, not only for the ongoing maintenance and expenses of the building we bought now, but for the renovation. And so this is super exciting. Again, it's beyond what we could think or imagine. And it's going to take a lot of prayer on your part, on our part and support from all of us.

And so I've summed it up. I want you to remember the five P's as we go forward. And here they are: "Plans." We got to finish them. They've got to come together. "Permits." We need the city of Dallas to give us that. We need the Lord to bring the "Personnel," the men and the women that will work with us, that have the same heartbeat we do. And obviously we need the funds. We need the "Provision." And lastly, we need "Prayer." We need prayer.

Now, there's going to be a lot of questions. And what we're going to do is we're going to have a meeting in September that will give a lot more detail. We don't have time to do that here; but we will do that, and all your questions will be answered. And so just remember the "Plans," the "Permits," the "Personnel," the "Provision," and your "Prayers."

Now, when you leave, we've got a brochure, one per family. You take with us and keep that so you can remember what the Lord's doing in the life of this church, and you can remember to pray what we need. Okay, Steve, close us out.

[End of presentation]

My heart is about to jump out of my suit right now. This is the most exciting thing that I've ever been a part of in a ministry. And this is really a bridge to the future. We've all wondered, "How's this going to work here? Are we going to have to have a third service here?" et cetera. This gives us a stairway to the future that we can grow and grow however God wants us to grow.

It's my intent - I told Kent, I said, "You can just one day bury me on this property." John Knox in Edinburgh, he's buried under Parking Space Number 23 outside of St. Giles Cathedral, so just bury me in Parking Place Number 23.

But I'm all in. I'm fully committed. In fact, this year I will be here in the pulpit every single Sunday with the exception of one Sunday. We're just going to march, keep going through the gospel of Luke together. So every time you come, you'll see me here preaching the Word, and that will extend on into the future as well.

So, we just need everybody to be onboard, to be excited, to pray, to give to whatever extent you can, to put your shoulder to the plow. But what you just saw is really mind-boggling, considering we were meeting at the Herb's Coffee Shop not long ago. And now one service here, now two services now busting at the seams. May God do an extraordinary work through your life to be a part of something bigger than any one of us can imagine.

So, God has done exceeding abundantly beyond what we would ask or think. Let me close us with the closing benediction. Kent, thank you for that tremendous presentation. I told Kent his whole life has been in preparation for this morning.

Ephesians 3:20, "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."