

## “The 5 Convictions of Those Who Transform the World” // Stephen, Acts 7:54–8:4

**Acts 6** if you have your Bible...

### Introduction

Years ago I heard a *true* story about a man named Larry Walters who lived in Orange County, CA...

**The story goes that one afternoon Larry** went out to the Army-Navy surplus store, bought 42 used Army weather balloons and attached them to a lawn chair he had secured to the top of his fiancée’s house. Then, with **the help of a few of his friends, he climbed into the chair along with** a peanut butter sandwich, **a 6-pack of beer & a fully-loaded BB gun, and he had them untie the rope.**

*His idea was that he would lazily saunter up to the right altitude, at which point he’d use his BB gun to shoot out some of the balloons, which would level him off, then he could enjoy his snacks from a spectacular view, and then, when it was time to come down, he’d take his gun and shoot out a few more of the balloons and gradually descend back down to earth. What could possibly go wrong with that plan?*

**Two and a half hours after they had untied the rope,** the Los Angeles International Airport reported an “Unidentified Flying Object” in the skies above LAX at 16,247 feet. “Lawnchair Larry,” as he came to be known, now 3 miles into the sky and over a hundred miles from his original launch site.

A 737 pilot who got a glimpse of Larry on his way into LAX said, “I’m not sure how to report this. I just passed a guy at 16,000 feet... in a lawn chair. And I think he might have a gun.”

*What Larry hadn’t anticipated was how fast he would ascend. His friends said that when they untied the rope, he did not lazily saunter up into the sky as he expected; it looked like he’d been fired out of a cannon.*

Immediately he’d taken out his BB gun to pop some of the balloons like he’d planned, but his hands were shaking so badly that he dropped the gun. *At that point, all he had was the peanut butter sandwich and the beer, so he broke open the 6-pack and chugged down 4 of the beers, at which point he passed out. From that point on, earth’s atmosphere and the laws of gravity made the rest of the decisions in this fateful journey.*

**Rescue teams weren’t quite sure what to do.** I mean, how could they bring him down without toppling the chair? **Eventually Larry’s makeshift aircraft began to descend on its own, and his journey ended when his aircraft got tangled up in some power lines just east of the LAX airport.** Larry was unconscious when rescue teams found him, but remarkably, he came out of the ordeal otherwise unharmed.

On the ground, **after being revived back to consciousness,** Larry was issued a **\$4000 ticket** by local police for “the obstruction of airport traffic” and just otherwise being a public nuisance. A **local journalist** then asked him three questions:

- *Larry, were you scared?* Larry said, “Yes.”
- *Larry, would you do it again?* To which Larry said, “No.” (And that’s how we know, btw, kids, that he wasn’t from Alameda County. Y’all’d have been like... I ain’t skeered. Let’s go...)”) )

- *Larry, why did you do it?* And Larry said, “I just got tired of always sitting around.”<sup>1</sup>

Now, you say, “Is that story true?” Of course, I read it on the internet. No, for real--I’m sure **some parts of that story have grown** with internet legend, but most everything I just shared with you is verified fact--in the transcript this week I attached a BBC article if you want to check it out.<sup>2</sup> But **I share it because I believe it captures** how many of us feel coming into a week like “Live Sent Week.”

We sense there’s some bigger purpose we ought to be a part of, and we genuinely want to know what it is; we want to make a difference in the world; we want to do something with our lives that matters. But we’re not quite sure what to do. Maybe you’re a college student trying to figure out what career path to take. Or maybe, like me, you’re in your mid 30’s trying to figure out what to do with the 2nd half of your career. But because you can’t figure out what to do, like Larry, you turn **to entertainment or toys or golf** to fill up your time.

**Again, this is LIVE SENT weekend, and I want to talk with you today about discovering the purpose God has for YOU in his global mission.** We’re also in the midst of our 40 Days of Prayer, and one of the things we’re praying for is that during this season God would raise up a new army of people to reach our community and at least 100 who will go out from our church to take the gospel to some of the least reached places on earth.

Today, I want to walk us through the story of the first gospel expansion in history, and I want to show you how God used an ordinary person, much like Larry Walters, much like you, as the tip of his gospel spear.

The man’s name is Stephen, and as I’ll show you in a minute, his story marks THE pivotal point of the book of Acts. It’s a very unique story, and I believe it is given to us as THE example of how God intends to use so-called ordinary people to bring his power to the world.

## (Acts 6)

**Let me give you the context.** Stephen was not an Apostle--a lot of people get that wrong; he was not 1 of the 12; he was just an ordinary guy. And yet, his story marks THE turning point of the book of Acts.

**You see, up until this moment**, as far as we know, the gospel movement had yet to leave Jerusalem, even though Jesus had clearly told the Apostles that he wanted his gospel carried from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

**Now, to be sure--it’s been an exciting ride:** w/ the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost and everyone speaking in tongues and the **3000 spontaneous baptisms in one day** and people **getting struck dead** in the offering and what not. It’s been amazing. Bottom line, though, is that in Acts 6 all the Christians are still in Jerusalem, meeting in small groups, holding hands and singing Kum-ba-yah and discussing Peter’s latest sermon.

**That all changes with the story of Stephen.**

**Stephen’s story, ch 6 vs 1, starts w/ a good, old-fashioned church conflict:** Some of the Hellenistic widows in the early church (‘Hellenistic’ means Greek-culture widows) complained they were being neglected in favor of the Jewish widows. There was a little Jewish privilege going on, and so the Apostles appointed 7 men to

<sup>1</sup> Some of the details of that story may have grown with internet legend, though the essence of Larry’s escapade is pretty soundly documented. <http://web.archive.org/web/20070710212757/http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/07/10/flying.lawn.chair.ap/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-68811305>;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFFVVo9usFY>

deal with this problem, the earliest version of **deacons**, so the Apostles could focus on the more important tasks of vision and word and prayer. Stephen was one of the men appointed.

- What you should hear from all that is Stephen's job, in one sense, was not that important:
  - He was not considered to be one of the **theological leaders** in the early church.
  - He didn't **write any books or get asked to preach any sermons**
- He was just a table waiter; he was the meals-on-wheels of the early church. He served chicken and shrimp to local widows.

And yet, **Acts 6:7** tells us that **he executed that task so well** and his service was so full of the Spirit **that it got the attention** of many of the *unbelieving* people in the community, including many of the Jewish priests, who began to turn in large numbers to Christ.

Well that **got the attention of the Sanhedrin**, the ruling class of Jews, who began to try to discredit Stephen. *"Who is this guy? What does he know?"*

I love vs 10: **"But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which (this ordinary layman, who had never been to seminary) he was speaking."**

**In Acts 7**, they drag Stephen before the Jewish council, where Stephen proceeds to give the longest recorded sermon in Acts...

- He basically gives an overview of Israel's history, accusing the Sanhedrin of turning their religion into an idol. He says, *"You guys are super religious, and you love this Temple, but you don't actually know God."*
- **He then brings** his sermon to a climax by saying, **"You are just like your wicked forefathers. They killed the prophets; you killed the Son of God himself."**

- **I should also mention it is the least seeker-friendly sermon in the NT.**

[54] Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.

[55] But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. [56] And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

[57] But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him.

[58] Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. (Saul, of course, who would one day become the Apostle Paul) [59] And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." [60] And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

**Now, unfortunately**, when Stephen Langton, the 13th century Archbishop of Canterbury, added chapter divisions into our Bibles, he put one here (Up until the 13th century, these books were just one flowing text; they added chapter divisions later to help navigate the text). But I'd argue this is a terrible place for a chptr division, because the 1st few verses of chapter 8 are the **conclusion** to Stephen's story.

**Acts 8:1**, **And there arose on that day** (what day? The day of Stephen's martyrdom) **a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem**, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles... (that's important, underline that) [4] **And those who were scattered went about preaching the word.**

There it is: the first time the gospel leaves the borders of Jerusalem, and I want you to note this: not a single Apostle is involved! That's significant. You see, **let me explain something to you: Acts 1:8 is the key verse of the book of Acts.** It is the book's outline. It's where Jesus tells his disciples, as he's leaving, **"But you will receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth."** That's the plotline of what is going to happen in Acts.

- Luke's repetition of those places in **8:1** signals that Stephen's story marks the **pivotal moment** for when this plotline moves forward.
- AND, let this sink in: In that pivotal transition moment, where the gospel spreads around the world, **NOT A SINGLE APOSTLE IS INVOLVED.**

Stephen is an "ordinary Christian," and he shows you what "ordinary Christians" in the church are supposed to look like, and **what will happen in the world** when they do.<sup>3</sup>

So, if you're taking notes, here's what I want you to write down:

## The 5 Convictions of Those Who Transform the World

They're not deep. They're very simple. But each one of these is *for you*.

### 1. God wants to use ME

- I don't think I can't convey how significant it is that the 1st time the gospel leaves Jerusalem, it's because of the work of an

<sup>3</sup> The book of Acts is often called "Acts of the Apostles." It's not a very good name. (And, btw, when I say that, I'm not insulting Luke the author as if I could better name the book than he could. When he originally wrote the book, it didn't have a title. The name "Acts of the Apostles" wasn't assigned until the 3rd century. But the book of Acts is not really about all the Apostles. I mean, after the Apostles get listed out in the first chapter, we don't hear

**ordinary Christian, not an Apostle. It's significant because it establishes the pattern for how the gospel will advance through Christian history.**

- **Stephen Neill, one of the previous generation's most noted church historians, said in his classic book *The History of Christian Missions*, "The only thing more remarkable than the rapidity of the spread of the gospel in the 1<sup>st</sup> century was its anonymity."<sup>4</sup>**
- **By the end of the 1st century, he says, 3 great church planting centers had been established in the ancient world: Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome.** What they have in common, he says, is we don't have any idea who planted the churches in any one of those places. No Apostle planted any of those churches.
- **Acts 11 records the story of the founding of the church in Antioch.** And all it says is (let me read it to you) vs 19, **"Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled to Antioch... And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number turned to the Lord."** (Acts 11:19–21)
  - THEM. I love that. THEM. Luke doesn't even mention their names. You wanna know why? Because nobody knew who they were. They were nobodies, like Stephen. In a movie, these guys would have been "bystanders #3, 4 and 5" in the credits. "Crowd people."
  - And yet, these ordinary people, these unnamed "THEM," planted a church that would one of the most significant church centers in the world, a church center that would one day send out the Apostle Paul as a missionary.

**Here's my question: What if you are part of this generation's 'THEM'? What if God gave you your skill, your job to put you into**

about most of them ever again. And, we've got several chapters like the ones we're looking at today, about Stephen, who wasn't an Apostle. No, this book is about the acts of the Holy Spirit working through everybody in the church to advance the mission of the gospel.

<sup>4</sup> My paraphrase

places so that, like Stephen and the “THEM” of Acts 11, you could make disciples wherever he takes you? God was sovereign in this persecution. He’s also sovereign in the job and skill he gave you.

In his latter years, **Billy Graham** kept saying he was convinced the next **Great Awakening** would be in the marketplace. He put you into a job, a place, a school, a neighborhood, to make gospel impact there.

**I think of one of our elders**, a noted medical doctor who is sent every year by the University he works for here locally to put on a training in Southeast Asia for Muslim and Buddhist doctors over there. He says, “I open up every class with my testimony of how I came to Jesus and an explanation of how the gospel now shapes my view of medicine.” I asked him, “Is your University ok w/ that? I mean, they’re not exactly ‘Christian.’ If anything, they are on the other team.” He smiled and said, with a twinkle in his eye, “Yeah, I’m really good at what I do, and I’ve been doing it a long time. They can’t stop me.” I think of that great verse, Proverbs 22:29, “Do you see a man skillful in what he does? He will stand before kings.” Yeah, and when you stand there, you can tell them about Jesus.

That is the future of missions. So, here’s the question: What if you stopped thinking of me as the one in ministry that you support and started to see yourselves as the ones in ministry that I support.

**Ephesians 4:11** says that God put pastors in the church to equip the saints for the work of the ministry. That means you do the ministry, I do the equipping.

*The second conviction goes hand in hand with this first one...*

## 2. The Holy Spirit fills ME

**The most distinctive thing Luke points out about Stephen is that he was filled with the Spirit.** It wasn’t his talent or his intelligence or

even his Bible knowledge that created this situation. Stephen simply yielded himself to be used by the Spirit.

**I’ve said this multiple times recently: Success in ministry is not talented people doing great things for God,** it’s ordinary people like Stephen following the leadership of the Holy Spirit as he does great things through them. That’s all the book of Acts is--stories of ordinary people stepping out in obedience as they are led by the Spirit.

Y’all might know I spoke at our student camp this summer. Loved it. Favorite week of the year. My first calling was as a youth pastor and I’m still a youth pastor at heart... **((In fact, let me tell you a little secret: Growing up, my favorite week in church each year was the week the youth pastor spoke. It was the only time the sermon made sense to me. So, when y’all called me as pastor, I just thought, “I’m going to preach like the youth pastor every week.” So every week I just try and talk with the 8th graders. And the more I do, the more y’all are like, “Somebody is finally talking to me on a level I can understand!”))**

Well, A few years ago I did a middle school camp, and the last night of camp I preached on David and Goliath. My final challenge to the students was to obey God in whatever he called them to do when they got home, and if they did, they’d be a champion like David. A few days after I got home, I got this letter in the mail from a middle schooler named Laura Beth. She told me how much my last message that night had impacted her, and she believed the Holy Spirit was leading her to tell the kids in her neighborhood about Jesus, and she asked me to pray for her. I wrote her back immediately and told her I would and that I was so proud of her, and that God’s Spirit would go with her. Well, a few days later, this letter came in the mail...([Laura Beth Letters...](#))

**So, I’ll say it again: Success in ministry is not talented people doing great things for God,** it’s ordinary people like Stephen, and Laura Beth, following the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

What that means is that you have to learn to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Do you know how to do that? Do you know what it's like to be led by the Spirit in where you go and what you say? I'd say that for many of us we have no idea what that means. It's like Leonard Ravenhill used to say: the Holy Spirit could totally depart from the church and a lot of us would have no idea he was even gone.

**Listen to this: The Holy Spirit shows up 59x in the book of Acts. In 36 of those, he is SPEAKING.**

- And I get it, Acts was a unique moment in Christian history. The Apostles were a one of a kind class, and they were writing the Bible. That was unique.
- **But on the other hand**, you can't convince me that the only book we have in the New Testament that shows us what it looks like to walk in the Spirit—the book of Acts—is filled with a bunch of stories of people with whom we have nothing in common.
- John Newton (a Puritan, not some over-the-top Pentecostal) said, "How could it be that the leading of the Spirit, which was so essential to the success of the early church, has become irrelevant in ours?"

**So, honest question:** When was the last time you asked the Spirit what he wants from your life? What opportunities HE wants you to be involved with? What relationships HE wants you to pursue?

- Have you asked the Holy Spirit, high school and college student-- what he wants you to do on your campus? Have you asked him what he wants you to do with your life in the world?
- Have you asked him, retiree, what he wants you to do with your retirement?

*That leads me to...*

3. I'll start with the needs right in front of me

That's where Stephen started. What he did was nothing glorious or grand. He just ministered to the needs of the widows in his community. And there's something instructive there for us, I think. You want to know where to start? Start with the needs God has placed right in front of you!

"Missions," you see, is not something we go on special trips to do. It's simply an extension of what we do right here in the Triangle. We always say, **"There's no transformation by aviation."** IOW, if you're not winning people to Jesus here, why would we spend several thousand dollars to send you over there to not do there what you're not doing here?

Instead, we say, **"The light that shines the farthest also shines the brightest at home."** And until it shines brightly at home, it shouldn't be sent far away. It's just an extension of what we do here. **So, start with the needs in front of you.**

I heard a story from our church recently that I love so much. At our Brier Creek campus, a couple of the volunteers in our women's discipleship ministry reached out to Bethesda Elementary to see if there was anything she could do to help. One was Julie Shroeder, on our kids team. The other was **Renee Hill**. Renee is 73-years-old. Renee heard that 90% or so of that school population, which is right near our BCC, are on free or reduced lunch. So she approaches the principal and says, "How can we help?" The principal said, "Well, you could come sub for some of our classes over lunch so the teachers could get a break." So she did. And she invited other women to do the same.

From there, it just kept building. They started hosting lunches for the staff several times a year. They began coordinating donations for things the school needed. They were given more and more opportunities to serve the teachers and the kids there. The ministry has grown so much that someone reached out to have her to speak at

a leadership conference for all Durham Public Schools about how to better support our local schools. And of course what she tells them is the reason we do any of this stuff starts with Jesus.

That's Acts 6 and 7. She's gotten the attention of the unbelieving community, and she uses that moment to tell them about Jesus. Hopefully this story won't end with them being stoned. But the point is, you **start w/ the needs right in front of you.**

OK, conviction: **4. As Jesus was to me, so I will be to others**

**Vs. 59 may be my favorite part of this whole story, because it gives us a window into Stephen's soul, showing us what Stephen was thinking about at the very moment of his death.**

[59] And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." [60] And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

Question: Where have you **heard these phrases** before?

They sound **almost identical** to what Jesus said when he died:

- "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit."
- And, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

*It seems that in Stephen's dying moments he was thinking about what Jesus had said on the cross, for him—things that Jesus had prayed for Stephen, and now he is saying those very things for others.*

**Get that:** In Stephen's dying moments, he is **attempting to do for others** what he'd seen Jesus do for him.

- **Because, see, that's what it means to follow Jesus:** to look at your life as a sacrifice for others like Jesus sacrificed himself for you.
- **Let me ask you a question: Where would you be without Jesus? Where would you be, had Jesus not come to die for you?** Because he didn't have to do that.
- **Here's one answer:** You'd be at the **exact same place** that millions are without you.
- You see, people have to hear about Jesus to be saved by him. It's like Martin Luther said, "It wouldn't matter if Jesus died 1000x if nobody ever heard about it!" 'Gospel' means 'good news,' but it's only good news for *somebody* if it gets to them in time.<sup>5</sup>

**And see, that demands something of us, Summit Church.** *Have you wrestled with the obligations you owe to the gospel?* **(PIC)** This is a **map depicting** where the gospel is preached around the world, with places of gospel access lit up. And we can praise God for what he's doing in these places. **But what about these places?**

**Like right here--Northern Yemen,** which has a population of nearly 10 million--that's the population of all of NC. Guess how many believers in that whole nation? 20 or 30.

**Are the people here worth any less than the people over here?**

- This region has 2.8 billion with little to no access to the gospel. 2.8 billion. \*And please **don't turn that number into a statistic...**
- **Joseph Stalin (whom I typically don't quote in sermons** said, "The death of one is a tragedy, the death of a million is just a statistic." That's a chilling statement coming from him.
- But think about it in terms of the gospel: Think about someone you love--a parent, a child, a friend. That person is an individual to you, not a state. An individual with individual hurts and needs and

<sup>5</sup> Carl F.H. Henry

fears. I couldn't bear the thought of one of my kids spending eternity apart from God.

- Every person around the world is a person just like each of my kids; each made in the image of God just like one of my kids, each who knows what it's like to feel afraid, or lonely, for whom going to hell will be every bit the tragedy it would be for one of my kids.

That demands something of us, Summit Church. If Jesus sacrificed himself to save us, then we should sacrifice ourselves to save them.

- Let me say something to high school and college students: **Yours is a cause-driven generation. It's one of the best things about your generation.** You go into your adult lives with a desire for justice. You want to extend human rights and end suffering and eradicate poverty and save the turtles from plastic straws, and most of those are good and worthy. **But you understand the worst kind of suffering is eternal, right?** The greatest tragedy is people dying without Christ. John Piper says that believers should give their lives to end all suffering; but most of all eternal suffering.
- **Make no mistake about it: the Bible presents** the fact that so many people in the world don't have access to the gospel as a matter of *justice* for Christians. And that's not me being dramatic. Paul said in **Romans 1:14**, "*I am under obligation* (IOW, this is a matter of justice) *to (get the gospel to those who haven't heard).*" It's not fair," he says, "for me to have received the grace of the gospel and not do everything I can to get it to those who haven't heard it yet." Why did I get to hear the gospel? Was it because I was more worthy than others, I was less of a sinner? No. God gave the gospel to me and my family as a gift of grace, & w/ that gift comes the obligation to get it to those who haven't heard it yet.

**So many Christians feel called to stay...** and I'm not your judge. But could you just answer me this:

- If we're all listening to the Holy Spirit, why would God leave so many of us HERE in a place of so much access when there's so many over there with no access at all?
  - Think, for a minute, if you will, of **all the ways someone here can access the gospel.** You can hear it in podcasts, on radio stations, TV programs, books, magazines; there are churches on every corner--there are over 1000 churches in the Triangle; there are Christians in almost every neighborhood. And there's so much more that we need to do here.
  - But in these "**unreached**" **people groups**, none of that exists.
- So, again: Why would God leave so many of us HERE in a place of so much access when there's so many over there with no access at all?
- **Honestly, is God that bad at math? *Why would he keep so many in a place where there is so much and send so few to places where there's so little?***

It can't be that he's not calling. It has to be we're not listening. And maybe we're not listening because we're afraid the price to get the job done is more than we want to pay. *But Jesus paid it all; all to him he owe; and if he be God and died for me, there's nothing I should not be willing to do for him.*

Which leads to conviction **5. Jesus is worth it**

**Let's return one final time to Acts 7.** As they began to hurl stones at Stephen, he lifts up his eyes and says: **[56] And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."**

- **Scholars point out that Jesus' standing here is odd,** because everywhere else in the NT we see Jesus as the right hand of God we see him... SITTING. It's actually an important theological



symbol: Jesus is seated at the right hand of God showing his work in salvation is done.

- **So why, here, is he standing?**
- Well, it's obvious, isn't it? He's standing to welcome home his son.
- **You see, the world has risen up in this moment against Stephen,** calling him a fool, a traitor, telling him that his life is a waste... and it's almost as if **Jesus can't contain himself. As they rise up to stone him, Jesus stands up at that very moment. Can you imagine? Jesus standing for you?** He stands to say, *"Well done, good and faithful servant. They call you heretic. I call you son. They kill you with stones; I welcome you home."* And the world recedes from Stephen's sight; he can barely feel the stones hitting his body. All he sees is Jesus.

**At some point you are going to have to decide** what success looks like for you in life. Because all of us are going to come to this moment. Yours probably won't be this dramatic, but **all of us are going to pass into eternity.** What's going to be waiting there for you?

I know for me, it's not going to be somebody with a list of my accomplishments. It's not going to be my fans, or my friends, or my critics. It won't be books that praise me or criticize me. It's just gonna be Jesus.

I've told you my mom and dad taught me two phrases when I was young that shaped my life; **2 phrases they drilled into me:** 1. Only one life to live, 'twill soon be past.. ; 2. **Only 2 things in life really last forever:** the Word of God and the souls of people: so make sure your life is built on both of them.

One day earth will recede from my sight, and then I'll see him. **In our Hebrews 11 series** we learned that faith is living today in a way that you know one day you'll be glad you did. There's nothing or no one else worthy of living my life for. No one has ever loved me given his life for me like Jesus. No one has ever been so faithful. Only one has

conquered the grave and only one deserves the title King of Kings and Lord of Lords. For he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. **Jesus is the only one worthy of my life.** For from you are all things, and to you are all things, and you deserve the glory!

**5 convictions** that shape those that change the world, may they be true of us:

- God wants to use me
- The Holy Spirit fills me
- I'll start with the needs right in front of me
- As Jesus was to me, so I will be to others
- Jesus is worth it

**So, my question: How is God calling you to apply this?** For some of you, it may be to go tell somebody about Jesus today, like Laura Beth. Or to get involved, like Renee, in serving our community.

**For some of you, I believe God may be calling you to be a part of these "100" we're praying for to go overseas. Like I said at the beginning, we're praying that God** is calling at least 100 of you to take your life overseas. There's close to 300 Summit members overseas now, we're praying for 100 more. And so, to that end, I have two very special guests with me. They are the first two missionaries that went out after I was at this church. Kurt and Janna Kay Holiday. They've served in S. Africa for 25 years, and have just this year returned home to America. We actually showed a longer video of them earlier this year. So, **Kurt and Janna Kay**, come on out here, if you will. Summit, put your hands together for them.

**INTERVIEW with the HOLIDAYS**

**25 years ago, when you stood on this stage to leave, we both looked a little younger.** Your beard wasn't as long or gray. Janna Kay, you

don't look like you've aged a single day. **\*How did the Lord initially call you from Summit/Homestead Heights?**

**\*How would you advise us (the audience/congregation) to consider God's call?**

**\*What would you say to someone in this audience who is feeling a nudge to become a missionary but has fears or doubts?** ~~OR~~ \*Looking back, what is one thing you wish you knew before becoming a missionary?

**How do you view the future of missions, and what role do you think the next generation has in continuing the work?** ~~OR~~ \*What are your hopes/prayers for those considering the path of missions today?

### Closing:

It is very emotional welcoming Kurt and Janna Kay back, because it does raise the question: "That was one generation. Who is the next one?"

Summit, when you came in today, you got a handout (hold it up). On it you will find a QR code that has four main ways you can get involved:

1. Some of you have never been overseas in a missions capacity. I want you to **consider going on a short-term trip** to visit and encourage our missionaries. Just a week. Think of it like tithing your year. There's a box there on that website where you can indicate your interest in that and they can let you know what's available.

2. The second box is for those of you asking **how you can use your professional experience to advance the gospel like I talked about**

**today.** We're actually going to be hosting a conference here in November to help explore what those possibilities could be. You can check out the details on it there.

3. Some of you need to get involved **servicing the community around you.** Next Saturday every campus will be hosting events to help get you plugged in to serving your neighbors. I'd love for us to have *thousands* of people show up for that. The light that shines the farthest shines the brightest at home. Sign up

*[[ Transition to "stand-and-step" ]]*

But here's the last one ... For some of you, the Lord may be calling you to **put your 'yes' on the table and truly let him put it somewhere on the map.** Look, I'm incredibly grateful for the Holidays and all they saw God do in South Africa. It really is exceedingly, abundantly, more than we can ask or imagine. But they've come home! Who will replace them?

We are praying something incredibly bold—that God would raise up 100 people from the Summit to be sent overseas, joining one of our teams to make disciples and plant churches. Who are the next 100? I have a feeling that some of them are listening to me right now. Who will follow in the Holidays' footsteps, in Stephen's footsteps, in getting the gospel to the unreached places in the world?

And some of you might sense that you might be in that number. Listen, I don't call you; the Holidays don't call you; *GOD* calls you. And here's what we're going to do. If you think you might be in that number—you're not sure, but something is stirring in your heart, I'm going to ask you to come down here and pray about that with

somebody. We do “stand and step” for baptism, salvation, prayer; this weekend I want it to be for those who might be considering long-term missions. You may not be sure, but you are saying, “God, I’m willing.” Middle or high school student, college student, family, single mom, retiree. “I’m not sure, but here I am; send me.”

Come forward and tell this to one of our elders or our prayer team, who will pray over you. Bring your card with you--they’ll have pens down front if you don’t have one. They are getting into position at each campus.

**The rest of you, pray:** “Here am I, send me.” And ask God what he wants you to do like my friend Laura Beth.

