



Believe

Part 1 – Do For One What You Can't Do For All

Pastor Ted Cunningham

Today, we're starting this new series *Believe* part one. It's based on a core value of our church and has been for about five years now. That core value is "Do for one what you can't do for all."

I'm a movie nut; I love movies. How many of you love movies? I love movies because movies, like music, stir us. There are great lines that come out of movies. I never forget them. My favorite Christmas movie of all time is *Christmas Vacation*. There are so many great lessons in that movie. My favorite line in the movie is when Clark and Eddie are in the family room. You know what scene I'm going to. They are sitting there talking and Clark is worn out. He's trying to be a good host, but it just ain't coming together for him. He looks at Cousin Eddie and says, "Cousin Eddie, can I get you anything? Something to eat or some egg nog; take you out in the middle of nowhere and leave you for dead?"

The primary lesson I take away from *Christmas Vacation* is that you shouldn't spend too much time with family. You have to limit time with family. I have to be honest with you. *Christmas Vacation* is no longer my favorite Christmas movie. What movie replaced *Christmas Vacation*? *Elf*! Does *Elf* have good Christmas lines or what? They are life lessons. "The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear." Remember when he's in the store. This is such a great movie. I memorized it the first time I watched it. Remember when he's like "I'm singing. I'm in a store and I'm singing." He finds out Santa is coming to the store and gets all excited. He says, "I know him! I know him!"

And then a fake Santa shows up. I know there are small children in here so I'm going to tread lightly. The fake Santa showed up to the store and Buddy gets right in his face and says, "You smell like beef and cheese." It was the only time in the movie that Buddy really had attitude. He goes, "You sit on a throne of lies." I whisper that to Santa I walk by. I don't know if you've done it. It's a blast when you drop your kid off at Bass Pro on Santa's lap, and you just whisper in his ear, "You sit on a throne of lies."

I want to give two *Believe* tickets away to the first person that can stand up and finish this... and it has to be in order. Let's see who the *Elf* fans are in the place. We elves believe in four main food groups... Candy, candy canes, candy corn, syrup. That's right; you've got it; *Believe* tickets for you! "We elves try to stick to the four main food groups: candy, candy canes, candy corns, and syrup."

Elf has now been replaced by my favorite Christmas movie, *Believe*. I hope you pick out some of these great lines. Today, we are going to look at two of them. We really didn't set out to make this a core belief of our church, a core value of our church, but about five or six years ago, I heard a message by

Pastor Andy Stanley called *For One Not Everyone*. That whole message was built around his twenty-year journey with a single lady who was drug addicted. He walks through this whole message about how he decided that he could do for this lady what he couldn't do for everyone. He stayed with her on her journey as she got clean from drugs and she went back home to seek reconciliation with relationships.

I remember bringing that into a sermon and I just used it as an illustration, but it took hold at Woodland Hills. Elders started talking to one another with the staff talking to one another. In home groups, we were going back and forth, talking about it. We said let's start doing for one what we can't for all. Hopefully, by the end of today's message, you'll see that this guides everything we do here.

I just want to put it out there that as we look at two of the lines today, we are going to focus on the character of Matthew Peyton. We're going to look at two great lines and interactions that he had in the movie. As we do, I just want you to stop and pause for a moment and ask this question. "When I see people in need, do I judge first or help first?" We are going to answer this honestly because I'm going to personally share for me. I know what goes on in my head when I see someone on a corner with a sign. I have to be honest with you. I see the sign and the sign tells a story. Does anybody know what I'm talking about. "I'm a veteran." "I'm homeless." "I'm traveling." The very first thought that pops in my head... But I'm asking the Lord to work in me on this. But my first thought is *I wonder if it's even true*. Many of you are with me. I can see it.

Many of you are agreeing. "I just assume, Ted, every sign is a lie. It's like they come up with the best story they can to get the most money." But, I'm convinced I need to stop judging and start helping. You can't help every person on every street corner. I get that. But I have to tell you something we believe around here. Our children are watching, listening, remembering, and then repeating. Our children see everything we do, hear everything we say, forget nothing, and then they repeat. Now, I have some explaining to do as I walk down the street and someone asks me for help and I don't help. My son pauses for just a moment and says, "Dad, why didn't you help that guy? Or let me rephrase that, Dad. Pastor Ted, why didn't you help that guy?" In my mind and in my heart, I start going, *Why are you in this position? Did you choose this? Why are you staying in this position? Do you want to be here? Do you want to step up and out of this?*

Hopefully, today, I want to take us on a journey where we take on a different look. Here's the character of Matthew Peyton. He's a small business owner in Grundy, Virginia. He's having company problems and his employees go on strike. I related to Matthew Peyton in the movie because he's a lot like us in this way. He's just living day to day. He's doing the best he can, living day to day. He gets up, goes to work, comes home. He's also trying to do the right thing. He pays his taxes. He wants to pay his people. You get that heart through the movie. He wants to take care of people, so he's going day to day, doing the right thing, but, like many of us, he has overlooked how God is able to use him in his community.

All of us are going about town doing good stuff. If we are not careful, we will overlook what God wants to do through us with the opportunities that have been brought to us. Do for one what you can't do for all is a brand-new way of looking at the opportunities that come our way to help those who are poor, those who are needy, those who need help.

I think we overlook it because we are overwhelmed. If you turn on Fox, CNN, MSNBC, whatever 24-hour news cycle you watch, you see all of the sex trafficking, all of the poverty, all of the homelessness, the orphans, the refugees, those fleeing to our country and fleeing other countries. You see this and you think *That's a big problem. And I'm sitting here on a couch; I can't do anything about it.* We get overwhelmed. You add to that overwhelmed feeling when you watch the news, when you're dealing with in this church, when you're dealing with in our community, when you're dealing with your co-workers... and you know their personal stories. Add to it what's happening in your family. Every person in here has a family member that you're like, "Would you just stop talking and get a job?" Everybody in here could be like, "If you do one more get rich quick scheme, I am not inviting you to Christmas." We get into this mode.

We get overwhelmed, so we come to this idea where we say, "We just won't do anything." Maybe this has been in your heart when it comes to need presented to you. "There's so much pain, hurt, hunger, and brokenness, I can't make a difference. This problem is too big; who am I? Who am I to take care of the orphan crisis or the emptying out the foster program or meeting the physical needs of students of Stone and Taney Counties? I'm just one person." Then it builds out from there. "I can't make a difference, so I won't even try. I'll hear about it and say, 'Oh, that's terrible. I wish something could be done.'"

I think this is part of the problem too. My heart, as a local church pastor, is that we start taking stuff away from the government and putting it back where it belongs, which is on us and on the church, to teach and to help and to encourage. But some feel the problem is too big so we need to just let the government take care of it. Then, if you're not careful, you go to this next part.

"The problem is so big, it can't even be solved." What I love about the orphan care and the foster program is there are states across our country where churches have come together and said, "We will take on the foster system as the church. We can't take in every foster child; we can't take in every orphan, but our church can take in one. Our church can take in a few. We can do for one or we can do for a few what we can't do for all." As these churches start getting together, the problem is being solved, so I submit to you, what would happen here in Branson, in Stone and Taney Counties if everyone did for one what they can't do for all. Now you'll see change. I believe that you will see the needle move if everyone in here does for one what they can't do for all.

We are going to look at several ways... As we look at the scripture today, I hope you see the heart of your heavenly Father for those who are in need, for those who are homeless, for those who are lame, for those who are sick. I hope that today, God will expand all of our hearts in love.

We just came through a series called *Heal Our Land* where we talked about love for each other, love for our neighbors, and love for our enemies. Today, I pray that we would have love and care in our heart for those who are needy among us, for those who are poor among us. If you've ever been overwhelmed... And this time of year, it happens even more because every cash register you go to in this town, you will be asked if you would like to give a dollar before your transaction closes out.

As you walk out of the store, you'll be asked for change. That's all good stuff. The problem is we are going so wide with everything that you're overwhelmed. We just want to get in our car, get home, shut the garage door, go in, and sit down until we go back out and do it all again the next day.

Maybe today, even in our giving and even in the way you do for one what you can't do for all, it will just begin to open up your eyes. That's the first thing we are going to look at.

Do for one what you can't do for all keeps us from doing nothing. Nothing is not an option. We have to do something, but we've got to start seeing.

I want to show you my favorite scene in the movie Believe. In February I received a script for this movie. I'm friends with the producers of the movie and one of the executive producers is the guy who puts together Date Night Comedy, so we've been friends for about ten years. He sent me the script and I landed the role of homeless man number two. I've always wanted to try movies and then I realized that second and a half of line delivery took twelve hours of filming.

I was at the movie set, doing homeless man number two and looking at my friends who were the executive producers. I said to myself, *I'd rather be an executive producer.* That's what I decided. They sit and drink coffee and eat snacks and tell people what to do. It's far better suited for me and my personality than acting. The next movie, I'm going to produce it. I hope to do it here in the Ozarks. Don't start sending me your headshots, please. I have to take a class or two on how to do it. I don't fully get it yet.

But, anyway, I read the script and I was moved by it. There were several lines that jumped out at me, but this scene got me the most because in this scene, I'm not Sharon. You'll see Sharon's heart. She's a single mom to Clarence, or CJ. I don't have where she's at; I have Matthew Peyton's motives and heart. They have this great conversation. There is a line that jumps out and I want to see if you catch it.

Video plays

Matthew Peyton: You probably think a guy with a descent car and house... What could be so bad, right?

Sharon: Well, I can see that you're obviously in a little bit of trouble right now. You do know that losing a car is not the end of the world, right? Unless that's what you make it. The world, it's here, inside. That's what you've got to live for. You can't worry about what's going on out there. Whatever trouble you're in, I just... I don't know you well enough and I'm going to stop talking.

Matthew Peyton: So, you don't want?

Sharon: Yeah, of course. I want, I want lots, but I've learned to live with what I need. Besides, all the true blessings in life are for free. I mean you're a blessing, Clarence is a blessing.

Matthew Peyton: Then why do accept these surroundings? Why don't you strive to give him something better?

Sharon: Better...? Better...? Better than love, strength, courage? Because that's what I give him every single day. You know I might not have a big fancy car or live in a giant house. I don't even have a paying job right now. Let me tell you something. When that mine shut down and his father left, he left us right here. I had to quit nursing school. Lost the only job I could get. Things, they got worse and worse and worse and they got worse because people like you forgot about people like us. And now, I strive to help these people because these people need me and they don't have anybody and they don't have any jobs and they can't afford to pay me so they do what they can. They keep a roof over our heads. They give me food to feed my son.

Clarence: Mr. Peyton, Mr. Johnson is waiting down stairs for you. He said you can make a call as long as he gets to the phone first, but you'll have to pay for the minutes, he said.

Matthew Peyton: I'll figure it out.

Clarence: What's wrong, mom?

Sharon: Nothing. Mr. Peyton, you should probably have that looked at by a real doctor when you get to wherever it is that you're going.

Matthew Peyton starts to take off the blanket around him.

Sharon: Keep it.

Matthew Peyton: Here.

Sharon: No. You're going to need it. It'll keep you warm... inside.

Video ends

So here was the line that convicted me: "People like you forgot about people like us." Overwhelmed with need and pain and hunger and homelessness that we say "I can't do anything so the best solution is I'll just stop looking. I'll see the guy on the corner as my car approaches the turn lane and I'll lock my door just in case. Kids look over there. Don't make direct eye contact." But, do for one what you can't do for all gets us seeing again. It begins to open up our eyes to opportunities.

Amy and I walked into a restaurant in Virginia last week and as we walked in, a guy approached me quickly. A couple of weeks ago, I told you how I'm always assessing whether or not I can take the person that's coming after me and most of the time, even in my mind after I crunch the numbers, I lose. I don't conceal and carry. I know everybody around here does, so I feel very safe in the Ozarks. But, this guy came up really fast, and I kind of put Amy behind me because I just always have this visual that I'm going to die protecting her. Isn't that something? I never win the fight. I'm going to lose my life, but I'm going to protect her. He came up to me and he goes, "Sir!" And he starts giving me a story. Again, I don't know about you, but I immediately shut down.

Don't look at me in judgment this morning. I'm looking around and some of you are like "Oh, Pastor Ted." Can I ask. We won't put this on video; they can't see you. Would you raise your hand if you ever start off with judgment?

The guy comes up and tells me the story and he just needs a few bucks. I keep my cash in this pocket, which I need to announce to everybody in here. That was another good idea. Now I have to start carrying it over here. You won't know where I carry it. How about that? But I'm doing that thing. I go with larger bills in. Does anybody know what I'm talking about? So, I can kind of keep track of where it is. I'm scrounging around for two bucks because after I've moved past judgment to doing something, I'm reaching for two bucks. He lifts up his shirt and swings around to show me that he doesn't have any weapons. I'm like, *Yeah, let me see your boot.* It's constant. We can laugh about it, but I hate it. I hate that this is where I go. Some of you think I'm just being smart, just being safe. Maybe it's time I risk a little bit more.

He says, "Can you help me?" I reached in and I pulled out what I thought were the singles. I grabbed the wrong bills. I didn't want to show him... I probably had \$60.00 or \$70.00 on me. I handed it to him. But, see, let's just go there. Most of you raised your hands with me. Now, I go there with *I know what he's going to do with this. That story he gave me, he's not going to use it for that. He's going to buy beer and cigarettes.* Again, the judgment never stops. Some of you are thinking You shouldn't be enabling, you shouldn't be... And I'm just saying, but what happens? I can't hand money to every person I meet on the street, but I can do for one what I can't do for all. I don't go wide and try to meet the needs of everybody, but I can get with this guy and have a conversation. It doesn't take long in a conversation to find out what's real in the story and what's not. I think we've been lulled into this idea to give a buck here and buck there and go wide with everything and then you don't really have to see too deep. The heart of our heavenly Father is that we would begin seeing and meeting the needs around us.

In Psalm 41: 1, we read this. ***Blessed is he who considers the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.*** We know this: Proverbs says, ***He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.*** Proverbs 22: 9 says, ***He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor.*** The Lord wanted his children, the Israelites, to understand this and to be openhanded, with open hearts and open hands to say we need to meet the needs around us.

We read this in Deuteronomy. ***7 If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you...*** I always like when that's added in the scripture to remind us what the Lord is giving us. We are realizing whatever is in this pocket right here or whatever resources you have, we don't believe 10% of it is the Lord's; it's all his. As a follower of Jesus, you and I are called to be stewards of what we've been given. And it's all of what we've been given. I love how the Lord is going to encourage the Israelites to be generous and he's going to say, "Let me remind you of the land I gave you. The wells that you're drinking from, I gave you those. The vineyards you've been gathering the grapes from and making the wine, those came from me as well." God is generous towards his people and he wants his people to reflect his heart. ***...do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. 8 Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need.***

10 Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart... So now, even if you move past judgment and say “I’m going to do something,” he wants us to do it with a cheerful heart, that we would do it with generosity, that we would say, “Here you go, this isn’t mine anyway; this is all God’s; I get to bless this person with what I’ve been blessed with.” ***...then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. 11 There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land.***

This so important for us to grasp that we become not only seers of the need around us, but that we actually be generous responders when we see it.

I had the opportunity to follow a man for 15 years. I love being around generous people. You have to be careful around generous people because if you start complimenting them on something they own, they give it to you. You can’t compliment them anymore. On the golf course with this guy, you say, “Hey I really like that” and he says “It’s yours.” I’ve had friends who I’ve complimented something they are wearing and they take it off and give it to me. That’s the person who understand “he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.”

In my life, for 15 years, the man I followed very closely and carried his bags was Dr. Gary Smalley. I watched him do this time and time again. He loved buying people groceries. It was his passion in life. When we would land from a plane in whatever city we were in... He took about a hundred pills a day. He had a very special milk that he liked to drink to take them. It was lactose free, almond, goat, elephant skin... And I’d have to find a grocery store that had this special milk. He only bought a half gallon of it so he could have a glass that night to take his pills and a glass the next morning. He didn’t even drink the whole thing.

I’ll never forget the number of times we would walk to the front of the store with his half gallon of milk and he would see someone with all their groceries out on the conveyor belt. He would ask the person “Hey, do you mind. We’ve been traveling all day. I haven’t had a lot of time to do something nice for someone. Can I please pay for your groceries?” I didn’t share this story a lot here in Branson because all of you started looking for Gary at the grocery store. You would find a way to get in front of him. But think about this. He wasn’t in the 20 items or less aisle. He would find the line... He could have done the self-checkout and we could have been on our way, but he found the line where someone had groceries and he would ask if he could pay for them.

It was fun being around him because people would give him the most awkward looks. People would resist it. People would think *This guy has a box truck out in the parking lot. He’s going to invite me to it and I’ll be gone.* They would start to have all these weird moments.

My favorite story was in California one time. Gary asked this lady if he could buy her groceries. I’m just behind him, watching the whole thing. They argued for a little bit because she doesn’t want him to buy the groceries. But then she starts crying. She said, “No one has ever done this for me before. Why do you want to do this?”

He said, "I have to do it at least once a day." I don't know where he got that. But he was like "Will you please let me do this?"

The lady is crying and emotional. She gets her groceries and hugs him and they're having a great moment. He kind of gets a little uncomfortable, kind of pushing her away. She leaves. Now I've been watching this whole thing. I tapped Gary on the shoulder and said, "I'll pay for your milk. It's the least I can do."

You don't have to go get in line where someone has \$150.00 worth of groceries, but maybe you get in the 10 items or less line. And even there, don't judge people who have 15 items. Isn't that what you do? We, as followers of Jesus, are some of the most judgmental people on the planet. "I'm not helping that person, they have five items more than this line allows."

I'll never forget getting Gary's milk and walking out of the store. As we were walking out... We've just had an hour activity to get a half gallon of milk. As we were walking out, this lady turns... You know the big cross walks and the double doors on both sides at a grocery store. As we were walking out, she spins around in this totally maxed out Mercedes, rolls down the window and says, "Thank you very much!"

I'm like, "Gary, maybe we should find someone more in need the next time."

He goes, "It doesn't matter. It's not my responsibility." That has stuck with me to this day.

I don't go buying people groceries every day, but there are moments and opportunities throughout our day that we can be a blessing. Let me give you an example. I almost guarantee everyone in here has a story like this. You've been in line at the grocery store and the person in front of you is watching the items scanned and watching the total and seeing it add up. They know the number in their head that they can afford. This breaks my heart every time. They start handing items off the conveyor belt back, realizing they don't have the money to cover it. What an opportunity right there. What a great opportunity to say, "Put that in my basket. Let me take care of those items." Then they just end up moving the little bar. But here's the problem. You and I grew up hearing a very bad line. We were trained the opposite of what we're talking about today.

Andy Stanley loves using this illustration and I think it's a perfect illustration. Do you remember as a kid going up to your teacher in class and saying, "Would it be alright if I...?" The teacher answers, "No, Ted, you can't because if I let you do it, I've got to let everyone do it." What was in your head when you heard that? *No, you don't. This could be our little secret.* Or you go up to the coach and say, "Coach, would it be okay..." Coach says, "Listen, if I let you do this, I have to let every player on the team do it." Here's my answer to that. Wrong!

Even with our kids. "Wait, you just let sissy do it, why can't I do it?" "Well because I love her more... right now." We should get over this "it's not fair." Life is not fair. But some of us think we have to be fair with our kids. "Listen, I'm doing something awesome for your sister right now. I can't do it for both of you every day. Your day will be next Tuesday. Then I'm going to do something for you and I'm not going to feel like I have to do it for her."

Some of you think that is not fair and that you have to make sure your children feel special at all times. No, I want them to know it's not fair. I can do for one of them without doing for both of them.

Some of you with six, seven, eight kids are going, "This is going to change our lives. We don't have to feed all of our children? The first four can be fed Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday? The last four can do Wednesdays."

But I grew up with this idea. Let me tell you what the "I can't do that for you unless I do it for everyone" does. That creates nothing. You get nothing done. You close your eyes and just say, "I'm never going to meet the need of that person right there."

This "do for one what you can't do for all" has changed the way I pastor. I want to say thank you. That you allow this to be a core value of this church is the reason I'm still here 15 years later. I can't marry everyone. I can't bury everyone. I can't counsel everyone. I can't pray with everyone. I can't have everyone over for dinner. I can't do it all, but I have friends that go to churches and it's not spoken, but this is what it comes out as. "Pastor, we just hired you. You do for all because we don't even want to do for one." Guess what? Those pastors will stay at that church two or three years or if they've got a little more strength, they may make it five years, but they're not going to have longevity if they are looked to as the guy that does everything.

My wife was sharing with me yesterday. Do for one what you can't do for all changed the way she does hospitality. My wife loves creating meals and inviting people over, but as our church has grown, she said "I stopped doing it because I can't have that family over and I think about the other 30 families that I probably should have over." No, do for one what you can't do for all. For some, you're doing nothing because you think you need to do for all. Stop with that mentality. Your first-grade teacher was wrong. The teachers want to kill me right now. Just look at one of your kids tomorrow when they come asking for something and say, "You're my special little student, yes you can do it." Here's what funny about that "If I let you do it, then everybody will want to do it." Not everybody wants to do it. Have you ever thought about that? This is the insanity of the "do for everyone." No, do for one what you can't do for all.

That's what moves me in this movie. Matthew Peyton goes to Walmart and he starts buying blankets for everybody, a couple hundred homeless people. He's giving blankets out to everyone, but in the midst of all that, he does for Sharon and CJ what he can't do for everyone.

I'm just going to submit to you again. What would happen in Stone and Taney Counties... Woodland Hills is averaging each week between 1,800 and 2,000 people. As I look at this crowd today, I'm going to guess we're at about the 1,900 mark, comparing it to last service and everything. Could you imagine what would happen in Stone and Taney Counties if every single person in here did for one what they can't do for all? If everyone did for one what they can't do for all, we would move the needle in this community on adoption, on fostering, on poverty, on homelessness; we could wipe it out. But you don't have to do it alone.

I tell my pastor friends in cities that feel like they have to reach their entire town for Christ... I want to tell them there are other churches there. **Do for one what you can't do for all helps you to celebrate what God is doing in other churches.** I'm not one of these pastors that wants to compete with other churches. Instead, don't compete with them; celebrate with them. God is using them. By the way, we need other churches so that when you start complaining, we have a place to send you. That's how we bless other churches.

Do for one what you can't do for all means we go deep rather than wide. It's how we do missions at Woodland Hills. We don't support 400 missionaries. We don't want to give \$50.00 a month all over the map to missionaries around the world. We've decided that instead of going wide, we will go deep with a few. We will have a partnership with a few. I want to go deep in relationships. I don't need to meet the need of everyone in this town. I don't need to spend time with everyone in this town, but I do need to do for one what I can't do for all. I just challenge you. I think it will change everything about the way you do life and ministry.

Do for one what you can't do for all reminds me to care for others through my life and work. The second great line I want to share with you from the movie Believe... This one jumped out at me, not when I was reading the script, but when I saw the movie. I was like, *Yes that's a lot of us.* Matthew Peyton said this: "I have lived and worked my entire life for myself. I stopped looking at other's needs." Again, he was an employer of a small business in Grundy, Virginia. He was providing jobs and those jobs provided incomes and those incomes took care of families. So, we can begin to think we're doing our part in just being an employer and being a business owner. But do for one what you can't do for all says I maybe can't meet all the needs of my employees, but I can do for one what I can't do for all in this community.

We've been talking about the gleaning laws the last couple of months and I love this because I've been studying wine making. And it's not because I'm growing a vineyard or starting a brewery. Don't get all freaked out on me. I've been studying wine making just so I can understand the Bible better. There are so many great documentaries out there. Wine makers don't like to be called wine makers; they like to be called wine growers.

A wine grower is a mix of an engineer, a scientist, a chemist, a horticulturist; they are brilliant people. I love that at harvest time, depending on the weather, depending on how the season has gone... There are hundreds of variables that go into a great vintage. They have a few days to harvest. I've watched several documentaries on wine growing in Burgundy, France and in Champaign, France.

They get out there and it's four days of craziness, it's four days of business, it's four days of teaching all of the workers going up and down the rows how to handle the grapes, how to cut the grapes off the vine, how to look for rot, how to make sure they don't leave any rotted grape on the bunch. Then they throw it all into the deal and the vintner, the owner of the vineyard, gets up and he explains how it's going to work. He's a passionate guy. If you're going to grow grapes, you have to be passionate about it.

Every time I watch this, I'm reminded of God instructing the Israelites. When you're doing this, when you're harvesting your grapes, in the middle of the hustle and bustle of your life and your work day and especially harvest that can be maybe not even a couple of weeks, but a few days, depending on the rain... And we call this the gleaning laws.

This is the heart of the heavenly Father, we saw this played out in Ruth when Boaz applied this law to care for two widows. It says, in Leviticus 19, **10 And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard...** If you've nurtured these grapes for an entire season, you're careful and you can almost call them all by name. This is how passionate these guys get because it's their livelihood. The Lord is reminding the Israelites that they won't gather every grape because **...you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord your God.** "In the midst of your busyness and in the midst of your work, you will have a mind for those in need and a heart for those in need."

Do for one what you can do for all is a step of obedience that leaves the results to God. This has set me free. Billy Dixon, the writer of the Believe film, the director of this movie, has become a friend. I've been texting him through the weekend. He's become a friend because he's a passionate Chicago Cubs fan. I found that out on set and I was like "Billy, this is a big year for you. Your team won the world series and your first movie is out." He's been a cinematographer in Hollywood for over 30 years. "Now, this is the first movie you wrote and directed. But after the Cubs won the World Series and Believe comes out, the Lord can take you home. This has been a big time for you." Billy is watching this morning so, Billy, we say, on behalf of Woodland Hills, "Thank you for this movie."

He said something this week in an interview. When I read it, I said, "Lord, let that be my prayer." He said, "It's not my job to judge someone, but it is my job to stop and help someone."

My heart was already there with "Lord, help me see need, first and foremost. When I do see need, Lord, would you please post a guard at my mouth and in my brain to not let my mind run there with all the reasons why this person is in this condition, why this person isn't doing enough to get out of the position they are in. What are they going to do to get training and get a job and have the willpower to provide for their family? Lord, don't let that be my first place to go. Let it be with helping."

Jesus wanted the disciples to lead with this. He wanted the disciples to be reminded of the poor and lame among them, and in a parable, he said this, **"When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid."**

Again, we looked at this last week. There is no skill required to love easy to love people. Greeting friendly people is easy. Greeting a difficult person is hard. For some of my friends in here, greeting a democrat is hard. For others, greeting a republican is hard. For others of you, greeting a Sanders supporter is painfully hard. You want to judge. Let me tell you, Jesus said loving your fellow republicans, loving your fellow democrats is easy, but try loving someone who doesn't have your beliefs. Try loving someone or greeting someone who is not with you.

Jesus is saying it's easy to invite someone over to your house that will invite you over next week. This is what Jesus says to the disciples. ***13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.***"

Paul said this to the church in Galatia. He said, ***9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*** This is why when you are in need, one of the first questions we ask you is if you are a part of Woodland Hills Family Church. We understand our responsibility for meeting the physical needs of family, of fellow believers, as we love one another. This is a mandate of the scripture. Our Lord has called us to this. We also meet the physical needs of those in our community. It's not one or the other, but it's both.

The first Sunday of every month, every time we take the Lord's Supper, we have a mercy offering. The mercy offering stays here within our church to meet the physical needs of families within our church. You've been generous in this offering. Today, I want to encourage you to be generous as you leave here today. The last mercy offering went to help purchase new tires for a widow's car. We were able to do for her what we can't do for all. Your mercy offering in November also helped a single mom with two young children catch up on car payments so she could find employment. Last month, your generosity also paid the rent for a single mom who was being evicted from her home. Your generosity in meeting the needs of believers here at Woodland Hills paid the rent for a pregnant mom with three small children who is having marriage problems.

We want our kids to pick up on this. When you picked up this Operation Christmas Child box, this wasn't just a light activity. This was teaching our kids to do for one child what you can't do for all. To me, this is one of the most powerful examples today in the church. When you see one child walk in with this box and then they put it in that giant container we have out there, maybe your kids are thinking *Wow, I don't know how much of a difference this one box makes*, but when they saw it with all the other boxes... Then we looked at all the pictures of all of these boxes being loaded into semis and being distributed across the globe, our kids are learning to do for one what they can't do for all.

Today, we have about eight families left and we're hoping that you grab them on your way out. This envelope has an actual family in it. You don't have to provide Christmas for every family in the Ozarks. You can take one family home today, talk to your kids about what it means to do for one family what you can't do or you wish you could do for every family.

I want to encourage you. On December 4, let the second service at Woodland Hills Family Church be the last eight envelopes taken. This one will be back there as well. I encourage you to do for one what you can't do for all. I submit to you that if we all, thousands of people on this campus this weekend, will do for one what we can't do for all, we will make significant change. We will see it in our community. So, as you leave here today, I want to encourage you. I'm going to relentlessly encourage you. I'm going to relentlessly call on you to be generous in those boxes marked mercy offering on your way out.

We're going to close with this song that Matt Maher wrote to close out the movie Believe. It's a Christmas song. For those of you who will be joining us at 4:30 this afternoon, the tickets are out there and I encourage you to be a part as we go through some of the lessons of this movie. I challenge you, as your family talks at lunch, what can we do this season to do for one what we can't do for all?