

Surrender

by Francis Chan

Francis Chan shares his journey of surrendering to God's call for a new adventure, encouraging the congregation to embrace faith and community support during this transition.

Duration: 47:44

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Trusting God"

Description

This sermon reflects on the journey of faith and obedience, highlighting the importance of surrendering to God's calling even when it involves stepping into the unknown. It emphasizes the need to trust in God's leading, even when faced with fear and uncertainty, and to prioritize following Jesus above all else. The speaker shares personal experiences and decisions, encouraging the congregation to seek God's will and step out in faith, trusting in His sovereignty and guidance.

Transcript

This morning as I was praying and getting ready for this, my time, you know, every Sunday morning I have my time with the Lord. And I went over to Sinaloa Junior High School and just prayed over there and read and just got ready. For those who don't know, Sinaloa Junior High is where we had our first church service 16 years ago.

And you know, just kind of looking at the courtyard, just the goofy things we did and thinking back to those days. And really just looking back at the history of the church, I was thinking about how the first, how nervous I was and the fear and how the first seven or eight years was all about, let me see if we can just get people together. Let's make sure we have enough money.

And so it's almost like, let's just get a bunch of people in the room and let's just try to hoard all this money and make sure we're safe. And then really how there was a switch in the church and how the last eight years have been, let's see how many people we can send out and how much money we can give away. And as we saw the different needs in the world, it's like, okay, we got to get out there.

We got to get out there financially. We got to get people out there. And it's been so fun for me how I would bring couples up on stage or individuals up on stage that just felt called to different places in the world.

And I loved watching your reaction because there would be sadness for some people because you were so connected to those people and it was sad to see them leave. But there was also this excitement on your face because you saw, okay, they're going by faith to do something for the kingdom. And even the pastors that moved on and I just loved, I loved watching their faith as they weren't sure.

Like I remember years ago, Paul and Angela Hatfield, when they said, you know what, we think we're supposed to go to Idaho. And I remember going, Idaho, that is really weird. And then Doug and Frannie, remember when Doug was like, I think I'm supposed to go to Texas.

I'm like, oh, Texas, that's so weird. And then Tony and Shauna, when they go, we're supposed to go to Ohio. And I go, Ohio, that's just stupid.

You know, what is, you know, but you're excited for them and you go, okay, you know, they're going out by faith and we're sending and Cornerstone, at that time we just realized, okay, this is not about Simi Valley. This is about something God's doing here that's having ripples around the world and sending people around the world and overseas. And it's just been a blast as a pastor doing that.

And this morning is pretty similar to that. And yet it's also very different because Lisa and I believe that God is calling us out now and that He is sending us out to do something new, something that scares us, something that's a step of faith. We're not even sure where God's calling us.

We believe it's Los Angeles to really be in the heart of that city. But it could be that, you know, I, we're not completely sure. I'd say 80%.

It's going to be LA. But what we're going to do is take our family and we're probably going to first, I believe what the Lord wants us to do is first go to like a third world country for a couple months, possibly Thailand or India and work with some kids that have been rescued out of the slave trade and just kind of go to a place where I'm a little bit more obscure, unknown, and just serve and care for some widows, orphans, and as a family. But also during that time, really seek the Lord, really be alone with Him.

Sometimes in the States it's very difficult for me feeling like there's a lot of voices telling me what the will of God is for my life. And I just want to get away with this book and go, okay, Lord, I really feel this calling. I felt it for a while.

I've felt like you've been wanting me to go on another adventure with you. And now is just really figuring what that is. And honestly, I, when I'm in the spirit and when I'm before God, I get so excited and I like it.

I feel an intimacy with the Lord. But then I, you know how you switch and then you go to the flesh and you just get freaked out and you just get scared and you start looking at yourself and going, am I sure about this or that? And I ask for your prayers because I get a, I get pretty scared of this when I, when I take my mind off of God. But the hard part was, even though I felt this leading for a while, I think this is what I dreaded and was afraid of was when I'd have to look you guys in the face and say, okay, it's, it's time for me to go.

And after telling first service, you know, so many people came up to me and just said, I knew it. I knew it was coming. I knew it was going to happen.

A lot of you guys are nodding your heads right now who know me and you're going, man, I just, I sensed it. There's been a restlessness and, but at the same time, this is all I know. You know, my old married life,

you know, we were married two weeks when I decided, hey, I think God wants to start a church and, and, you know, going back to Sinaloa this morning, I just thought, man, it's just so weird to think it all through.

But I, it's hard to imagine. It's hard to fathom. And I know for some of you, this is a total shock too.

And it's hard. I mean, some of you, I was there when you gave your life to the Lord. I remember the old you before Jesus, and that was pretty ugly.

And then, and then I saw the new you and I got to be a part of that transition and maybe even baptized you. And, and some of you, I've, I've walked with you through some pretty painful times and even death and loss. And, and, and for some of you, you know, like I said, it's, you came to the Lord with me and I, I got to experience that.

I got to baptize you. I'm seeing Bebo over there. I still remember your, you know, baptizing you that day.

You know, you had the ponytail back then. And, and he was like, it was just such a shock, you know, like, like him, how God called him because, you know, after Vietnam and everything, I was like Charlie to him. And, and he even shared, he goes, man, I can't believe I'm getting baptized by a Chinese guy, you know, and, and just the way the Lord turns your life.

And it's, it's weird to think, you know, of all the history and then to go on, I'm not going to be a part, you know, like what, why? And, and there'll be some connection and everything. But even, even during the worship this morning and hearing you guys, you know, yell out and just worship and clap and the energy in this room, again, it just, it, it kills me, you know, I'm worshipping and I'm thinking through, you know, getting nostalgic, thinking about all the past, thinking about all the prayers that were written on the, the concrete, on the floor, under this carpet for what God would do in this room. And how many of you got saved in this room and how many we've walked together with.

And for some of you, I know it's crazy because, because of that, everything in your relationship with God in some ways was, was tied to me. You know, I led you to the Lord. I pastored you.

I, I cared for you. And so I don't, I don't want to make light of this. I'm just trying not to lose it in some ways.

And I, I've, I've really tried to search my heart on this, you know, because when you feel led by the Lord, you, you have to first look at the scriptures and make sure you're going because of the scriptures and, and that there isn't any in this book that would, you know, contradict what you're doing. The other thing is, is you check your motives and go, okay, is there a selfish motive in here? You know, money's not drawing me. I'm not getting paid for whatever I'm going to do.

You know, and, and the elders have offered if I stayed, they would triple my salary. No, I'm kidding. I mean, they could, it's, it'd still be zero.

But it's just, you know, we, we, we, you know, so you look, is there something in me that wants this? And, and I thought, okay, it's not money. Is it fame? You know, no, because I really believe what God's leading me to is, is greater obscurity and to lift other people up into the limelight. I think, okay, is it comfort? Am I trying to make my life easier? I go, no, definitely not.

I believe what he's leading me to is going to be more difficult and even painful. And, and, and yet I, I just, I just sense that's what the Lord's leading me to. It's, it's, but it's, it's bigger than this stuff.

Remember when I kind of came up here a while back and I just, just kind of freaked out? You guys are going, which time? The time when, like five years ago when I was teaching through Colossians, or I was going to teach through Colossians, I got to chapter one, verse one, and I just said, you guys, I got to leave. And I just took off and I didn't know if I was coming back. Because Colossians 1, 1, when Paul said, you know, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, you know, by, by the will of God, I thought by the will of God, he just went because of, it was the desire of God.

And, and I, I wrestled with that because I said, God, am I really open to your desire? Like, am I, am I a man who right now would say, okay, Lord, it doesn't matter. I don't care. What, what is your will? What is your desire? Because this body will go wherever you want it to go.

This mouth will say whatever you want. It's about your will, your desire. And I, and I remember just confessing before you guys, I go, I'm not sure that I want to know the will of God because I'm not sure I would go.

I, I'm, I'm scared of a lot of things, a lot of places. I don't know that I want to say this. I don't know that I want to go there.

And, and so how can I be a pastor if I'm not completely surrendered to God? And, and I just told you, I go, I got to get away. I've got, it's not about you. It's not about, it's just about, man, can I be right with the Lord? I just want to know that I would go anywhere.

And during those three months, I had some great times with the Lord and, and believe that he was leading me. And I, and I would, all my heart really believed that I would go anywhere and that I did trust him. I go, God, you know what? You can take me anywhere.

I would go. And it was at that time, I genuinely believe that God was saying, I want you back in Simi Valley. And so I came back because I didn't believe my work was done.

And, and again, remember when I came back, that's when I had some messages that were not real popular. You know, so we did the whole lukewarm and loving it thing and a bunch of people freaked out and left and said, what happened to him? But the elders and the pastors go, we like what happened to him. And, and they're very defensive of it and believed it was of the spirit.

That's when we came back and I said, I don't think, I don't think God wants us to build this big fancy building. Why don't we just sat outside, you know, and gave all the money to the poor. And again, a bunch of people left going, what is up with him? And you guys stuck it out.

And you go, I don't know. I think that's biblical. It looks right.

It's like, well, let's give away half. And you know, the elders like, yep, you know, I'm like, all right, let's do it. And we just started caring for other people.

And then as we started studying the word of God, we go, wait a second. It seemed like there was such a deep connection between the believers. It wasn't a guy up front and just a bunch of people staring at him.

There was connection. There was love. There was giving a shirt off your back for, for people who are different from you, but they had the Holy Spirit and there was a family.

And we started talking about how as a church, let's be family. We're supposed to love each other. And the world's supposed to look at us and see us love each other so much that, that they'd never seen anything like that before.

They'd never seen that type of unity. And we're going how that's not happening in our church. And there's clicks.

People just try to find the people that are like them. And, and they form their little circle. Like, why don't we, why don't we just love the people that are different from us because they have Jesus in them.

And what about your neighbors, the very people you walk by every day or drive by every day? Yeah, they may be different from you. Their personalities may be different socially, financially, everything else, but they're believers. We should be caring for each other.

And the neighbors should see how we love one another. And we, we led you toward this idea of community and loving one another as we saw in the scriptures. And again, people left, but others of you, you stuck around.

You go, you know what? This is it. And, and, and that's why it's so hard because I, even as I were worshiping and you guys know me, I mean, I'm traveling nonstop and just all these places around the world. And I go, there's, there's not another place like Cornerstone.

And so it's hard to go, so why am I going? Why, why leave this? How can you leave this? It's so good. And yet I, I can't deny this restlessness I felt. And I share every time I fly into LAX and I see all those lights.

I just feel like God going, do you not trust me? You know, it just, cause it's overwhelming. You just go, what am I going to do? What am I going to, you know, it's just, I, I just, I felt it for so long. And then when I was in Brooklyn a couple months ago, again, it's just being in the middle of a big city and just feeling like helpless.

Just feel like that's something the Lord is leading me toward. And as I've shared with the elders, they affirmed my decision. As I talked with my wife, she says, you know, not only was she affirming it, but was feeling some of that same calling herself.

And it's something the Spirit was doing in her. It's, it's, it's pretty interesting. It's, it's kind of like when I started the church, Lisa and I had been married for like two, three weeks.

And I kind of just felt this weird calling by the Lord, like I'm supposed to start my own church. And that's hard to say to your new bride, that she'll have to support the family and everything else. But, but she just, she just says, no, I, I trust that that's of the Lord.

And then I, I went to Ron Wilson, who at that time was the oldest man I knew. And, and he's still alive, which is crazy. But I, I just said, hey, what do you think? And I remember Ron going, no, I, I believe this is, I would follow you.

I'm like, wow. And, and then, you know, and then I talked to some people and people actually showed up and, and it's kind of the same thing this time. It's like, as I talked to my wife, she's like, yeah, yeah.

And then as I talked to the elders, they're like, no, we affirm this. And I think we have to do that when we sense these callings from God. You lead, but at the same time, if it's of the Lord, other people and those

who are in leadership will, will come alongside of you.

And, but I don't want to just speak for my wife. I've actually asked her to come up and, and share just, just how God's led her on this journey. Hello.

As a wife, there have been times in our marriage that it has been more of a, a leadership. Francis saying, this is where I feel like God is calling us. And, and there's times when I've had to say, okay, I'm just going to trust that.

And I'm going to submit because I believe that God is leading me. And I'm going to, I'm going to trust that God is leading us through you. Maybe because this is a bigger decision.

This time in the Lord's graciousness, he has just been wrestling with me and dealing with me and bringing me to this place where I feel like I'm just right on the same page with him. And it's, it's just a blessing to me from the Lord. I think it's for recently how it started for me was the scriptures that we've been reading as a church family going through first John over and over and then reading through Luke over and over and, and now into Acts.

But I have to say the book of Luke just was rocking my world personally. All, I thought this commitment that Christ calls us to is so serious, you know, and in Luke chapter nine when he says, anybody who wants to come after me has to deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me because whoever wants to save his life is going to lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

And over and over in my mind, I would be thinking about this, deny yourself. And I think, I don't know what it looks like to deny myself. I am, I'm such a creature of comfort and habit and safety.

I even said to Francis recently, I feel like there's just like a gravitational pull on my life for, for safety and comfort. And I, it's almost like it's strapping me down in these rubber bands and I'm, I have to push against it. And I know God is calling me to push against it and to go outside of what I know and what is safe and what feels comfortable with my children.

You know, for you ladies, I mean, as a mama, do I, do I have fears about taking my four children to Thailand? Yeah, I do. Do I have fears about going to a big city like LA? Yeah, I do. Maybe that's funny to some of you.

I know there's people that have given up so much for the gospel, but God is really asking me personally to say, are you, are you willing to lay down your own life and the lives of your children for me? And as I was reading through these scriptures in Luke, it was chapter 14 that really stuck with me the most. It says, great crowds accompanied Jesus and he turned and said to them, if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

And towards the end of that chapter, he says, so therefore any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. And so stirring in me is just this desire to say, Lord, I want to be a disciple. I do want you.

I do want to lay down my life. I do want to give it all up, even though in my flesh, I don't, I want to cling to what I know. I want to cling to you because I love you and I know you, but God is calling us out and we

can't deny that.

And I pray that you would pray for us and I will be praying for you too, but I'm praying that you would pray for me as a mom and just my own personal struggles. But there's nothing I want more than to hear the Lord say, well done, good and faithful servant. And what kind of leaders would we be if we heard the voice of the Lord leading us and didn't obey? We wouldn't be anything to you then.

And so I just hope that you will be able to pray for us and encourage us as we take a step of faith. That is not something we saw years ago. I think we would have both said, oh, we'll be at Cornerstone forever.

But the Holy Spirit has said differently. I was blown away when she shared first service and I think I'm even more blown away this time. You know, I had a passage that I was going to share first service.

Then when she got up and laid all that out, I go, you know what, let's just leave it at that. It's awesome. It's awesome when there's unity.

You know how I think it's Psalm 131 or 132 where it says how good and pleasant it is when the brothers dwell together in unity, when there's unity. I think my favorite thing about this morning is just to even paint that picture to you of a husband and wife in unity because I know there's been so much brokenness in so many relationships. But it's such an, I can't even share how amazing it is.

It was the same thing I felt right after we got married and suddenly this woman is saying, if you believe the Lord is calling you to start a church, I'm right there beside you. I'm like, are you kidding me? I've never had that in life. And once that happened, it was the things that God did through us.

And now to see that again, it's always been there, but now at just at another level, you know, 16 years later, it's just your relationships at another level. And then, you know, just the things the Lord's been saying to me lately is just has to do, it's not just me, it's me and Lisa. If it's true for me, it's gonna be true for her also.

You know, if God's leading me to something, it doesn't mean, sorry, Lisa, but you gotta go here. It's no, I love you, Lisa. You know, God says to her, I love you and this is part of your journey and I'm bringing the two of you together toward this.

And it's such a crazy thing because I felt like the Lord's been saying, you know what, and Lisa's gonna be even more in the forefront and just even hearing her share, you know, it's just like, you know what, there's a gifting and a Holy Spirit filling in her life. And same with our kids, the way there was such a unity there, you know, there was pain. We're all like crying.

We're all sad about this, but we're all like, no, whatever the Lord, you know, if we back down from this, then everything's a lie to us. Like what Lisa said, no, this is worth it. It's worth it to give it up and whatever happens, happens.

It's all in the Lord's hands. And so then to come to the elders and the elders, you know, to also feel some of that uncertainty and yet at the same time to go, no, this is right. We've seen it in your life.

We've seen the restlessness. It hasn't come as much of a surprise to many people because they go, no, I always knew you guys would just go do something crazy and go wherever the Spirit led you. And so the elders felt the same thing and go, no, this is not a, because the hardest thing was like, gosh, I can't

separate from these guys and I trust these guys more than anyone.

These are the elders, man. We're so tight. I travel the world and I don't trust anyone like I trust this group of men.

And it felt so good for them to say, well, you're not leaving us. You're an extension and we want to send you out as part of us and you'll always be a part of us. And it's like, oh, thank you.

You know, it's just, okay, okay, good, good. I got my wife, got my family, got my elders. And so now it's like bringing the church and I'm going, gosh, you guys, you've been with me through so many crazy changes and Simi Valley hates change, right? We want everything the same as it was, but you guys stuck with me and you saw the Spirit of God move.

And none of us would have thought 16 years ago that what has happened has happened. You know, it's just, it's just a crazy, crazy thing. And I guess I'm asking you one more time, okay, can you stick with me on this one? And that means praying for us and remembering us and having a place where we can come back and say, hey, you know, here's what's going on.

And if it is LA, of course, that's nice. But if it's New York, Chicago, San Francisco, wherever, just to have this sense of, because, you know, people around the country will say, well, hey, we're praying for you, but it's different. I don't know them.

I don't know that they, you know, the Bible says the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Remember how I shared a few weeks ago, God doesn't hear everyone's prayers. You know, biblically, it shows us, look, he's not listening to you.

If this is the way you're alive, he's not listening to you. And yet in this room, I know of people who seriously, seriously walk with the Lord and would do anything for him. And those are the prayers I really want.

And so there's just a sense of peace. If over these next few weeks, I can just know that you're with us in spirit and that you're praying for us, because like Lisa said, it's a pretty crazy time. I believe that there's going to be some pain ahead, some loneliness ahead, some just the Lord leading us into places that we would never have chosen for ourselves.

Let me just tell you the plan, a rough plan, so you know what's going on. This isn't it for me. I'm going to be speaking like the next six weeks or so.

I have to miss one week at the middle of May because I'm in London. But other than that, I'm going to preach through April and through the end of May, because I wanted to re-emphasize the things that have been most important to me over the last 16 years and leave you with those thoughts. So I really love for you to be here and give me an opportunity to share some of those things and remind you of some of those things.

So I just get the sense like, okay, let me, I said it again, I want to make sure you know what's most important to me. And also during that time, we're going to have some meetings midweek and stuff like that. I'm gone this week, but after that, I'm around for a couple weeks.

But I want some meetings midweek where you guys can ask me questions, because a lot of people come up and say, hey, can I have a one-on-one? Can I have a one-on-one? I just can't have a one-on-one relationship with everyone, but if we have some forums where I just, I want you to be able to ask questions. Not that I have all the answers, but I want that. So that'll be going on through up until June.

In June and July, I have so many speaking engagements. I'm basically just non-stop speaking and traveling. Then August and September, I have a few speaking engagements, but it's also going to be a time when my family travels around the states to see if the Lord might lead us somewhere else, or at least, you know, walk around New York, pray, walk around San Francisco, pray, walk around LA and pray, and just see if there's a place that we just sense this is it.

And then October, after October 9th, I have no more speaking engagements for the rest of the year. I kind of put it that way so that we could go to some third world countries and just serve, and that's when we'll really be seeking the Lord to just get confirmation, and also just serving some people, and who knows? Who knows what God will do in India or Bangkok or something like that. But just once that's over, I believe that it'll be January of 2011 when we launch something new.

Again, when I make plans, they rarely stick, you know, so that's kind of what the Lord has so far. So that's kind of where I'm going, but here's what I'd like to do is I really want to invite you to join me, not in my adventure and calling from God, but join me in what I'm doing. And I was trying to think how to illustrate this, but last week I couldn't be here because I had to speak in the Bahamas.

And hey, I told them no the first time, and then they said, well, what if we fly your whole family out? I'm like, I think you're calling me Lord. So we went, but I went scuba diving for the first time. You know, the guy was a scuba instructor, one of the guys in the church, and I'm like, I'm a little scared of it, you know, because I've just never done it.

And he gave me like a 30 second lesson, and he said, just put this in your mouth and breathe. I'm like, oh, that's it? He goes, yeah, and I'll bring you up and down and show you the rest later. And so we just went, and it was so, so cool.

And I just never done it before. We're just cruising around, and I'm like, wow, this is amazing. And, you know, my wife and my daughters, you know, were like, I'm not doing that.

So when I got out and I realized how easy it was and how safe I felt with this guy, Tim, you know, I was like, oh man, you know, in fact, let me show you a picture. There's a picture we went. Look behind me.

It's a shark. That's awesome. There were a couple of them.

And I, you know, before we went in, I'm like, aren't you scared of sharks? You know, because I see a couple in the water as we're about to jump in. And he goes, you know, if they get real feisty, he goes, what I do is I just grab their fin. And they don't like that and just struggle and they'll take off.

And I'm like, oh, okay. You know, it was weird. And, you know, I mean, this guy is crazy.

So I trusted him. And he brings chum, you know, like dead fish to attract the sharks. I mean, he likes them.

So anyways, so after I go out, you know, I'm like, wow, that was so awesome. You know, so then I go to Rachel, you know, my oldest daughter, because I knew Lisa would still be scared. And I go, Rachel, you

gotta try.

It's just the greatest thing. You know, he'll be with you. He'll just kind of guide you.

The moment you're scared, just tell him, grab his arm, and he'll take you right up. I totally trust. I don't trust, you know, don't go with me.

I don't know what I'm doing. But I trust you with him. He wrestles sharks.

Go, you know. And, you know, and she's scared. I'm like, no, no, just go.

Just go. Trust me. It's so good.

And she takes off and goes even further than where I went, you know. And she comes back. She saw stingrays and everything and comes back, big old smile on her face.

I go, was that the coolest thing you've ever done? And, you know, just her eyes all big. I told you. I told you.

Now, come on, you know, we're gonna jump into some sharks now. And, you know, it just took my 14-year-old. But it's just that the whole thing was, you know, I went and I experienced this.

And I go, ah, you can go. You can go. And how I just trusted her with this guy, because I've been there.

And I guess it's that picture of, man, I've done some things in life where the Holy Spirit has led me. And I come back and I go, come on, you guys, just jump. Just jump.

It's good. It's good. I've been there.

And let him be your guide. He'll take you to other places. You know, I've been with him.

I trust him now. And the Holy Spirit, he'll lead us. He'll take you.

And my hope is that maybe even as I jump and make this transition, I really believe there are many of you in this room that have felt an uneasiness about your life. It's this tension, like there's something more. Like it's not just, it's not clicking just yet.

Like there's something more the Lord's leading you to. And I've felt it for a while. And I've been scared.

And it's like, no, I'm doing it. I'm making the jump. And I believe as I do that, my hope is that others of you would join with me and go, you know what? I've been thinking I was supposed to do this.

And here it is. I'm just letting go. I'm surrendering.

Holy Spirit, where do you want me to go? And I had a moment of clarity too when I was scuba diving. Because after we did the shark thing, he goes, okay, now I want to take you to a blue hole. What a blue hole is, it's a hole like in the middle of the forest.

Like you're in your wetsuit in the forest. And suddenly there'll be a hole, like a sinkhole that goes down who knows how far. And it's just water.

It's like fresh water for the first 50 feet. And then it gets foggy because it mixes with the salt water. And then below that, it's salt.

You've probably seen on Discovery Channel or something. It just goes down forever. And he goes, I want you to take, he goes, I won't take you to the bottom.

I'll just take you to about 120 feet. And that's dumb, okay? Like you would never be able to do that in the States. You know, you can't even do what I did the first time.

You'd have to take all these tests. This guy's like, breathe, you know? And he goes, don't worry, I'll take you down there. And I remember, you know, we're going down, you're popping your ears, all this pressure.

And then about 100 feet, he says, you'll feel like you're on drugs. Like everything will slow down and you'll get all crazy. And I'd never been on drugs, but now that I was there, I know why some of you guys do it.

And it was like, wow, this is great. But when I got to 100 feet, I freaked out at 100 feet. You know, suddenly it went in my mind, like, if this thing doesn't work, you die.

And so suddenly, you know, bubbles are just flying out. And I grab him and I go like this, you know, and he goes up and I go, you know, and then he starts to, and I go, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. You know, and it was weird.

It was like in my mind, I just go, you know, I was praying and I'm going, Lord, this is no different. I depend on you for every breath. When I'm up and walking on the land, you just gave me that, Lord.

There's another one, Lord. This is no different. It doesn't matter if I'm 100 feet down in some hole in the middle of the forest, or I'm walking around and land, you are always sovereign.

You're always in control. And suddenly it was like I started breathing slower. And I looked him in the eyes and he could just see my eyes, the panic going away.

And I just went like this and I go, let's go down. You know, let's keep going. And he goes, I'm like, you know, and just like, ah, it was just, it was just pure craziness.

But again, it's just, you know, our lives, come on, you guys. I mean, really, it's God opening my eyes that wherever you are, you're always dependent on me. You just see it a little bit more clearly when you're 100 feet underwater, you know, and you see a little more clearly when you're in a place of danger.

And I've just, I've just sensed the Spirit of God leading us. I'm excited about it. I'm sad about it.

You know, and in moments I'm afraid of it. But my prayer is that some of you would, you would be jumping also. I don't mean joining me in my venture, but for you, what is it the Lord's called you to do? What is that step of faith? And last thing I want to say today, and again, we'll have several weeks to keep talking, and there's so many passages of scripture I want to take you to.

But even this morning, I know that some of you, this is your first time to Cornerstone, and that's kind of weird, but here was my hope for those of you that are visiting, and also for some others of you that have been coming for a while, and you've been checking this thing out, and you haven't made the jump because you're scared, and you're not sure if Jesus is really worth it. Because you're looking at your life right now, and you're going, man, but if I follow Jesus, do I have to let go of this? Do I have to let go of

this? Do I have to let go of this? And hopefully what you've seen this morning is a couple that's got a lot on the line, but we're looking at Jesus and going, oh, he's so worth it. He is so worth it.

It's scary to let go, but I know that he's worth it. We're talking about God who's giving us every breath, our creator, who loved us so much that he willingly gave his one and only son. Like our fear over our children, and we're thinking, I serve a God who willingly gave his only son into that type of suffering, and now I'm not going to trust him that he gave me that.

He gave you who didn't spare his own son. Of course I want that God to be my God, to be my king. A Jesus who came to the earth and made himself nothing and died on a cross for me, and then invites me to spend eternity with him, and they invite me to have his very spirit come into this body, and for me to be at one with God, truly at one with God, and it's like, well, of course I would go.

Is there a pain? Absolutely, but there's just such a trust in this holy God, and for some of you, man, you're holding on to relationship. You're holding on to finances. You're holding on to whatever it is, your vice, and I'm going, man, are you serious? This God is so worth it, and maybe today God's calling some of you to say, you know, I was always unwilling to let go, and maybe just you seeing our willingness to jump into whatever this next phase in our life, and the passages my wife read about this is bigger than everything.

Maybe this morning's your time to die to yourself and give your life to Jesus, and so what I'm going to ask you to do, because maybe some of you, it's this would be awesome, is maybe for all of you that have been on that fence that have been listening to me for years, my bigger prayer, this is bigger than Lisa and I leaving. It's your eternal security. It's your eternal salvation.

See, my wife and I, anything happens to us, it's really not that big a deal. We go to heaven, but something happens to some of you, and this is not true of you. If Jesus Christ were to return today, not everyone in this room would go into this eternity of joy and bliss.

Okay, I know you've been to memorial services where the guy up front just goes, oh, he's in a better place, and in your mind you're going, I'm not so sure, and I'm certainly not the guy that's going to say, oh, I know you'll all go to a better place. I'm really not so sure. When I read Jesus's words, he says, am I really worth it to you? Do you really believe I did all that for you? Do you trust me with your life? And I say, yes, and I'll forsake everything for him and for this call, and I thank God because I have so much peace even saying that right now because of this decision.

It's like, you know, Lord, I would go anywhere. I will go anywhere with you. I trust you, and maybe you've never made that decision, and that's what baptism is about.

It's like, I'm dying to myself. Forget about Francis's will. I'm rising again to follow the will of the Lord.

He died and rose again for me, and I will die to myself, and I want to live for him alive in the spirit, and if that's you, then I encourage you to come up as we worship. Did you want to announce that now? Yeah, never mind. We're not singing yet.

Todd's coming up. Worship team can come up too, but Todd's going to share some thoughts, and here's the thing too, you know, before I hand it off to you because I want to still feel like I'm in charge. We've just had an awesome time with the elders this week, and as you pray for me, and that's kind of selfish, I would say pray for these elders and encourage these elders.

No one loves you like these elders do, and Todd, who's going to lead us in prayer, he's been like a brother. He's been the one guy that has made me think more biblically than anyone else and challenged a lot of the thinking, going, is it biblical? Is it biblical? Is it biblical? Is it biblical? It's to the point where we're just sick of that word, and yet it's like, man, that's what we say we are, though, is this Bible-teaching church, and he's gotten me so right with the Word of God, and so it's so easy to go, man, these elders, they love you. They're walking with the Lord.

I trust them more than any other man on the earth, and I really mean that, and so it's an exciting time. It's been a real bonding time with the elders during this time. Could you join me to stand up and pray? I just feel like we need to thank God.

Jesus, we acknowledge that the very one that we're talking to right now formed every single one of us in this room. You shaped us. You molded us.

You put us inside of the very mother's womb that you want us to be inside. You crafted this entire universe to function in such a way that everything about us might proclaim how awesome you are, and God, I believe that not only did you do each of us individually, but Father, I believe even just as a friend, as a brother, you crafted Francis in a unique way, just like you have all the rest of us, and you crafted him for a time and a place to accomplish what you wanted to accomplish, and God, I pray that, number one, that wouldn't end, but that, number two, that, Father, we would spend time thanking God, you alone, for what you've done inside of his life in such a way that it impacted us. We believe that it was totally of you.

It was your spirit at work in him, and so we just want to stop for just a moment and say thank you so much. Thank you for Lisa. God, thank you for providing a wife to Francis that puts up with his craziness, Father, but not puts up with it, but joins him and is excited about it and believes in you because she's seen your work in his life.

God, thank you for the family that you've given him, and God, I can't wait to see what you still have in store for him and what that means, and yet, God, I also want to thank you for this family. You know I love this church, God, and I know you love this church way more than any of us in this room could ever. You've demonstrated it through your death on the cross.

You've demonstrated it through bringing everyone into this family. You've done it in miraculous ways. You've done it in ways that none of us could have expected, and God, so I pray what would happen today is all of us will be blown away that the same God that loved us enough to bring us into this family will care for us, walk us through, and has so much hope for every one of us.

God, I don't believe just it's Francis you've given a mission, but I believe the mission that you've started here will continue on, and I can't wait for what that looks like through the power of your spirit. So, God, please continue to blow our mind with those realities, and so, God, we give this to you and trust you more than we trust ourselves and can't wait for what you're going to do through this. Father, give us grace.

I don't want to personal, Father. I've had to walk through just the reality of not having a friend around as much, so I pray that you would give us the grace there, but God, please give us a hope that we never imagine. Your precious name.

Amen. Okay, you need to sit down real quick. Let me just walk through a couple things.

You okay over there? Okay. Just so you know, like I, three weeks ago when Francis called me, he's like, hey, we need to talk. Have you ever had those feelings just like you knew what the talk was going to be about, and I never imagined Francis and I breaking up over a bagel and a coffee at Panera.

I was imagining more like a long walk on the beach and, you know, him explaining to me where he's going, but I'll take the everything bagel with cream cheese, but, you know, I just, as we sat there and I just heard his heart and I listened, it was almost like that very moment I knew the Spirit of God was telling me that I was at peace with that. I knew it. I had this confidence about it.

We talked for a little while, even when he told the elders, while there's that thing you go through that is like, you know, it's the friendship, the serving together, the times of prayer, the times of laughing, crying, all those things you go through. There's been this right thing about it all the way through that we just knew there was a confidence about it, that there was a time in which eventually somebody has to be released, and I was reading the book of Acts, and I so appreciated what Lisa was sharing, is that I do believe the scriptures have just spoken to me so much. If you ever noticed in the book of Acts, they didn't send their second best.

Whenever they were in prayer and whenever they were worshiping, whenever they were fasting, they always chose out of what was the best, and at this time the best just happens to be Francis, and we're going to be sending him out, and so, like, on one level there's a bitterness to it, and I'll confess it to you just as a friend, there's a sadness to it, but yet, you know, when something's right, and you can lay your head on your pillow at night, and you can know, okay, God, there's no doubt about it, this is a right thing, and we're supposed to do it, and that's the confidence that I have right now. Just to let you know, I wish you could have watched the elders work through this. I know you couldn't, but even just to watch those guys, the thing I appreciated so much about the elders here is they wanted to make sure in the middle of everything that Jesus was absolutely central, and that the love of this body was above all else, and I just watched those guys wrestle and pray, and it's just the confidence that I want you to have.

There was almost this excitement that the thing that Cornerstone has made from the beginning is that Jesus Christ would be proclaimed, and Jesus Christ would be the number one issue, is even in wrestling through this, whether or not Francis is supposed to go stay, all those things, is that the way Francis wrestled through it, his family wrestled through it, the elders wrestled through it, and the way I hope our church wrestles through it is, is that Jesus Christ is the one who's magnified most in this process. That's my hope in all this. Now saying that, I know it's kind of hard at times to do this, but when it's right, you know how you're supposed to tell God it's right? If you ever noticed in the Bible, if you remember right when I preached, when something was right, the people sang.

And so what I want to do is, is I want to kind of finish this morning off, and I want us to sing, and I want us to thank God that he's alive and well in Cornerstone, and leading leaders, even if it means through tough decisions. And so what I'd love to do this morning is just have Jim lead us. Let's sing like we honestly believe God is building his church, and he's building it through each and every one of us, all right? Okay, let's sing this morning.

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