



**Kingdom of Heaven**  
**3 – The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl**  
Pastor Ted Cunningham

Today we're looking at two very short parables packed with meaning about the value of the kingdom of heaven. And we are going to look at the parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl. Now, I want to ask. Have you ever put on a pair of jeans or a coat after summer and reached in the pocket and found money? Raise your hand if you have found money. Is there any greater joy in the world than finding money? I stop whatever I'm doing to announce to my family that I found money. I will come up to strangers throughout the day to go, "I started my day by finding money." I have a friend that told me some time ago that he opened a drawer and found \$1,000.00 that he forgot he had. I said, "How rich do you have to be to forget you have \$1,000.00 sitting in a drawer?"

Let's just be honest for a second. This is like six or seven bucks. That's the first observation. The second observation is it's my money. I didn't find new money. Now if I reached in your pocket and found money, that would bring me even greater joy. I'm not that pastor reaching in people's pockets, trying to get the offering.

But when you find something, you want to tell people about it, you want to share it. Today, we're looking at a parable where one stumbles across this treasure and the other is looking for something of great value, and as we see all throughout scripture, there are people who were actively seeking out Jesus. I think about Nicodemus in John 3. At night, he went to find Jesus. But then when you think about Paul, who in the scripture in Acts 9 says he was breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples when he was knocked down.

Today, in this room and over at the chapel and online there are people who are seeking. There are people who are searching. Some are seeking Christ actively – they want to know more about what the church is all about, what it means to be a part of the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God. And there are others who are seeking, but they are not necessarily seeking Christ.

I want to talk to those of you who are seeking and searching for something today. Some of you are seeking answers to your questions, and you want to know if there is someone here that can meet with you and answer some of these questions. There are others here that are just seeking comfort for pain. We meet a lot of people who find their way into the church who have been through a traumatic event in their life. Maybe they are grieving, or they've just been through a divorce and they are in a lot of pain and they haven't been able to find any help. They've looked online, they've looked in the neighborhood, they've looked in the community. They know a friend or family member that maybe goes to Woodland

Hills or to another church that they may have been visiting and that kind of started them on their journey of seeking.

There are others who are here seeking healing for brokenness. These are the stories that I love, like Marriage 911. A marriage is in crisis, and they call the church. Within 24 hours, R. G., Karen, or another Marriage 911 mentor calls them. They stepped into the church and started a conversation with the church thinking they were going to get help for their marriage and in the meantime, they found the Lord. They didn't realize that their greatest need was salvation. We hear these stories all the time of someone at Panera Bread meeting with a husband or a wife and leading them to Christ right there at the table. There are others that are just seeking guidance for the future.

In this first parable that we look at today... It's a one sentence parable talking about the value of the kingdom. I want to talk to believers today and ask you the question: Are you still treasuring Christ in the kingdom? Do you realize what you have found and what you are a part of? And do you have joy as you think about your relationship with the Lord and your work in the kingdom? But I am also thinking about the one who is just walking through a field right now looking for something else and they stumble upon this great treasure.

So, let's look at Matthew 3: 44. **44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field.** So, you have to remember in that day, they didn't have banks that governments would bailout. I was going to leave that little joke out today, but... But they didn't have banks to put their prized possessions in. they would take it and bury it to protect it. So, this guy is walking through a field, and he finds this treasure. In that day, whoever owned the field or owned the land, owned everything on it and in it. **When a man found it, he hid it again...** And this is the key and where we want to start today. **...and then in his joy went and sold all he had...** He was willing to sell everything because he knew how great a value he had found. **...and bought that field.**

Today, I want us to really explore and really talk about and let our hearts be stirred and let our affections be stirred with Christ and his kingdom, that we would treasure Christ and his kingdom. And then ask the hard questions. What if we're no longer treasuring Christ as we once did? As we talk about the kingdom of heaven today, we need to understand it is **both a present reality and a future expectation.** It is in our midst and it has not yet come. It is now and later. It is in our midst right now, followers of Jesus, and it will come again with Christ in the Second Coming, as it is a physical, literal kingdom.

Now what's important is the disciples at this time, knowing what they were going to be going through, they were looking for an immediate, powerful, kingdom of David. They wanted something that could be established and be a protection for them. Jesus says this, as he explains the kingdom more. **20 Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come...** Both Adam and Shay explained that clearly that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are synonymous. **Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, 21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."**

We want to start today with understanding that some of us... If you go back to when you became a follower of Jesus and the joy that you had, willing to give up everything to follow Christ. You didn't see

that as a trade you had to do begrudgingly. You did it willing and with joy in your heart. You were willing to let go of everything of the world because of the treasure that you had found in Christ and his kingdom. But after we've been believers for some time, after we've walked with the Lord for a few years, this joy can fade if we can be very honest. I think it's one of the reasons why so many of us were inspired recently by this movie, *Jesus Revolution*. Who has seen *Jesus Revolution*? I can't encourage you enough as your pastor to go see this movie. If you want your heart stirred with the joy of the treasure of Christ and his kingdom, go see this movie.

This movie is the story of Greg Laurie, a pastor in California. It's the story of the hippies moving down from San Francisco into Southern California and finding Christ. A revival breaks out among the hippies. How many of you grew up with the hippies? How many of you were a hippy? The joy that you will get in this movie... There were several times in this movie if you were in the theater in Branson meadows, with me when I was watching it, I had fists in the air like three times. What had happened was Lonny was coming down from San Francisco and Pastor Chuck's daughter meets him and then introduces him to her dad who is a pastor of a small congregation, an established congregation. The hippies start coming into the church. On this side of the church, you had all of these hippies not wearing shoes, and on this other side, you had the suits. Again, nothing wrong with suits, nothing wrong with shoes.

You had two things going on and pastor Chuck... You could see he was really wrestling with it because in the first scene... Pastor Chuck is played by Kelsey Grammer. He is speaking clearly online now. I know that God did a work in his heart in this movie. He was stirred. When you start mentioning this movie and then you start mentioning the name of Jesus, the joy comes to his face.

So, Pastor Chuck is a pastor trying to figure out what to do. When he's watching the hippy movement on television, he has the same thoughts some of you had. He's looking at it going, "They need a bath. They need a job." So, that's where his heart was. Then you get to watch this whole movie with Pastor Chuck's heart softening. To me, it's one of my favorite scenes of the movie. He's just sitting on a stool with his Bible in the front of the church. He looks out at the hippies and says, "Go tell your friends they are welcome here. Go bring them in. This door back here will always be open for them. I want you to bring your friends so they can hear about Jesus like you heard about Jesus and how he has changed your life. The joy you have in Christ, I want you to go tell your friends and bring them in."

And then he turned to the other side of the church. This was when my hand went up the first time. He said, "I need to tell all of you that door works both ways." I about jumped out of my chair. I've been fighting this for 25 years. YES! Two old guys got up and walked out the back. Another old guy gets up. It's a very tense moment. He looks... You remember singing the song, "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart." Some of you need to tell your face. It's so far down in your soul that it hasn't come out in a long time.

This old guy gets up and he walks across the aisle, and he sits between two people who don't look like him, who don't act like him, but they are brothers in Christ Jesus. The whole movie takes a turn for me. I'm pumping my fists. May Woodland Hills be a place... You go invite your friends to this place. The ones smoking the dope and eating the little gummies, that got drunk last night. What joy there would be in this church if the homeless said that this is a place where we can feel comfortable. If the homeless

started showing up here in Branson and we just brought them in... We're not moving past three services, so we have to figure something out. But bring them in. Multiple times in that movie, I'm going, "Yes! Lord!!" I think the reason the Jesus Revolution movie stirred so many of us and brought so much joy to us is because of the times that we live in, and all the bad news we feed ourselves with.

If you've lost that joy and treasuring Christ and his kingdom... And I think that's just something we have to start with today to be honest with. "Ted, I've lost the joy." "Ted, I've not experienced the joy of giving it all up. Selling it all to follow Jesus." To know that there is great treasure. I want my affection and my joy to be stirred today. I want that for you. I want that for our church. I want that for our community. I think that's happening around our country. People are tired of the last few years of all of the anger and all of the hatred. They're like, "Let followers of Jesus be the ones to lead out being stirred with joy for Christ and his kingdom and be reminded of the treasure we have in him.

I have one more passion in life... This is really getting me worked up. Nothing wears me out more than when I hear pastors or Christians say there is a difference between joy and happiness. Please stop saying that. I think we have drawn that line... It's not biblical. The Bible does not do such hair splitting between joy and happiness. But what we've said is joy is an inner peace. Maybe you had a Sunday school teacher when you were growing up that would get up and go, "Alright, today we are going to talk about joy." Will you be our primary example because... I think what we've done is joy is something you have on the inside. No, joy is something that should be showing on the outside. It should ooze out of you. So, what we say is, "No, that's happiness. Happiness is based on your outward circumstances. Pastor John Piper has been saying this for years and no one gets it, and no one goes with him, but a man who has studied the Bible. *"The Bible is discriminant in it's use of the language. Happiness and joy, contentment and satisfaction."* – John Piper That you and I, today, would be stirred in our happiness, joy, contentment and satisfaction in Christ and his kingdom. That we would find that joy again.

For those who have never placed faith in Jesus, that today you would hear about the treasure, and you would say, "I want that. And I will go sell everything I have to have it."

I want to talk about joy killers for just a little bit. What sucks the life out of our joy? What drains us of joy as followers of Christ? The first one I think we can say the scripture uses a very clear example with the church at Ephesus is just **drift**. I don't think anybody wakes up... If you've followed Christ for any number of years, you don't wake up and go, "Today, I'm just not going to be as serious about it." No one makes that decision. Drift is not a decision.

Joy is something we choose, something we go after. In Revelations 2, Jesus said, **2 I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.** Jesus is telling them, "You're doing good things. You're working hard. And that's good and that's to be commended. So, it starts with a commendation. But it goes on. **3 You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. 4 Yet I hold this against you...** You've done so much good stuff for the church, for the kingdom, but **...You have forsaken the love you had at first.** Some of you in here can identify with that. My encouragement to you today is never allow your work in the kingdom to drain your joy for the kingdom.

We hear it all the time at Woodland Hills. People coming from other churches where they were hurt, or they were burned out. I talk to a lot of pastors that find their way here. Some retire here and they're like, "Listen, I know you're going to be wanting us to serve. I know you're going to be wanting us to plug in a be a part of this local body, but we just need to sit for a while. Is it okay with you?" It's like they are asking permission. Is it okay that we don't jump in, roll up our sleeves, and get busy? We are tired." I used to be like, "We will give you two weeks to catch your breath." You can ask. I think about some of the retired people around here that when I find out what you did or... I'm like, "Your it. let's go. Let's run." But I know what you're saying. You're saying, "I've done so much, I've worked so much, I've put years in. Ted, can I just have a moment to just love my Savior? Can I just worship with this church? I want my affections for Christ stirred and I've been hit on and beat on and I'm a little bit tired. I'm not saying I'm not going to plug in or I'm not going to serve, but I want to fall in love again with my Savior."

Some of you are in that drift right now. You've been in drive and today you need your joy for the Savior rekindled. You need that happiness, contentment, and delight brought back into your life. You need to find the treasure again. You need to find the treasure. Not be saved again. That's not what I'm saying. You know what I'm saying. You need to be reminded of the treasure you have in Christ and the kingdom.

Here's another joy killer that we all can relate to – **Outrage** You know one of my passions in life is helping couples enjoy life together. I get to do it almost every weekend. I've come up with a new one in the last year and I've been telling churches and events this. Another one of my passions is to help America find it's sense of humor again. Ya'll, we lost it a couple of years ago. We don't know how to laugh at ourselves. We don't know how to cut loose and have fun because we are mad all the time. Unresolved anger is like drinking poison expecting the other person to get sick. You never bury it dead; you always bury it alive. And every day, we have this buried anger that we wake up, turn on the news to find out what we should be mad about right now. It used to be I'm going to be mad about this thing for a week, but it seems like that cycles down to every 24 hours. There something new I need to be mad about. ***A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.*** –Proverbs 17: 22

Some of you have no joy in the treasure of Christ and his kingdom because you have a crushed spirit, and it is drying up your bones. I've seen the physical affects of the outrage and the anger that people carry around. It starts to hit them physically at some point. We need to get back to understand... This is not just a Christmas verse, this is a year around verse. Remember when the angel declared to the shepherds, ***I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.*** – Luke 2: 10.

When you hear about the treasure of Christ and his kingdom, and the gospel is clearly presented to you, if it doesn't sound like good news... I heard one pastor say this: "If the gospel doesn't sound like good news, maybe you haven't heard the original version." You've heard man's version who tacked other stuff onto it, who put the list onto it. You haven't heard about Jesus and what he has done for you. We want to make sure at this church that we always teach the original version. I just want to remind everyone. Good news that causes great joy. If we declare the good news today and it doesn't stir great joy in you, let's explain it again because maybe you didn't get the original version. I want to remind believers in here today.

**We are good news people living in a bad news world.** Don't take the bait. Don't keep clicking. Be around people who understand the good news.

I was listening to a podcast a couple of weeks ago on Christian journalism. It was an intriguing podcast. It said, "One of the major Christian publications listed their top 20 stories for the year. It was pretty much just bad news, bad news, bad news. People started asking them, "Why don't you ever report on anything good, like the good stuff God's doing in the church.?" I loved their answer. He said, "Because nobody reads it. Nobody clicks on that stuff."

Do you know what they just did right there? They put it back in our court. They put it back on us. You're the ones that are clicking on this. You love the story of failure and this church going down and the church being in decline and the pastor had this problem and the pastor did this... You love those stories, and you click on them. You can't get enough of them. They call it failure porn. And we are addicted to it. We love to hear the bad news. You understand that journalism is supposed to be about accountability and trust and confronting and truth. Truth and justice and accountability have been replaced by clicks. What will people hit on? I want to remind us not to take the bait. It has drained your soul of joy. You have forgotten the treasure that is in Christ Jesus and his kingdom. We have to guard ourselves against it.

Another one I know has drained some of you. It has drained me, and it may be in your marriage and in your family, community, country. It fits kind of with outrage. It's **conflict**. Conflict has drained you. Paul addresses young Timothy, and he says, "Listen, if you want to be faithful as the Lord's servant, there's something you really have to be on guard with." This is one of the most convicting text I've been sitting in for months now. This is a message I need, and I know it's a message that many of you need as we look back on it.

2 Timothy 2: 23-26 - **23 Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments...** Do you know what he's saying there? Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments. I felt I needed to interpret that for all of us. Do you know what the commentaries say that he is saying there? Do you know what he's saying there? Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments. **...because you know they produce quarrels.** The word for *quarrels* is hand to hand combat. We've had plenty of it the last couple of years, haven't we? Hand to hand to combat over stupid and foolish arguments. In our church, we use this at Starting Point. It's just a simple outline, but hopefully it makes sense that in our essential beliefs, what we believe about God, Jesus, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, heaven, hell, these are our essentials. In our essential we have unity. In our non-essentials, we have liberty. A non-essential is tattoos. Don't ever make tattoos an essential issue. Some of you like them, some of you have them, some of you don't. It's just not a conversation we are going to have.

How about Yoga? We're putting that in the non-essential category. Wine. Non-essential category. We are not going to elevate all of these to essentials. You will find people all the time wanting to engage you in non-essential arguments and debates. I get asked all the time, "What do you think about yoga pants?" I don't even want to talk to you about it right now. This is such an awkward conversation, but if you must know my opinion, I don't feel comfortable wearing them. But it's a non-essential. That's my opinion. And in non-essentials, we have liberty. But here's the key, the third part.

In all of our beliefs, we show love. So, what Paul is telling Timothy is People are going to want to drag you into foolish and stupid arguments. I feel like as a pastor, this is all I've done in the last three years – engaging in foolish and stupid arguments. Those moments up here where you see me exasperated, it's just exhausting.

**24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome...** Listen, when it comes to being quarrelsome, I'm one of the world's best. And I beat every argument I ever have with you around 2:00 am, when I'm laying in my bed thinking about what we discussed earlier in the day, and I didn't have all my points succinct. But they are clear at 2:00. I'm like, *Aww, I wish I would have said that. I would have won.* What would I have won? A quarrel? A foolish and stupid argument. Some of you in here, over the last couple of years, you've wanted to drag me into them. "Can I just not engage?" "Well, then you're soft." "No. I just think this is quarrelsome. I don't need the quarrel. It has nothing to do with treasuring Jesus in the kingdom. And you've made the mistake of linking this thing you're quarrelsome about to Jesus and the kingdom."

Let's not be quarrelsome, **...but must be kind to everyone...** Why, Jesus followers, do we have to be reminded of this? What does it mean to be kind to everyone? Well, if you study it, it means be kind to everyone – your friends, your family, even your enemies, the people that don't look like you, that don't vote like you, that don't talk like you, that don't dress like you, that wear shoes, or they don't wear shoes. **...able to teach, not resentful. 25 Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth...** In other words, Hey, Ted, why don't you let God do what God does and you back off. God opposes the proud. There's another military term. God opposes the proud. He stands against us but gives grace to the humble. Maybe if I don't engage in this foolish and stupid argument, God can do a work in this person's life because right now, I'm just standing in the way. **26 and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.**

This is the one point I've been worried about all week. I've asked multiple people. There are some of you in here right now that think, If I follow this, if I'm kind to everyone and I don't engage in foolish and stupid arguments, people are going to think I'm soft. That's not at all what Paul is instructing Timothy with, to be soft. You can take your stand against the devil's schemes while avoiding foolish and stupid arguments.

I just want to encourage the whole church and sit with this for just a second. Avoiding stupid arguments and being kind to everyone does not mean you are woke. It means you are the Lord's servant. I'm telling you we've got to get back to not being outraged over everything, not fighting over everything. Last weekend, I did an event. It's one of my favorite events to do because it's first responders. It's a marriage retreat for first responders. I've been doing it the last few years. I have come to love this group. I don't know if you know this about first responders, but they have a very dark sense of humor. I love it. I'm told by the coordinators of the event "no holds barred, say whatever you want to say." I'm like, "Are we recording? If we are recording, I have to hold back, but if not, I will engage with these first responders."

At dinner, I thought about this. I'm not supposed to get involved in civilian affairs. What does that mean. A soldier of the Lord... I was sitting down with an Atlanta Homicide Detective. He spends 60 to 80 hours a week investigating the most heinous crimes you can imagine. He said, "Ted, I walk in all the time, and I see a scene and I say to myself, *No one should ever have to look at this. No one should ever have to see this.* I see the worst of the worst. I see how evil humans can be with one another." This really started getting me... He was teaching me. He said, "This is why when I go home, marriage can be so challenging. Because with the things that we are talking about, I'm sitting there in my head going, *No big deal. If you would have seen what I saw today, we wouldn't be talking about this.*"

Those of you who served in the military, you know what first responders are talking about. When you go see scenes of war and you come home, a lot of the stuff we get wrapped up in says to you that's not something I should be getting worked up on. It was one of these moments for me at that meal saying "When I treasure Christ and his kingdom, if I'm constantly stirring my affections for Christ and his kingdom and I'm letting that joy be stirred, I'm looking at a lot of these foolish and stupid arguments, going, *I don't even have a desire to enter into that.*" I don't want to be quarrelsome because this is too important. We have too much going on. We have too much we need to share. I understand the bad news, I know we have to listen to it, and I know we have to learn from it. I get all of that, but I want to be a good news person that has joy in my affections for Christ and his kingdom.

One more joy killer is **comparison**. We see it all the time in the church. I want to remind all of us. We have a role to play. We have gifts, we have service, and God's called you to do something he maybe he hasn't called me to do. He's called you to do something that the person next to you hasn't been called to do. We want to encourage you to run. When you run in what you are called to do, this is going to stir joy in you. Romans 12: 3 ***For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought...*** In other words, have a sane estimate of who you are. ***...but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.***

So, speaking of spiritual gifts, we read this in 1 Corinthians 12. There are different kinds of gifts. If you are a believer in Christ Jesus, you have a spiritual gift, one or more, it's different than the person sitting next to you probably, but the same spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service. So there is something different you are going to do with your different gift, but the same Lord. ***4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in God we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6*** There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. In other words... I want to encourage you with this. Stay in your lane and cheer on the runner in the lane next to you. There is no need to compare what God has called you to do with someone else.

This is where I begin to lose my joy. When I know what God has called me to do, what he wants me to do, and then someone who has a different calling comes to me and says, "You should be excited about what I'm doing, and I need you to join me in my lane, I tell them, "You go back to your lane and run. I'm going to run in my lane and it's the same God working in both of us. You don't need to compare what you're good at or what God's called you to, to someone that is not called to do or not gifted in because you're just going to live with pride. And if I compare what I'm not good at with what someone else is good at, maybe they run ahead of me.

You know I've been saying this for a while. I'm going for the sheet cake. I want the sheet cake and I want the younger guys in this church to run ahead of me. They have more energy. And I want to cheer you on as you're running, knowing what God has called you to do. If I start comparing what I'm not good at with what someone else is good at, I'm just living in false humility, unnecessary defeat. Stay in your lane. Let your affection be stirred. To go back to Revelation 2 for a second, for those who drifted and lost joy, for those who live in outrage and have no joy right now, for those of you who maybe have been through a difficult conflict or you are in one right now and have no joy, you've done the comparison game and have no joy, in Revelation 2, Jesus gives a simple three part outline to those who have lost their first love. It says consider. Consider how far you've fallen. Give that some thought today. Go back to a time when you had great joy for Christ and his kingdom. And then it says repent. Say I have allowed blogs and podcasts to guide my faith and I just want to come back to the simple things where it all started for me. That's the third part. Redo. Consider how far you've fallen, repent, and then redo what you did at first to find the joy you had at first.

We go to the last parable to teach one more thing out of these parables. I learned in seminary the two biggest mistakes we made in studying the Bible. We see too much, or we don't see enough. We were taught don't press for details. And these are simple parables that we don't need to press for too many details. This last detail like joy, like finding the treasure of Christ and his kingdom, is so important for you to understand, especially if this is your first time to Bible study or first time to understanding parables. Matthew 13, **45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.** Different than someone just walking through a field and stumbling into something, now there is an active looking for it. **46 When he found one of great value...** So, both parables are the same on this. Hidden treasure or great value. Sell everything to buy the field so I can have the treasure. **...he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.**

When you read this, you might think *oh, can I buy Christ, or can I buy my way into the kingdom?* The answer is no. Jesus, in this parable, is not teaching that we can buy our way into the kingdom. Why? Here's the good news. Because he already paid the price for you. He already paid the price for your entry into the kingdom.

In Romans 6: 23, we read, **23 For the wages of sin is death...** If you are not a follower of Jesus today and you were to die, heaven would not be your home, but Jesus paid the price for you and I'm hoping today when you understand your sin and that it brings death and you find that Jesus is the one who forgives your sins and brings life, and you are finding that treasure for the very first time, that it stirs a joy in you. I just want to encourage you. Don't let another, older Christian who has lost their joy ever take it from you. Stick with the original version. **...but the gift of God...** It's the gift of God. It's not something that you earn it's something that you are given. **...is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

We used to sing this in the church I grew up in. Jesus paid it all; all to him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain; he washed it white as snow.

In Ephesians 2: 8, we read why It is not something you or I can do to find our way into the kingdom **8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith** All you need to do today is reach out and receive that free gift. **—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.**

Father, we thank you for all that you continue to do in this church. I pray a blessing over the growth of this church that we would leave here today... We do not want to be the one with arms folded, arms crossed, seeking our own way into the kingdom, for there is only one way and that is through Christ Jesus our Lord. He is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through him. I pray a blessing over our church family this week that they would have their affections stirred for Christ and they would find joy in Christ and his kingdom.

I pray for the one who has never placed faith in Jesus that today would be the day of their salvation, that they would step forward, meet someone from our prayer team, and spend time learning about this free gift that we have in Jesus.

That I would be leaving here today with my affections stirred in Christ and his kingdom and the joy that I have and the treasure that I have in him.

We pray all this in the authority of the name of Jesus and everyone agreed and said... Amen.