



Thrones

Leveraging Authority to Help Others Win

1 – The Most Powerful Person in the Room

Pastor Ted Cunningham

We're excited today to start a brand-new series, so we welcome everyone online and everyone at the chapel as we start *Thrones*. We're going to be taking this all the way to Easter. We're going to be talking about what you do when you realize you're the most powerful person in the room. For a lot of us, it may start with parenting. As parents, we become the most powerful person and we feel that it's our job sometimes to overpower the children by becoming the loudest voice. Does anybody know what I'm talking about? What do you do with the mantle of authority or the mantle of leadership that is placed on you? In this series, we want to talk to husbands and parents and bosses and government leaders on how to leverage authority to help others win.

Throughout this, we're going to also be talking about a word that is so popular right now. It's a big word. Everybody loves this word. It's this word *submission*. Say that with me. Wives, turn to your husband and say, "I submit." No, you need scripture before you do that; we get it. We know where you're at.

Today, we are talking about the most powerful person in the room. To kick this series off, I'm going to show you pictures. As they hit the screen, I want you to yell out "Good!" or "Evil!" Let's see the first one. "Evil!" Who is this? "Loki." My favorite scene in Avengers is when he declares "I am a god." And then who shows up? "Thor." Then Thor becomes the most powerful person in the room. It's the best scene in the movie. He picks him up by the ankles and just bashes him back and forth to the floor. That's what we do with false gods. It was a great scene.

Let's keep going. Good or evil? (Captain America) "Good." Yeah, you better have said that. My daughter and I flew into Pensacola Friday night and they were hosting Comic-Con. I'll have to admit I was a little scared. They transformed the airport to welcome all the Comic-Con guests. All the gates had new posters and banners over them. We landed at Star Gate 6. I told Corynn, "Just look down. Don't make eye contact with people as we walk out." There were people dressed like Freddie Kruger...

How about the next one? Good or evil? "Good!" Who is it? King Arthur.

How about the next one? We don't know because there were two. This is The Man in the Iron Mask. I think this is the scene with the good king, but I don't know.

How about the next one? “Evil!” The King of England in Braveheart. I watched it this week because I just had to get fired up for this series.

How about the next one? “Evil!” He misused authority in the movie *The Patriot*. I remember a couple of years ago, I was talking about *The Patriot* and described the movie as being set during The Civil War. The historians in our church came up to me afterwards, shaking. “You made one of the greatest mistakes of your ministry life. That was the Revolutionary War!” But, this guy did not leverage authority.

How about this next one? “Evil!” This is in the movie Gladiator. He did not leverage authority.

How about this next one? (Picture of Donald Trump and Barrack Obama) Hey, shush. I did this just to stir you up today. I shouldn’t have done it before the offering was completely passed, I know. Only say amen if you agree with this. Our nation is deeply divided over the issue of leadership and authority.

Today, we’re going to start off as we talk about leveraging authority to help others win. We’re going to talk specifically about government and government leaders and how to respect the king. We are divided, but we’ve also become disrespectful of authority.

This next one... (Picture of police officers) We have taken a couple of cases and painted an entire group of government leaders. We’ve become disrespectful towards those in authority.

How many of you remember when this person was in charge? (Picture of a teacher) Do you remember? What she said or he said, it was what happened. How many of you were spanked at school when you were growing up? How many of you worked hard to keep your home life and school life separate? I did. I tried to never let the two meet because I knew that if the teacher spanked me, then my dad was going to spank me. My parents always sided with the teacher. And all God’s people said... Amen. Not today. If you don’t like the answers you’re getting, if you think this is not a great environment, you’ll rip your kid out of this class and put him somewhere else because we’re great at creating environments for our children to succeed, rather than teaching them to succeed in environments they can’t control.

But, we can’t neglect what is most current. Last week was the women’s march. You’re like, “Oh no he didn’t.” Yeah, because I believe every man in here needs to be paying very close attention to this right here. A newsletter came across my desk this week and when I read it, I thought it was so spot on. It was by a guy named Partridge. Here’s what he said about the women’s march. I want every man in here... When we teach on marriage in this church, we will be teaching from a complementarian point of view that we believe God has given the authority of leadership in the home to the husband. So, I want every man in here to please hear this.

“Men, we cannot ignore last weekend’s women’s march. It was a complex moment fueled by historical wounds, ungodly political agendas, and broken desires. But, at the root, it was a reaction to the absence of godly men. A reaction to generations of fathers who never loved, husbands who never cherished, and brothers who never valued. It was wives, sisters, daughters, aunts, and grandmothers screaming the songs of oppression, of belittlement, and of confusion.”

Men, the women of our world are hurting for the truth. Their protests are also pleas to us for more love, for more value, and for more leadership. Men, it's time to recognize the reservoir of wisdom that sits within our women. It's time to see the value Christ placed upon our counterpart. And it's time to grow up, know up, and show up to the roles God has placed before us. Remember, when men become boys, women become men. And when women become men, our ladies carry our weight at the cost of their femininity.” – Dale Partridge

I watched the protests and I said, “Yes!” I speak a lot on prolonged adolescence. I’m challenging young men to grow up. Parents react to this. Parents are telling me I’m too harsh. No, it’s time to begin looking at the young men in our lives and saying get off the video games, get off the porn, and start taking on the responsibility of being a godly young man.

One of the reasons this is becoming even more fueled in me is because soon my daughter is going to marry and I’ve got to wonder who the man is that she is going to marry. For some of you, the authority is going to be placed on your shoulders on the day of your wedding. You may not feel much like a leader now, but, guys, when you get married, you are a leader, you have authority. And your wife is going to be looking to you for leadership. Don’t throw that away. Don’t squander that. Be a man. Go out and get a job, work hard, bring every dollar you make home to your wife. And all the ladies said... Amen.

You may say you don’t feel much like a leader until you have a baby. And they let you out of the hospital with her. They let you out of the hospital with them and you’re like, “I’m not prepared for this.” A lot of you showed up at Woodland Hills Family Church because you didn’t feel prepared or equipped to take on the authority or the mantle of leadership that comes with parenting. You say, “I don’t have a clue what I’m doing. Would you please help me?” That’s why we take baby dedication seriously here. We have baby dedication classes. We partner with parents here to help you leverage that authority so that your children can win.

And then some of you, in a message years ago, got fired up and said, “I’ll serve. I’ll volunteer.” And you found yourself in a Critter Street class with a bunch of little humans. You’re like, “I didn’t realize that when I walked into the Critter Street room at that very moment, for an hour and a half or an hour and forty-five minutes, I, for just that length of time, would be the most powerful person in the room.”

Some of you, at work, you just wanted more money. You were making good money, but you knew there were next steps to take. A promotion was offered to you and you took it and you found yourself in the boss’ seat. You’re sitting there going, “I’m not ready. This mantle of leadership placed on me, I didn’t realize how hard it is to lead people. I didn’t realize all the agendas that were going to be coming at me. I didn’t realize all the bickering. I don’t want it.”

Years ago, when I was being fired from a church... If you’re brand-new to Woodland Hills, it’s only been once, maybe twice, but only really once. It was about sixteen years ago. My brother’s job was in jeopardy. He was working on a construction site in Chicago. He’s very skilled at what he does and they kept wanting him to become the foreman. He didn’t want the job of foreman. It was kind of like “Andy, you’ve been here long enough; you’re taking the job of foreman.”

He was like, "I don't want to be foreman. I don't want to run all these guys. You've got to be kidding me."

My mom said it was a strange period of time in her life. She had one son almost fired because he wanted to be leader and one son almost fired because he didn't want to be a leader.

This may be you. You're like, "It just came on out of nowhere and I don't know... What do I do with authority? What do I do with power when I have it?"

Just some introductory thoughts before we jump into 1 Peter 2. If you have your Bibles, turn to 1 Peter 2, where we're going to spend this week, next week, and the week after that. Here are some first thoughts if you have the mantle of leadership on you right now.

We fear not being liked. You can't be a leader too long before you realize even when you lead well, people hate it. Even when you're leading, your kids come against you. We talked about this a couple of weeks ago. We want to be loving parents, not tolerant parents. We want to make sure we instruct our kids and discipline our kids and correct our kids, not let the kids run the house. And all the parents said... Amen. It's not my job to be the BFF. But, we fear being not liked, so we withhold ourselves from leadership because we don't want to lose a friend or we don't want them to not like us.

We feel overwhelmed. I pick up the pieces of overwhelmed leaders all the time. I get the calls and I find out they are so overwhelmed. I had one friend that was pastoring a church. He started it at 600 and a few years later, they were at 7,000. That growth, that amount of energy put into leadership wrecked him. He didn't handle it. He got overwhelmed and he started making stupid decisions. A lot of times, a leader will sabotage their lives, intentionally or unintentionally, so they can get out from feeling overwhelmed. But, we don't get to run away from the mantle of leadership that's been laid on our shoulders.

We shy away from confrontation. We know something needs to be said. You can ask the staff around here. I say it all the time. We withhold confrontation for months around here and it's never served us well. When we know something needs to be confronted head on, we don't want to do it because we want to be liked and we already feel overwhelmed and if we confront this, then that is going to consume our week, it's going to keep us from sleeping, it's going to exhaust us. But let me tell you that leaders confront. They confront in the home. They confront in the workplace. They confront in the church. They confront in the government. Leadership is confrontation.

We take the place of a bad leader. Some of you have taken a leadership position from a bad leader. You are the successor to a predecessor that did not serve well, did not lead well, did not leverage authority to help others, but leveraged authority to help themselves gain even more power. I think that's what we see in those movies like Braveheart and Gladiator. Those are people wanting power and wanting authority so they can expand their lands and grow their titles and that's not what it's about. That's not what the kingdom of heaven is about.

We have seen bad models. Some of you shy away from it because you've never seen a good model. All you've seen are bad models and you don't want it.

We have never been taught. There are some in here that have never been taught. You weren't planning on leadership and it hit you and now it's on you, it's resting on your shoulders. Let me tell you it's time to get educated. It's time to start reading. It's time to start getting around other leaders. It's time to start asking good questions. It's finding out how you make it happen and how you can be a good leader. If all you've ever experienced are bad models, find good models.

We wait for someone to tell us to lead. What you'll discover when you're the most powerful person in the room is you're finding yourself leading whether you like it or not. Whether or not some tells you, "Hey, you're the leader; why don't you run with this?" What do you do when you're the most powerful person in the room?

It's a powerful question that Pastor Andy Stanley asked church leaders years ago. When I heard it the first time, I took it deep into my soul and I said, "Lord, do something in me with this." What do you do when it dawns on you that you're the most powerful person in the room? Your answer to that question will determine the character and the legacy of your leadership. Is your leadership for you to expand your lands and to give yourself more titles, give yourself more money, or are you really taking the authority that has been placed on you and entrusted to you? Are you leveraging it to help others win?

Here's where we're going. In 1 Peter 2: 13, you're going to see this as we talk about leveraging authority as husbands to help our wives win. We are going to have a whole message and we're going to spend time talking about how to help your wife win every argument. I can't wait for that. We're going to talk to parents specifically how to leverage your authority as a parent to help your child win.

We're going to talk to bosses. I'm not doing this message because I don't feel equipped. Honestly, I feel I'm an okay pastor, but not a great organizational leader. I struggle with organizational leadership. And the more we grow and the more responsibility there is. And we're always talking about growing and I'm just looking at people sometimes and going, "Why do you want more people; we've got enough. This is plenty of hassle, I mean plenty of people right here. We don't need anymore." I really struggle on this, so we are going to do a whole message on how to leverage your authority as a boss to help your employees win.

The whole time we are talking about this, we are also talking about submission. And this is that word. How do we submit to our 45th President of the United States of America? How do we submit to his cabinet? How do we submit to pastors and church leaders? How do we submit to parents? Here's what I want you take deep into your heart to start this whole thing off... And you're going to see it every time submission is discussed in the Bible.

It starts off in 1 Peter 2. ***13 For the Lord's sake...*** Submission to human authority is an issue between you and the Lord, not between you and them. It doesn't say for your boss' sake... No, it says for the Lords sake. Ladies, it doesn't say for your husband's sake... If you have teenage kids, they need to be in here the third week of February as we talk to parents on how to leverage their authority to help children

win because we want to talk to young people about how to honor parents well. If you have adult children that you're struggling with, they need to be here for that message. If you've never invited them to church, make that the Sunday you invite them and act like you had no idea what was coming. That's what we're going to do. It will just be our little secret. We'll keep it between us and on the internet.

We're going to talk about this because, young person, submitting to the authority of your parents isn't for your parent's sake; it's for the Lord's sake. If you say, "I'm a leader in my school. I'm a leader with other Christian students..." We have all sorts of ministries around here to students and some of you are leaders to other students. Listen, you should be leading well and one of the best ways you learn to lead is knowing how to submit. And you need to be demonstrating to your peers that you know how to submit to the authority of your parents. Not for your parent's sake. Your submitting to church leaders, not for your pastor's sake, but for the Lord's sake.

...submit all human authority... "Ted, I will submit to authority that I think is good, but I will not submit to authority that I think is evil." Let us pick the two. I want to give you the context of 1 Peter 2. Peter is writing to Christians during a time when Nero is on the throne. I can't go into everything about Nero, but you just need to know this. At that time, under Nero's leadership, Christians were being impaled on sticks and burned alive. They were being thrown to the lions. This was a cruel, cruel leader.

Peter is saying, ***For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority whether the king as head of state, 14 or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right.*** In a second, we'll define what the role of authority is for government leaders. ***15 It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you.*** Here's the important thing to understand. If you have a Bible where you're taking notes, circle the word *silence*, draw a line out to the margin and write muzzle because that's the word.

Raise your hand if you've ever muzzled a dog. We had a dog that had severe emotional trauma at some point early in his life and it scarred him. And we got him as a puppy. He was about five weeks old when we got him. We wondered what could have happened to him unless we were that bad of dog parents that he turned out this way. He attacked everyone. Anybody that would come to the door he would latch onto their heel.

We hired a psychologist when he was about two. This is a true story. We hired this person. I told Amy we could never let anybody know about it, but that was 14 years ago, so I feel good about that that I can tell you now and not feel judged. She told us, "When I come to the door, don't restrain your dog."

Amy said, "Oh no, ma'am, I have to restrain Max." He weighed about 11 pounds. He was a terrier mix. He had one tooth that stuck outside his mouth.

She said, "I have to see his initial reaction to people so I can adjust the training and the therapy plan." She came to the door and Max latched onto her heel and would not let go. She tells us, as the ones who are paying her money to tell us stuff... She tells us, "I've never seen a dog this bad." Well, you feel about that big as a dog owner.

She said, "I don't know what to tell you, but you're going to have to use a muzzle." So, we did. We got a little muzzle on an 11-pound dog. The front of his snout stuck out of that muzzle so you saw that tooth. Every person that came by, Max would go nuts and growl.

Here's the important thing to know about a muzzle. The person wants to attack. They want to bite. They want to bark, but they can't. The idea here is your honorable life, the way you submit to authority, the way you submit to those over you actually puts a muzzle on those people that want to accuse you. They have ammunition to attack us, but they can't. They have some things they want to say, but they can't. He says your honorable lives should silence, it should muzzle those ignorant people that make foolish accusations against you.

16 For you are free, yet you are God's slaves... In other words, for the Lord's sake. You're submitting unto the Lord. Every action to earthly leadership, for the follower of Jesus, is submission unto the Lord. ***...so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. 17 Respect everyone, and love your Christian brothers and sisters. Fear God, and respect the king.***

When you submit to human authority, you honor God. You recognize the Lord's leading in your life. Submitting to human authority says a lot about the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the life of a believer.

It also tells us about the government's authority. What's the authority the government has? When you hear everything from creating jobs to immigration reform, we often forget that there are really only two tasks of government leaders. **The government's authority was established to promote good and punish evil.** Promote good and punish evil.

Now, we can disagree about the strategies and that's the next point as we talk about the muzzles, as we talk about silencing those who accuse us. **We can disagree with human authority without being rude, disrespectful, and combative.** And all God's people said... Amen. We can disagree with the City of Branson. We can disagree with the city manager. We can disagree with the governor. We can disagree with the state senator, with a congressman, with the president of the united states. We can disagree with all of them, but we can share our opinion in a way that is respectful. It's this word we used to have years ago and we've lost it. It's *civility*. Civility defined is **formal politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech**. That's why you see in the Congress and Senate, they say, "I will yield the remainder of my time to the gentleman..."

Until this week you when saw two senators on the floor of the US Senate that didn't know they were being taped to film... I think every Politian should know they are being taped and filmed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. But, they had the spotlight and they were dropping F bombs on each other. We've come a long way from the gentlemen from New York. Civility, being able to share... Just so you know, I love posting stuff on Facebook because as a pastor, it helps with application. Your comments are never going to change the interpretation of scripture, but your comments help with the application in a big way.

But, when you're rude, when you're disrespectful towards other comments on the page, the blessing of it being my personal site is I can hit the delete button. And all God's people said... Amen. Name calling... delete. Disrespecting a person... delete. Bashing someone... delete. We just don't need it. With many

of you in here, we have very different opinions on a lot of different things, but we're able to carry ourselves in a way that we're not rude with each other. One day, you'll see the light a come around to my way of thinking, but until then, I will be kind.

This is what we saw on inauguration day. **Gushing over one leader while bashing another says more about you than it does the leader.** Some of you are going, "Okay, he's talking about gushing over President Obama and bashing Trump." Yes, and I'm talking about gushing over Donald J. Trump while bashing President Obama. This is so important. I don't know if you've picked up on it, but whether you watch CNN, MSNBC, or Fox News, all the news outlets have this one thing in common right now. They are all shocked at where we are as a nation right now. They are all saying it and I love listening to it. They are all saying things like "I didn't think that was possible" and then it happens. "He's running for president?" "He's never going to run for president." "Oh, he ran for president." "He's never going to get out of the primary." "Oh, okay, he beat all 16 of them and now he's the republican candidate." "There is no way he will beat Hillary Clinton and become the 45th President of the United States." Then he beats Hillary Clinton and becomes the 45th President of the United States. The whole time, we're going "I didn't think it was possible."

It gets me thinking, and I'm not sharing prophecy lest I die. But, I think there is something much bigger going on in our nation than President Donald J. Trump. So, I'm going to ask you this question and you can give me an answer and we can disagree. We can always edit the tapes later. Do you believe the heart of the king is in the hand of God? If you do, God is in control.

I told Amy this morning... I got kind of fired up. I got kind of excited about something because all I hear the news media say is "Well, that will never happen. You can't say that stuff on Twitter and get elected president." And then you do. I told Amy that for first time in my adult life, I have hope. And I truly believe, I'm not just saying this as a preacher. I truly believe we can overturn Roe V Wade. There are some in here right now saying that will never happen. We've been saying that will never happen a lot. I told Amy, "Do you know what is going to break out in our nation..." I am praying fervently that abortion becomes illegal, praying fervently that we will protect all human life, born and unborn, and I believe it can happen. You think we are going through some stuff now? You wait until abortion becomes illegal. Christian, brace yourself. Don't be rude. Don't be disrespectful. Don't yell and scream. Don't throw things. Don't be divided. Come together, understanding the heart of the king is in the hand of God.

Watch what Peter does. He goes now into the relationship between slave and master. **18 You who are slaves must submit to your masters with all respect. Do what they tell you—not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are cruel. 19 For God is pleased with you when you do what you know is right and patiently endure unfair treatment. 20 Of course...** He takes it one step further so we're clear on what he's talking about when it comes to respecting authority and submitting to authority. **...you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, God is pleased with you.** Watch this throughout all scripture when it comes to submission.

In a few weeks, on Valentine's weekend, we'll talk to husbands about leveraging authority to help their wives win. Ephesians 5: 22 says, **Wives, submit yourselves to your own husband as you do to the Lord.**

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Ephesians 5: 25

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— 3 “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Then watch Verse 4, talking to dads about leveraging authority as a parent. **4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children...** Your authority is not to wear your children out. We have to understand our job is to ***instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*** - Ephesians 6 We have a job to do as parents in leveraging authority to help our children win.

How about church leaders? It will be awkward at times for me to teach this, but we have to cover it in the scripture. Hebrews 13: 17, speaking of church leaders, says, ***Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority...*** Let's say that together again and promise to memorize it before next time we meet. ***...because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.***

The model we have of this in scripture is Jesus. One of the most poignant pictures of Jesus' authority and him shedding his authority for the purpose of others in the room is when we read this account in John 13. **1 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.**

2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Just imagine the emotion in the room. **3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God...** The son of God, what did he do with that power and that authority? **4 ...so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.**

I love the words Pastor Andy Stanley uses to describe this passage. He says, *“Jesus, in the moment of the greatest recognition of his power, leverages it for the good of the people in the room. At the pinnacle of his power, he sheds his robe, the symbol of his authority as a rabbi, and humbles himself. The disciples are stunned by his humility. They want to put him back on the pedestal. To them, he has no business shedding his authority.*

But Jesus has a message for them, “You will preach the Gospel and heal diseases, everyone will want to be close to you, because and you were the ones closest to Me. You are going to be extraordinarily influential, but don't forget this night.” The disciples understood. That's why their words reverberate through history. They refused to leverage power for their own sake, but they leveraged it for the other people in the room.

How can I leverage my power for the sake and benefit of the other people in the room? I'm not greater than my Master, and I'm not greater than my Savior. If His response was to lay it aside to benefit others, then that's what I'll do with my leadership."

To close out our time today, I want to share a personal illustration with you that's really effecting our church greatly. It's something I need to ask a favor of everyone in here. We live in a tension in the church between ministering to those who have been here – they are the church, they're part of our church family – and reaching new people. Some churches do one well while neglecting the other. We've decided we never want to be a church that focuses on one group. If you focus on the group that's been here, your church dwindles and you eventually die. If you focus on the new people group, you can become five miles wide and a half an inch deep. We are comfortable and okay with living in the tension between the two.

But if I can speak for a moment to people who have called Woodland Hills their home for a long time, we need you to leverage your authority. When we first started the church and when a church is young, a lot of people are speaking into it and trying to influence where it's going and preferences start to rule and agendas start to take over and it gets awkward.

At Music City Center, I'll never forget sitting down on the front row and a guy walked up to me. He was mad and he wanted some things changed. We were going to fix some things. And he led out in the conversation with "And don't forget I tithe to this church."

Can I tell you something? In twenty years of ministry, nothing good ever comes after that statement is made. After that statement is made, it's a mess. I can promise you most anything you're going to say after that statement is not of the Lord. I'm going to say this and some of you came at me this week and some of you thought I was directing it straight towards you. As a pastor, I'm asking you to hear this. Before you bring it to me, I want you to seek the Lord on it first. Before you attack me, seek the Lord on it, asking what's in your heart on this. I want you and the Lord to do business before you and I do business.

The amount of time you attend a church and the amount of money you have given, does not earn you special rights and privileges in the church. We are not a club. This is the body of Christ. The longer you're here, the more you should be serving and leading, not demanding. The longer you're here, the more you should be rolling up your sleeves and getting after it, not coming with a mountain of expectations that you want to see changed for you. If you lead out a conversation with "I've attended here for this long and I've given this much," I can promise you what follows that is going to be something that leverages your authority for you, rather than leveraging your authority for someone else.

So, what we've done and I'm working really hard here not to tell a joke because I know you're sitting in it and I want to bail you out, but I won't. I did in the first service. They were lucky, but you, not so much. Last week, we had 717 people in this room with about 750 seats total available. We're pretty close to that today if not more. We have an issue we have to deal with. We need 100 plus of you to move from this location over to the chapel to be a part of our chapel environment. It's the same message. They will have a live band kicking up there next week.

For you who say, "I've been here a while, I love what goes on in the castle," we've created these five seats. We're shining a light on you five sitting right there. You needed those seats. Don't feel bad that the light is shining on you right now. But there are five gray seats and they simply say, "We've saved a seat for you." We're going to leave those there to remind all of us, as we are a family together, of the family of five that's not yet a part of our church, the family of five that's falling apart in the Branson, Stone County, Taney County community that if we're not careful, we will forget about them and we will stop reaching out to them because we have our preferences and we want to leverage our authority to make ourselves better and do more for us. But we can never forget about those five empty seats.

We have seats right here. This is for the single in our community that is struggling. She's struggling to find a husband. He's struggling to find a wife. He's just divorced. She's just divorced. I'm talking about four different people. He's widowed. She recently lost her husband. These are singles, that if we are not careful, demanding our rights and expecting things, we're going to forget about that person. Over here, we have two seats. "We've saved a seat for you." That's a couple in our town that needs to hear the Good News of Jesus so they don't run out on each other and their kids. That's a marriage that is struggling. That's a couple that moving to our town from Iowa City, Iowa. That's a couple that's retiring here and they're going to get jobs at Silver Dollar City. They don't know anybody here, but they visited here on vacation and they love it and they think all we do all day long is go to shows and eat funnel cakes. That's what we do; we're on the go-carts and we're at shows and we're a party town, but now they're working here. If we're not careful, we're going to forget about them.

So, here's what we're asking you to do. We need 100 of you to free up seats for those who are not yet here. What a lot of churches do is they come up with gimmicks and tricks and try to manipulate, but we've kind of decided we don't really want to do that. What we'd like to do is just ask you to submit to the authority of this church.

I have to be honest with you. We were planning on doing this, but Alex Himaya gave me this next part at 8:20 this morning. He said, "Ted, get cards and ask people to sign them at the end of the service, those who will show up at the chapel next Sunday. They'll park in fast pass, they'll show up at the chapel. Ask them for their name and their email and then send them a thank you. Thank them for serving and for giving and for leveraging their authority for those who aren't even in the room yet. Thank them for that, follow up with them." He said, "If you need 100 people, be grateful when 25 fill out the cards because as leaders, we're very optimistic."

In the first service, 115 people signed the cards. I'm going to say to them... I know some of them go home and watch the service. Thank you for leveraging your authority, your power for those who are not yet in the room. I'd like to ask you to do the same; 100, maybe 150 of you... This is why this is important. We can go to a third service, we've talked about doing some things where the speaker is over there, piped in here... There are a lot of things we can do and we may have to do, but right now, there are 175 seats empty in the chapel for both services. That's 350 seats we want to leverage, we want to use. It's an environment that's been created. It's a wonderful environment. There will be live worship and I'll be life size over there, which is kind of freaky if you ask me my opinion, but it works. If you say, "Ted, I will do it," stop by on your way out at the Welcome Center. There are pink 3 x 5 cards. Just give us your name and your email and say, "We'll do it. We want to make the move to the chapel."

I was watching just now. There are some introverts going, "Oh, no! You've ruined this whole experience." We're coming at you. We're going to hug.

Think about this. Last week, there were twelve people in the second service in the chapel. That's over 175 seats that are available over there. We just want to make the most of the resources that God has given us. If the Lord is prompting you in that, I want to encourage to do that. First of all, as a pastor, I want to say thank you for submitting to the authority of this church and making our job a joy and not a burden.

Father, it's in the name of Jesus that we pray. I asked for this series for me. I feel this series is going to do more for me than anyone. I can't wait to sit under the teaching of our teaching team as they teach and instruct on this topic because I often feel incapable as a leader, uninformed as a leader, ill prepared as a leader. I'm grateful for a church that has offered so much grace over the years. There have been so many leadership blunders in my life and mistakes in my life that I have had to repent of.

I have not always leveraged authority well and I want to; it's a desire. I pray that desire for every parent in here, for every husband in here, for every teacher in here, for every principal in here, for every superintendent in here, every assistant superintendent, for every councilman and councilwoman, for all that are in here that they would know, over the next couple of months, that we're getting serious about leveraging authority to help others win. We want others to win in our nation and in our community and in our church and in the home. Give us wisdom as we seek to do that as a church family.

It's in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen