

The Call of Ministry

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon emphasizes the unique distinctives of Calvary Chapel, focusing on the balance of preaching and teaching for spiritual growth.

Duration: 1:03:36

Scripture: Isaiah 1:18, Isaiah 55:6

Topics: "Surrender To God", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon reflects on the journey of Calvary Chapel and Pastor Chuck Smith's dedication to teaching the Word of God. It emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God, seeking His forgiveness, and experiencing His grace and love. The sermon highlights the transformative power of God's Word in changing lives and bringing about spiritual growth.

Transcript

I'd like to just give a little introduction to this night and welcome you here to We Are Calvary, Ask Me Why? Our introduction to Calvary Chapel Distinctives. In 1970, in Look Magazine, they had an article there, they called what was happening at Calvary Chapel the Jesus Movement. I like that, that Jesus was moving.

It was back then and is today a very unique work of God, that God has done, is continuing to do. It's been over 40 years and yet it continues to flourish. What's going on? This is unlike any movement of the past.

Well, I'll tell you one thing, it has a lot to do with our pastor Chuck. He was just, he just came back from back east, doing many different churches back there, I think 12 or so, in a two-week period with Love Song. He's got a second breath and he's going after souls.

There was literally hundreds upon hundreds of people saved at all of those churches. He shows us young guys up. He's still out there and God's pouring out his spirit in these last days.

There's a great hunger out there and we're seeing it everywhere. So how does this happen? How does this, something like this continue to take place over the years and over the decades? We're going to learn about that as we go through this series. And looking back, there are a number of distinctives that continue to make us different than the historic church revivals and movements that have gone on before us.

A number of years ago, my pastor Chuck, he got with Word for Today. He put these distinctives together to give this work of God a clear perspective and definition of Calvary Chapel movement. And this book has

become an incredible description of who we are.

It's just, it's where we're at. We've taken it literally around the world. I personally was able to go into Cuba with, you know, hundreds of them and pass them out.

They're in South America, they're in Europe, the Middle East, Mexico, Africa, Russia. I mean, the distinctives going forth. This series of distinctives is an effort to emphasize these distinctives in what we're trying to do with an MP3 and a DVD format.

And to help many more enjoy and understand the balance of this biblically-based principle that makes us Calvary. So I'm excited about what God's going to do. I love this scripture in Nehemiah.

And in Nehemiah chapter 8, verse 8, it says, So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and they gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading. This is one of our main objectives that we're always seeking to do is read distinctly from God's Word, chapter by chapter, verse by verse. Then to explain it and help many to understand the meaning.

I believe these distinctives help to give us a picture of why God has allowed us to exist and to continue to grow. And I am so blessed to have this series being kicked off by Pastor Chuck Smith, a servant of God, to give us the introduction to the Calvary Chapel Distinctive Series. And he's going to be giving to us tonight the call to the ministry.

Would you welcome Pastor Chuck Smith? Good evening. An absolute pleasure and joy to be with you tonight and to kick off this series on the Calvary Chapel Distinctives. You know, it's an interesting thing when a crime has been committed.

Quite often they'll get a artist there and they will get different people who were able to observe the crime because they wanted to know what the person looked like that was guilty or committed the crime. And so they would show them different kinds of eyes, eyebrows, hair lines, and so forth. And the artist would show them the different noses and shapes and ears and they would draw up a composite picture of what the person looked like by taking all of the parts and sort of putting them together as they have been described or by the people that saw the guilty party.

And so Calvary Chapel is sort of a composite of many different things and none of them are unique to just Calvary Chapel. In other words, we're not some kind of a weird thing out here all by ourselves and that other churches don't do these things, but doing them all sort of makes the Calvary Chapel. In other words, a lot of churches have noses that look like our nose and eyes that look like our eyes or ears that look like our ears, but when you put it all together, you have a composite picture and you get to understand just a little bit of what Calvary Chapel is all about.

And so in this series, they're going to be talking about the different facets of Calvary Chapel and as you put them all together, then you'll realize just what we are. But I think that one of the major distinctives of Calvary Chapel is the emphasis upon the preaching and the teaching of the Bible. There's a difference between preaching and teaching.

Many churches don't sort of see this difference between the preaching. There are a lot of churches that have a lot of preaching, not much teaching. There are other churches that have great teaching, but not much preaching.

And there are both necessary and with Calvary Chapel, there is both the preaching and the teaching of the Word of God. Preaching of course is for sinners. They preached the gospel.

That is, they declared what the gospel is all about and it is to be preached, but it is for sinners to explain to them just what is the gospel. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul said, Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received wherein you stand. For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

So basically, that's what preaching is about. It is the gospel that Christ died for our sins. He was buried, but He rose again the third day, and He is the means by which we can have our sins forgiven by our faith and believing in Him.

And so that's the preaching of the gospel. But once a person has received the gospel, they really don't need the preaching anymore. Now they need the teaching.

They need to be taught how to grow in their relationship with God through the study of the Word and through the power of the Holy Spirit working in their lives. And so this is where a lot of churches come short. They don't really teach the Word of God.

And so in Acts chapter 14, 21, it says, when they had preached the gospel in that city, then they had taught many, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch. In other words, they had preached the gospel, but then they taught the people in that city. In Hebrews chapter 6, it said, Therefore let us lay aside the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, and of the doctrine of baptisms, the laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

In other words, that's basically the gospel preached. But then let's go on from there. Let's go on into perfection, and the word perfection in the Greek is full maturity.

Let's grow up. And there are so many churches that sort of stay in an infancy state because all they get is just the preaching of the gospel, but they are never taught so that they can really grow up and the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry. My personal experience was I went to an evangelical Bible college.

I grew up in an evangelical church, and I was taught in Bible college that the primary purpose of the church is the evangelization of the world. And so when I graduated from Bible college, this is just what was ingrained into me. The primary purpose of the church is the evangelization of the world.

And so the whole idea was preaching the gospel to get people saved, and that was just the primary thrust of the ministry. And so growing up with that, I just, well, I thought it was a scripture. I never found it in the Bible, but yet it was just sort of implanted in us almost constantly.

The primary purpose of the church is the evangelization of the world. But when we had to fill out, I went into the ministry. I was in a denomination, which was basically evangelical denomination.

And I had to fill out the report every month, and the very first box on the report was how many people were saved, because that was the whole emphasis, getting people saved. And success of the ministry was always measured by the number of people saved. And so, you know, little kids will often, when you give

the invitation, raise your hands, and they'll do it week after week, but I would count them every week they'd come forward because it looked good on the report, you know.

But I began to have frustration because there would be times when I would have what I felt was the perfect evangelistic message. In fact, I would be so excited about the message, I thought, no sinners can possibly sit through this message without being convinced that they need to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. And I would go just all pumped up because I had this powerful evangelistic message just burning on my heart.

I'd get to church, sit on the platform, look over the congregation. I knew them all by first name. Not a sinner in the house.

During the songs, I'd be praying, Lord, send a sinner in because this message is so powerful and surely it'll convince them they need to accept you. But the Lord didn't answer my prayers, the sinners didn't come in. So I had to, well, you know, you've got the message all prepared.

You know that it doesn't apply to anybody there, they're all saints, they're all faithful members in the church. And so you just sort of add a few little things to the message because, you know, you know that it's why I preach to them to, you know, surrender your heart and give your life to Jesus Christ and so forth. And what the Lord will do, they were all Christians.

So you know, you had to just add a few things like, you know, folks, if you were really serving the Lord like you ought to serve him, you would have had your neighbors here tonight so that they'd hear the message of salvation and come to Jesus Christ. And you know, I'd take the whip and I'd start to beat the saints. And I became a real saint beater because I was frustrated.

You know, here you have this powerful salvation message and no sinners to preach it to. And so I found myself really in great frustration dealing with this particular issue. And so I had about two years of good evangelistic sermons.

And so I would go to a church and the first few years of my ministry, I would stay for two years in a church, preach out all my evangelistic messages, and then I would just write to the bishop and tell him I wanted to transfer to a different church. And so I would go from church to church about every two years, a new church, and it went on for the first few years of my ministry, a transfer every two years. And that did well until I was sent to Huntington Beach, to pastor in Huntington Beach.

And so I was getting near the end of my two years of messages in Huntington Beach, but I had fallen in love with Huntington Beach. At that time, it was just a little beach city of 6,000 people. The surf was absolutely fantastic.

There at the pier, you could either go on the right side or the left side, whichever was breaking best, and we would go down, and if you can believe this, we would go down and go surfing. The editor of the newspaper there, Huntington Beach newspaper, and we'd go down in the morning from about, oh, maybe 8 o'clock till 10 o'clock every morning to surf, and the druggist would come down there, the guy, Terry from the drugstore there, and we would be the only ones out in the surf in Huntington Beach, if you can believe that. It was just heaven, and I thought, this is just so great.

I don't want to leave Huntington Beach, but I've run out of sermons, what am I going to do? And so I had a book in my library, it was called The Apostle John by Griffith Thomas, and so I was reading this book, The

Apostle John, and in about the seventh chapter, he had outline studies of 1 John, and I began to look at these outline studies of 1 John, and each one of them was just a great message, and I counted them, and there were over 40, and I thought, whoa, I can stay in Huntington Beach for another year, you know. God meets you where you are, and I know that that was carnal motivation, but that's where I was at that point in my walk with the Lord, so he used my desire and love for surfing, and the desire to just stay in Huntington Beach. Of course, at that time, it was called the oil city because of all the oil wells, but with the oil wells, there was the income for the city off of the taxing of the oil wells.

It made that the local property taxes were the lowest in Orange County, so you had a perfect situation, you're living in Huntington Beach, and you've got the great surf, you're just, you know, enjoying it, having it to yourself, and just, it was just closest thing to heaven that you could find, you know, and so I started preaching through 1 John, but I thought, it's going to take a whole change in my ministry, and so I announced to the people next Sunday, we're going to have a change. I'm going to start teaching through 1 John, and when John wrote his epistle, he gives you three reasons why he wrote the epistle, and so this week, I want you to read 1 John and I want you to read it until you can tell me the three reasons why he wrote his epistle, and of course, the first chapter, or the first part of this in the Griffith Thomas was the purpose of the book, and the three reasons why John wrote the book, and so in chapter 1, he tells us that these things write way unto you that your joy may be full. In chapter 2, he says, these things we write unto you that you sin not, and in chapter 5, he says, these things we write unto you that you might know that you have eternal life, so it's to bring you fullness of joy, it's to bring you freedom from sin, and it is to give you assurance of your salvation, and this was the first time in my ministry I had ever, you know, you always say, you've got to read your Bible, you should read your Bible, but this is the first time I really gave them an assignment to read, and where to read, and what to find when they were reading it, and so it was interesting, about Wednesday, I started getting calls from people in the church, and they said, are you sure there are three reasons why he wrote it? I've read it through ten times, and I've only found two reasons.

Are you sure there are three? I said, yes, there are three, keep reading, and you'll find all three. That following Sunday morning, I was at the front door to greet the people as they came, and it was interesting, because I told them, when you get here Sunday morning, I'm going to meet you at the door, and I want you to give me the three reasons why John wrote his epistle. So as the people came up, some of them were so excited, and they gave me the three reasons, and I said, yes, that's good.

Well, then, I said, the following week, I said, you know, John tells us, you know, about knowing, and there are two Greek words for know, one is to know by experience, *genosko*, and then there is *oedis*, which is to know by just intuition, or just intuitive kind of knowledge, and I said, John uses both of them in this epistle, so I want you to go through, and without knowing Greek, just to read it in its context, I want you to tell me which of the know is a, you know by experience, and which of the things you know by intuition, or just by, you know, the spirit, and so, again, I signed them, and of course, they again were searching through to find and to figure out what, you know, the know was, whether it was, I know this by experience, I've experienced it, and thus I know it, or I just know this, it's just something intuitively, you just know that I was a child of God, this is what it is, and so, again, they were reading over and over through 1 John, in order to find the knows, and why they knew what they knew, and then I told them the next week, John tells you the things that you know, but how you know them, by this we know that we pass unto death and to life, but the things that you know, how do you know that you know them, and so, I said, I think there are five there, and I want you to find all five, and of course, the following week, we had one more thing for them to find, and it

just, it was just getting the people into the word, reading the word, and the next week, I said, there are a lot of professions that people make, but they're not always true, and so, I want you to find the six places where John tells you if a man says, or if a man say, then the things that they say, but what is the proof behind what they say, and so, got them going through, and after that, then we started through 1 John, verse by verse, this little epistle, and I got the pulpit commentary, and other commentaries, and I began to go through 1 John with the church, and I was able to expand from Griffith Thomas's 42 outlines that he had, and I added another 10 sermons to it, so I was able to stay in Huntington Beach for another year, and that was just so exciting for me to be able to stay there a year, but an amazing thing happened. In that year that I was just teaching the word of God, the church actually doubled in attendance, and now, I really didn't want to leave Huntington Beach, because we had a great church, and it was really growing and exciting, and I had a professor in seminary who said that the book of Romans would revolutionize any church. Well, I had always heard that Romans was a great book.

I had read it, but I really didn't get that much out of it, to tell you the truth, and I thought, well, if it will revolutionize any church, I'd like to see a revolution, and so I announced to the people when we were through with 1 John, we're now going to start reading through the book of Romans, and we'll go through the book of Romans like we went through 1 John, one verse at a time or, you know, one week just going through. Well, he said it would revolutionize any church, but to tell you the truth, the book of Romans revolutionized me. As I was going through studying the book of Romans, I came to an understanding of the grace of God that I'd never had before.

I grew up in a church which was sort of legalism. In other words, they told you, you know, the things that you could do and shouldn't do as a Christian, and, you know, my relationship with God was always predicated on my good efforts. You know, God rewards the good boys, and he punishes the bad boys, and I always had this kind of a relationship with God that I expected God to bless my good efforts, and thus it was always endeavoring to do things that would sort of earn the favor of God, but discovering the grace of God, I discovered that God wanted to bless me and would bless me even though I wasn't worthy or deserving the blessings.

You know, when you're looking for the blessings as sort of a reward for being good, then, well, I know in my own life the blessings were rather spasmodic. There would be times when I would not be so good, and I would think, well, God, surely I understand why you won't bless me because, you know, I just don't deserve it, and, you know, I'm sorry. I wish I would have been better, but I wasn't.

But, Lord, I understand you don't have to worry about not blessing me because I know I don't appreciate it. I don't really deserve it or whatever, but the interesting thing was when I discovered the grace of God, I began to expect to be blessed even though I knew I wasn't worthy of the blessings, and as a result, I began to be blessed more and more and more, and I took two years going through Romans verse by verse with the people, and again, God just really blessed. The church doubled again in that two years time as we went through Romans, and I was just really doing just--I was so excited, and the church was growing so much that, of course, I had to send in my monthly reports, and they in headquarters were looking over the monthly reports.

They saw the increased attendance and so forth, so that when one of the largest churches in the denomination had a problem, the pastor had a moral failure, and they needed to get another pastor, they sort of insisted that I go and take this church, which I was very reluctant to do because it was in near Pomona and far from the beach, and yet, because of the pressure, I had to leave my beautiful beach and

surfing and all, and yet, as I began to look back on the whole thing, the blessings, the church growth and all the things that God was doing, I realized that it was because of just teaching the saints, building up the body of Christ, and always I had been trying to just, you know, preach to sinners and get them saved, but I wasn't really feeding the body of Christ, and the Bible says, feed my sheep, and I wasn't really feeding his sheep, I was beating his sheep, and I just sort of missed that one, just, you know, feeding and beating, and there's a big difference between it, and the sheep who are fed are going to grow, and thus, we saw them growing, and as they grew, they began to witness to others, and thus, the number of people being saved was actually exciting because they were strong enough and well-equipped enough to go ahead and just witness to their neighbors and to their friends, and thus, we saw more people saved and coming to Christ during these years than I had ever experienced in my ministry before when I had all of these evangelistic messages, and I would just be teaching through the Word, but people were coming to Christ, and it was just an exciting time in our ministry. When I began to, and this I finally caught on to, it didn't happen at the beginning, but in looking back over the ministry and looking in retrospect, I realized that the people had come to a greater joy in Christ than they had ever had. They had begun to have power over sin in their lives and a real assurance of their salvation, and I tied this in with Isaiah 55 10.

For as rain comes down and the snow from heaven and returns not thither, but it waters the earth and makes it to bring forth into bud that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void, it shall accomplish that which I please, and the thing wherein I send it. So I realized that, you know, this is just what was happening. The people were being fed, and as a result, they were having greater joy in their walk with Christ.

They were having power over sin, and they were having assurance of their salvation. So realizing that the word of God was doing its work, it's not going to return void. The Bible says that, and if you give the word of God out, it's going to bring forth fruit in the lives of the people which it was doing.

So today when people come in for counseling, and they say, you know, I just don't have the joy of the Lord that I once had, and all, and I don't know what's wrong, but I just am lacking the joy. I'll tell them, go read 1st John, and find the three reasons why he wrote it. And, you know, by the time they find the three reasons, the word of God has had its effect in them, because he wrote it that your joy might be full, and it will just do it for you.

Your joy will be full. If they come up and say, well, you know, I'm having such a hard time, I really wonder if I'm saved or not. I'll say, well, go read 1st John, and find the three reasons why he wrote it, and then when you find him, come back and we'll talk.

And it saves an awful lot of counseling, because the word of God will do the work in their lives, and they don't need to come back, because the word of God isn't going to return void. It will accomplish the purposes for which God has sent it. So, in going through the book of Romans, I discovered, as I said, the grace of God, and this was a, this was a true revolutionary thing in my walk and my experience with the Lord, relating to God not on the basis of my goodness, but relating to him on the basis of his goodness and his desire to bless me.

So, I discovered that grace is God acting freely according to his own nature of love. He has no promises or obligations to fulfill. He owes me nothing, but grace is uncaused by me.

It stems completely from the heart of God. I don't deserve it. There's no cause in me that God should bless me, except that he wants to bless me, and just to allow him to do that which he wants to do.

I discovered that grace is sovereign. It has no debts to pay, no obligations to fulfill. It can act toward whom and how it pleases, even bestowing the divine favor on the least deserving.

Grace cannot act where there is deserving or ability. It's not an aid in my Christian walk. It does it all, and I must cease trying to deserve the grace of God.

It brings to me the greatest humility to be blessed of God when you know you don't deserve it, and yet to see the blessings of God, you know, it's just an exciting thing. Before I discovered the grace of God, again, the blessings of God were sort of spasmodic, but once I discovered the grace of God, they just are constant. The blessings of God, because it's not based upon me.

It's based upon God. He loves me, and because he loves me, he wants to bless me, and so I've just learned to just receive and accept the blessings of God, though realizing more and more I'm not worthy or deserving. Flesh has no place in the plan of grace.

My standing is in the grace of God. I've been accepted in Christ, who is my standing. As to my past life, it doesn't exist.

It died with Jesus on the cross. There I was crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live, but yet not I, but Christ is living in me.

So, the failure of devotion, and my devotion does not cancel the grace of God, and thus my proper attitude towards grace is just to consent to let God love me, though I know I don't deserve his love, not to make vows or promises to God to try to deserve it. I have found one of the most difficult things in my life is to accept grace gracefully. You know, God is so good, and he blesses me so much, and I just say, well, Lord, thank you, and that's so wonderful, and I'm going to do this now, and I'm going to do better, Lord, and I try to, you know, just give God a reason.

He doesn't need a reason. He loves me, and he loves you, and he wants to just bless you, and just learn to accept and receive these blessings, though you know that you don't deserve it, or you're not earning it, and so to make promises or vows to God is an attempt to try to deserve the blessings of God. Lord, I'm going to do better.

Lord, if you'll do this, this is what I'll do for you, but this is what I'd like you to do for me, but don't make those kind of promises, because God knows, and you know you're not going to keep them anyhow, so you're not fooling him. Just accept his blessings, and don't really don't think that you've got to earn them, because you can't, and so I expect God to bless me, though I know full well I don't deserve it, and yet he does bless me, and to hope to be better is to fail to see myself complete in Christ. You are complete in him, and that hope to be better, it just fails to see that you are already complete in him.

You are accepted in the beloved. To be disappointed with myself is only to show that I was believing in myself, and to be proud is to be blind. The lack of blessings doesn't come from unbelief, but from, let me rephrase that, the lack of blessing comes from unbelief, and not from my lack of devotion.

True devotion is the spontaneous response of my heart to the recognition of God's grace to me. The true devotion is just spontaneous. I know I'm not worthy.

I know I don't deserve it, but God pours out a great blessing upon my life, and it just overwhelms me. I say, oh God, you're so good. You're so, oh Lord, you're so wonderful, and it's just, you know, I'm just

responding to the goodness of God that he's, the blessings that he's poured out upon me, and that's the truest kind of devotion.

If you're saying, uh, you know, well, let's all stand and praise God so we'll bless us, you know, then you have, you think, well, Lord, you ought to bless me. Here I am raising my hands and praising you, and so you ought to bless me now. No, no, no, just be blessed, and when you're truly blessed, you just automatically want to praise him and thank him for it.

I used to think that the blessings of God on my life were predicated on my goodness and my faithfulness to God, and I was trying to earn them rather than just receiving and enjoying them, though I realized how undeserving I really was. When I was seeking to earn the blessings of God, they were few and far between. Satan would always show me why God shouldn't bless me because of my failures, but now that I've discovered the grace of God, there's no end to the blessings that he pours out unto me, and I'm, as that song I learned back in Missouri in the churches back there, and it's, I'm under the spout where the glory comes out, you know, and it's just great to be under that spout where God's love and glory is just being poured out upon you just because he loves you, and he wants to bless you, and you need to realize that God wants to do for you these wonderful things, and all you have to do is be a recipient, just to, by faith, trust him to bless you, though it has nothing to do with your goodness, your faithfulness, or anything.

It just has to do, he is a God of love. He loves you supremely, and, and thus, this is where my ministry really began to take off, is when I began to just teach the Word of God. I had finished, of course, the Book of Romans there in Huntington Beach, and so I was reading in Halley's Bible Pocket Handbook, and I think it was page 652 in the edition that I had, but it said the most, in the beginning of the book, it says the most important page of this book is 652.

Well, I'd always been getting Halley's Bible Pocket Handbook. I loved that. I always was giving away my copies to newcomers and buying me a new one because they kept coming out with new editions, and people would be real, you know, thankful.

They'd say, oh, the pastor went to his library and got me, you know, his book out of the library. Well, that was good, but it's because I needed a new edition, so. So I turned to this page, and it said that every church should have a way of teaching the people through the whole Bible, and he said, you know, ideally, you would encourage the people to read through the Bible 10 chapters a week and so forth, and then your morning message would come out of the 10 chapters that they had read, and so I looked at that, and I thought, whoa, that's neat.

If I start this, taking the people through the whole Bible, I can stay in Huntington Beach the rest of my life, and so we started going through the whole Bible. He gave suggested readings, but instead of that, I thought, you know, rather than going from Old to New Testament and so forth, let's just go straight through. So I told him, you know, next Sunday, I want you to read the first 10 chapters of Genesis, and Sunday morning, my message is going to come out of that first 10 chapters.

Sunday night, we'll give a commentary on the first 10 chapters, and we took the people, started taking them through the whole Bible, but then the church had grown so much that they transferred me out, but I started the program in the church that I was transferred to, and it worked there, and so when I finally got freed from the denomination and just started Calvary Chapel, I just started out the same thing, just teaching the Word of God, and when we started out there in Costa Mesa, there was this group of people that were meeting. There were 25 people, and so we had been, we had started a church out in Corona,

and we had bought a new home in Corona, and things were going real well, and I was teaching, you know, we started out just teaching the people the Word of God, and there in Corona, and God was blessing. The church was growing like everything, and then I decided to move back to Costa Mesa.

We had a home there in Newport Beach, and I had some problem with some of the fellows there in Corona on the board, and I thought, well, rather than fight it, I'll just, you know, go ahead and start. I was teaching a home Bible study in Costa Mesa, and I thought, we'll just move down there, and we'll just take the 25 people that were there, and we'll make them the best Bible students in the whole area. They'll know the Bible better than any other group in Costa Mesa, and they'll be the most loved of all of the people in Costa Mesa.

We're going to go down and just feed them the Word of God, and love them, and just let God work in their hearts, and when I told my wife that, you know, the Bible study down there that I was conducting, I was going down once a week to this study, and the people were after me to come and start a church down there, and so I told my wife that, you know, I was thinking about maybe moving down and starting this church, and she thought that I had flipped. Here we had this church that was growing out there in Corona, well over 200 people coming now, and here I'm talking about going down and starting basically all over again with just a very small group, and so we had a psychologist that was coming--our psychiatrist, actually--was coming to our church in Corona, and my wife said, would you mind talking to my husband? I think he's flipped, you know, and so Bud invited me to go for lunch, and as we were eating lunch, he said, you know, do you really love your mother? I mean, did you really? Were there problems, and you know, and did you ever think about running away from home? These kind of questions, I knew that, you know, he had been baited by Kay, and so I told him, no, no, I love my mother, and had a great family life, and things were wonderful, and I knew he was trying to psychoanalyze me, but because she thought, really, I had flipped, but I started to, you know, well, it's one of those things where in marriage, you know, there are certain subjects you don't bring up because, you know, it's going to create a flare, and so I know that these people were pressing me to make a decision to come on down to Costa Mesa, and I couldn't talk to Kay about it because she would just say, you can't even think of that. Look at the people that are here.

Look how this is growing. How can you even think of leaving them, and so forth, and I'd say, well, honey, I just, you know, just praying about it, and she said, well, you don't have to pray about it. There are some things you don't have to pray about.

It's just obvious that the Lord wants you here, you know, and so we lost communication on that particular subject, but one night, I came home from the Bible study in Costa Mesa, and Kay was at the front door. She met me when I came in, and I could tell she'd been crying, and I said, what's wrong? She said, well, nothing. It's all right.

I said, no, you've been crying. What's wrong? Are the kids okay? Are any of them sick? What's going on? She said, the Lord's been speaking to me. I said, well, you shouldn't cry about that.

That's good, and I said, what's he saying, and she said, well, he's telling me that I shouldn't stand in the way. If you feel that the Lord is calling you to Costa Mesa, I shouldn't stand in the way and try to hinder you from doing that, and I said, well, that's exciting, sweetheart, because I said tonight at the study, they said they wanted an answer, you know, within a week of whether or not we would come down and get started there, and she said, don't tell me that. Don't talk to me about it.

I'm not ready to go. I'm just ready to submit at this point, but don't press me beyond that at all, and so we moved to Costa Mesa, but it's been an exciting experience, and oh, can't tell you, can't tell you just how exciting it is to see what God has done, and it's just, we just stand in awe and in amazement at looking at what, well, here I am, look at tonight here. I mean, this is just a good sampling of what's happening across the country.

Over 1,500 Calvary chapels now in the United States. I mean, just amazing, and so what a joy it is to be with you tonight and to share with you from God's Word and how we thank the Lord for the work He's doing here in Downey and how we've had the privilege of just watching the Spirit of God grow this church and just to see what God is doing and just again, just to anticipate what He wants to do as we just believe and trust in Him and just look to Him. So God bless you.

Great to be with you. We'll be back at the end of this series. Well, that's how it happened.

A call to a whole new ministry and a ministry of the Word of God in an incredible way that would reach hundreds of thousands of people. It's hard to understand, but it's God's Word that does the work, and that's why we seek to hide it within our hearts. I'd like to share with you just a couple scriptures, and then we'll close.

It's in Isaiah chapter 1, where Isaiah says, Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

And then he says, if you be willing and obedient, you're going to eat the good of the land. That's what Chuck's talking about here. The good of the land, the grace of God, the love of God.

But he says, if you refuse and rebel and say, you know, I don't want this. God says, you shall be devoured with the sword from the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. God says, it's your choice.

It's up to you what you're going to do. Then in Isaiah 55 in verse 6, Isaiah says, Come on, seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near.

Let the wicked forsake his way, the unrighteous man, his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. The greatest thing that happened to me was stumbling into Calvary Chapel on Fairview and Sunflower to that little church and just hearing the word of God and receiving the love of God. And my life was forever changed.

Like coming into a church like this, not knowing what's going on, what's happening, but God's pulling on your heart. He brought you here to hear a call to the ministry and what God did with Pastor Chuck and how he wrestled so much with the denomination, which churchianity will get you. It will wear you down.

But Jesus says, My yoke is easy. My burden is light. I want to bless your life.

I want to give you joy. I want to give you abundant pardon. I want to forgive you of your sin.

And I want you to eat and give the good of the land. I want you to enjoy, taste, and see that I am good, says the Lord. And I want to bless your life.

So we're going to have a prayer and we're going to ask if any of you would like to receive this abundant pardon tonight. Let's pray. So Father, we thank you for Pastor Chuck.

We ask that you give him traveling mercies tonight. Go with him and bless Kay and the family. Just go continue to go before Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa.

And thank you for this time that we've had in your presence. Thank you for your amazing grace. Thank you for your mercy towards us.

Thank you for your great love wherein you loved us when you gave your son for us. Thank you for your forgiveness. And Lord, I pray that many here tonight will say, you know what, I'm ready.

This is what I need in my life. I'm going for it. I'm going to ask the Lord to forgive me.

I'm going to seek the Lord while he may be found. And it's tonight I'm going to give my heart, my life to him. And such as I am in this situation, I need to just give it to the Lord.

And I want to do that tonight. So how many would say, Jeff, I want you to pray for me because I want to do that tonight. The Lord has definitely spoken to my heart.

And this is really what I feel that I need to do in my life at this time. And I want to do it. And I want you to pray for me.

And I want you to hold me up to the Lord because I really want to follow through with this. Would you raise your hand? I want to pray for you right now. God's going to do the work in your life.

And he's here to work a wonder. God bless you and you and you. There's many others.

Just raise it up. Way in the back. Both of you back there over here on the side.

Anyone else? This is a time for you and him to get right, to make it right. As you just say, Lord, forgive me. I've sinned against you.

You guys are in the back. Both of you right down in here. Right down in the back over there.

Both of you back there over here on the side. Anyone else? Anyone else would like to come and embrace this Savior? Oh, hallelujah. What a Savior.

What a Lord who would come and die for our sins to give us new life. Hundreds of thousands have come into this new life in his last 40 years. And it's going to continue as the word goes forth.

For it's the word that's reaping the harvest and doing the work. How many others? Anyone else? You want to, you want prayer tonight? You want to go for it? Anyone else? Wave your hand to me. Go ahead.

God bless you. Praise the Lord. Anyone else? Don't want to miss anyone tonight.

Because once you come, you're hooked. You'll be back over and over and over again. Because your soul is fulfilled.

Your soul is blessed when you get right with God. His forgiveness cleanses you from all sin. And you just want to take more and more of it in.

It's the love of God. It's the word of God as you're taking it in. And you're, you're growing spiritually.

Father, I pray for these that have raised their hands, now turning their hearts towards you. As they come and they ask for your forgiveness. That Lord, you're so gracious.

You hear immediately as they say, Lord, forgive me a sinner. Come into my heart. You're there, Lord.

You're right there. That you would come in and be their Lord and their Savior. As they turn from the lifestyle they've been doing.

And they turn towards you tonight. This is a full-on conversion that's taking place. This soul is no longer the soul that's serving Satan.

It's a soul that is yielded to God. It's a new creation. And God, we thank you for.

Many, many more are going to come in. Because you save us one soul at a time. And yet, you pull us out of the pit, out of the miry clay.

Put our feet upon a solid rock. Give us a new song. Many will see it.

Our families will come. Our loved ones that we love so much. Help us to be your witnesses, Lord.

Thank you for our new brothers and sisters. We give you all the praise and all the glory. In Jesus name.

Amen? God's good. God's good. So, for those of you that raised your hands, and maybe you didn't, and you wish you would have, or you're just sitting there going, oh my gosh, what's going on? Just take your time.

Make your way up the steps to your right. We want to give you what we're going to give to those that raised their hand. We're going to give you a Bible.

If you don't have one, we're going to give you a Bible study. We're going to kind of share with you a few things that you need to start doing immediately to keep this relationship now burning in your heart and going forth. All right? So, let's stand and remember, Sunday morning, we're going to continue on with the model of the church, and then Ponch is going to be here next Wednesday night to give us church government.

So, that ought to be interesting, and I'm sure Ponch has got some awesome stories to tell us about what he's gone through with the whole thing of church and government, because he comes out of the streets of L.A. You know Ponch, right? Streets of L.A., and there was government there, I think, but it was the wrong type, and now he's going to give us God's government. It's awesome. Let's sing this as we go forth.

God bless you. Have a great night. Continue to pray for Chuck Smith and Kay and all the family at Costa Mesa.

They appreciate it. Yeah. God bless you.

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