

I'm Saved, So What?
1/10/99

...name is Jim Wilder and he and his wife, Robin, were transferred to California to South Florida earlier this year. I am so grateful that we have them here and a part of Boca Raton Community Church. They have jumped right in and gotten involved serving, sharing, using their gifts, and been a blessing to all of us.

This past week has been a wonderful week. It has been the first week of our conference season and to all of our conference guests we welcome you here today. Last week we had Dr. George Sweeting here with us. Dr. Sweeting has played a great role in my life. He has been a tremendous friend to me and it was a great opportunity for us to be together.

Midweek last week my brother, who I have not had an opportunity to be with since early last Spring, came into town to do some business in Fort Lauderdale so we got an opportunity to have a dinner and a lunch together. It was a very positive experience for us as we were together this past week. In particular, while he was here, he put something in my hand that I just wanted to share with you this morning. It is simply entitled, "Thoughts to Ponder, Some Things to Think About." This is a very good one and I just thought I would transfer it to you on this stormy morning we have had.

Think about it! Can atheists get insurance for acts of God? Have you ever thought about that? How about this one? If they arrested the energizer bunny, would they charge it with battery? I like this one. If FedEx and UPS were to merge, would they call it FedUp? If quitters never win and winners never quit, then who came up with quit while you are ahead? That is a good question. How about this? Do Lipton employees take coffee breaks? That is one to consider. Why do they call them apartments when they are all stuck together? Have you ever thought about that one? If you take time to do so, it might be interesting. Have you ever wondered why you keep pressing the remote control harder even when you know the battery is dead? Isn't that amazing how we do that? Have you ever wondered why there are five syllables in the word monosyllabic? Have you ever wondered why they call it the Department of the Interior when everything they do relates to something outdoors? Have you ever wondered why it is that when a door is open it is ajar but when a jar is open it is not adoor? It doesn't make sense. That doesn't seem to connect. There are a whole lot of these. What color hair do they put on drivers' licenses of bald men? That is a good one isn't it? Well, I thought you might enjoy pondering some of those things with me. Since it is starting to get personal I think I will move on at this point.

The fact of life is there are a lot of things that make us stop and question and wonder isn't there? In my own life I have been pondering some things and I have to tell you they have not been those kinds of questions. They have been questions of much greater consequence and of much greater importance. I have spent some time recently pondering afresh and anew what the nature, the identity, and the character of the church is. I believe that today it is very important that we understand what the biblical priorities of a church

are according to the Word of God and what the identity of the church is according to the word of God. As a result of that, I have realized there really is a crisis in the church in America. The crisis in the church in America is not an image crisis. A lot of people would tell us that the problem with the church is that we have an image crisis but I want you to know that the issues that relate to the church today are not nearly so much image issues as they are identity issues. Who we are and what we do as a church is of the utmost consequence and significance of any gathering and of any group of people who exist in society today. I think Michael Griffiths said it very well when he said, Christians collectively seem to be suffering from a strange amnesia, a high proportion of people who go to church have forgotten what it is all about. Week by week they attend services in a special building and they go through time-honored routines but give little thought to the purpose of what they are doing. The Bible speaks of the church as the Bride of Christ but often she looks more like a ragged Cinderella. It is a very powerful statement. Yet I think it is very true. In fact, I think it is so true that it is crucial for every one of us in this building this morning to understand that we cannot afford to be ignorant or to be indifferent about what the nature of the identity of the church is because who we are and what we do is of such great consequence.

Several years ago, while we were living in Merritt Island, Florida, my son played on a baseball team with a group of Little Leaguers and at the conclusion of that Little League season we had a gathering of all of the families, the brothers, sisters, mom, dads, and all of the players at the home of a very wonderful family. As we were there in that home that afternoon everyone was having a good time. We were preparing a meal, grilling out, the kids were in the pool, kids were playing in the yard, and all of the parents were gathering. The time finally came when all the preparations were complete. They invited us to come and to begin to fill the plates and to enjoy the meal. We had just begun to do that and all of the people were getting together. Several parents were getting their children and beginning to get them in line and plates were being distributed. Suddenly there was a gasp and there was a scream and everyone turned to the pool to find a mother dragging a little child from the bottom of that pool out of the water. There was a man standing on the side who jumped into the water to try to grab her and to lift her out but she was obviously not breathing. She was unconscious. The fear and the uncertainty that gripped everyone in that place were beyond anything I can describe to you. To this day, when I think about it, it is almost slow motion. It just didn't seem they could get her out of the water quickly enough. As she came out of the water there was a deathly silence all around. My wife, Connie, a nurse by background, took that little girl in her arms and began to puff into her mouth and try to bring resuscitation and to try to restore breathing. It seemed like an eternity. I watched as two parents just began to melt. I will never forget looking over my shoulder as I stood there with one hand on that little girl and looking in the face of that mother and realizing that for all practical purposes it was over. Connie would give breaths. Nothing would happen. By moments the body of this little girl was turning bluer. The paramedics had been called and within just minutes of when the paramedics arrived suddenly there was a cough and then a cry. Suddenly we realized there was hope. The paramedics took that little girl away. She spent two days in the hospital and by God's grace she fully recovered.

As God would have it, that family ended up building a home within just yards of our family. Literally from the corners of our backyards we could see each other's house. For the next three to four years I watched as that little girl, Sarah, grew and matured and went on with life. But I have to tell you something. I never saw her the same way. There had been a moment in her life when I realized that Sarah was lost, when I realized that Sarah, as hard as it is to say, was dead. Yet there was that moment when there was a breath that brought life into her and suddenly there was a response and suddenly there was a change! I have to tell you that from the moment that Sarah was saved I never saw her the same way. Our families never connected at that same level again. It was a different level of connectedness and there was a realization for every one who was there that something consequential had happened on that pool deck that day and no one would ever forget it!

I want you to know, ladies and gentleman, as we stand in this place in this moment today and as we talk about the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we live in the midst of a dying and a perishing world. The world around us is hopeless and helpless and people can do nothing for themselves apart from the intervention of faithful believers who will take the life-saving message of Jesus Christ and who will take them from death and bring them to life through the power of the Holy Spirit in the truth of the Word of God. There is no help and there is no hope in this world and that makes who the church is and what the church does of the utmost consequence in the world today.

Over the last few months we spent many weeks studying the Ten Commandments. We have looked at the old covenant. In reality what the Bible is is two covenants – the old covenant and the new covenant. The Bible tells us that the old covenant, the law, was given for a specific purpose and the purpose of that old covenant is to expose our problem, to show us that we have a sin problem and that that problem of sin leads to death. We are separated from God. We are helpless. We are needy. The Bible describes our condition under the law, under sin, as being, in Ephesians, Chapter 2 and verse 1; we were dead in our trespasses and our sins. We are in the position of death and you don't have to do anything to be lost. You don't have to do anything to be condemned; you are already in that condition because of the law and what we have seen in the study of the old covenant is just how deep the sin problem goes in life. Whether you talk about the attitude of murder or whether you talk about the issues of adultery, or stealing, or covetousness, all of those things are reflective of how deep humanities' problem is. But just as the old covenant exposes us the new covenant, the New Testament, of life in Christ identifies us with a new life. Once a person becomes a follower of Jesus Christ, once a person has put their faith and their trust in Jesus Christ, you can never see that person the same way any longer. They have been saved! Being saved has changed the essence of who they are and how they live their life and how they relate to others around them. Just as I would look at little Sarah as she grew and developed and matured, I always saw her differently. So it should be in the church of Jesus Christ that we take on a totally new identity that is called belonging to Jesus Christ.

I want to spend the remainder of the time that I have this morning talking about the revolutionary power of the gospel of Christ and talking about what it means to take on our new identity with Jesus Christ. I want to talk about the evidences and the marks of a

saved life. Basically, as straightforward as it may sound, and almost as belligerent the question may be, I simply want to ask and answer this question this morning, I am Saved, So What? What does it mean? What does it mean to belong to Christ? What does it mean to be a follower? What does it mean to be a part of the community of faith called the church of Jesus Christ? Ladies and gentleman, it is not a sentimental journey. It is an issue of the greatest consequential value in all the world. So let's make the journey together.

Let's begin reading in Matthew, Chapter 28. I think we are all familiar with this passage of scripture, that is those of us who have studied the Bible. For those of us who are new to the study of the Word of God it will be important for you to see and hear this passage of scripture because these are the last words of Jesus. Jesus was about to ascend into heaven and go back to be with the Father but he was giving to his followers and ultimately to his church because his followers, his disciples, were the ones who would go and establish the churches. He was giving the final mission, the final mandate. It is called the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. Here the Bible says in Matthew, Chapter 28, beginning in verse 19, go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always even to the end of the age. Amen.

The Bible says we are to go. We are to go into all the world and we are to go with a specific purpose and that is to make disciples of all nations. When we talk about the identity of the church and when we talk about biblical priorities in the church, we have to begin with this issue of the mission of the church of Jesus Christ. It is to take a message, the message known as the gospel, to all people everywhere and to see them come to a place in their life where they are snatched from the larders of loss and where they are brought into the air of eternal life. That is what it is all about, seeing people saved, seeing people delivered, seeing people changed and transformed, and given a new life, given a new birth as the Bible calls it. If that happens and if that is to happen, then it is important this morning that we understand that all of that begins when a person makes a clear confession.

The first thing that you should do if you are saved is that you should make a clear confession of your faith in Jesus Christ. Just as there was a moment when a little girl could not help herself and then suddenly she began to respond and to express, so there is that sense in which there needs to be a clear, a definitive moment in every person's life where they confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Let me make it very clear. We are not simply about association as a church. We want people to associate with us and we want people to come and to investigate and to see and to hear what the church is about and the message that church preaches. We want people to understand that this isn't some ancient antique book that we hold but that there is not a more relevant guidebook for life than the book that we have. It all begins with the moment a person comes to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Consequently, we can never be happy if all that people have with us is an association. It is our desire, it is our prayer, it is our burden that every person who has a connection with the Boca Raton Community Church would come to a specific moment

and a specific place where they would make a clear confession in faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Salvation begins with a personal confession of Jesus Christ. When I confess, the word confess means to say the same thing as when I confess that I cannot live a life that is good enough to merit the favor of God and when I come to a moment in my life that all that I do is to release my own effort, my own merit and where I confess that my only hope is Jesus Christ, the one and only Savior. The Bible makes this clear. A passage of scripture some of you have memorized but all of us need to see in a fresh and new light this morning is Romans, Chapter 10, verses 9 and 10. Here is the very heartbeat of the confession of faith in Jesus Christ. The Bible says in Romans 10, verse 9, that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. With the heart one believes to righteousness and with the mouth confession is made to salvation. The Bible literally says there is a confession that must be made. That confession is to confess the Lord Jesus Christ. To confess that you have given your life to Christ, that you have surrendered your life to Christ, that you belong to Jesus Christ. So salvation begins with personal confession, when you confess that you are a sinner, that you are lost, that you need to be saved, and then a confession that says Jesus died to save me, Jesus rose that I might live, and today, Jesus, I receive life in you. But that is not all. Not only does it begin with a personal confession but the truth of the matter is ladies and gentlemen, that salvation demands a public confession of Christ.

Jesus said in Matthew, Chapter 10, verse 32 and following, if you are ashamed of me and of my word before men, I will be ashamed of you when I stand before the Father. I want you to hear me very clearly this morning. There is a demand that when you have received Christ into your heart personally, you must be willing to confess him openly.

I think there is a great peril today and that is that we have put such tremendous emphasis on personal faith that somehow we believe that that means private faith. I want you to know that while there is personalization of the gospel not one man not one woman, not one boy or girl will go to heaven unless personally, individually, they receive the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a personalization of the gospel but there is no privatization of the gospel. There is a demand that we speak of the Lord Jesus Christ and let people know that we belong to Him. There is no such thing in the Bible as secret agent Christians. There is a need to confess Christ. For that reason we offer opportunities in our services for people to come forward and to confess their faith in Jesus Christ. There is nothing magic or miraculous about walking an aisle. You don't have to walk an aisle to be saved. But I want to ask you this question - if you are unwilling to walk an aisle in a church where people have prayed for you, where people love you, where people are trusting God to do something in your life, am I to expect if you are not going to do that that you are going to go out and stand up in this rude and resistant world in which we live and tell the world that you belong to Christ? I find that doubtful.

I believe it is important that whether it be in the church, during the invitation time, or whether it be getting with a pastor or a family member, or in some other fashion, it is important that you let someone know you aren't just a secret agent who prayed a prayer in private somewhere and think that is good enough. We are to make a clear confession of our faith and that we belong to Jesus.

Let me tell you something. After that incident with that little girl in the swimming pool we didn't have to tell people around us what had happened. That family told people everywhere they went about what had happened. You see that moment of life change brought them to a place of openness about it. It was an amazing thing to see how that happened. In the same way, when a person receives Christ, when they are saved, they are willing to go public and to say I belong to Christ.

I want to go back again to Matthew 28, where we started. The Bible says "Go into all the world and preach the gospel; make disciples of every nation. Then there is another statement that is there and this relates to the identity of the church. It says "Jesus said, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. If you were saved, then not only do you need to make a public confession but also you need to have a biblical baptism. You need to be willing to follow the Lord Jesus Christ in the waters of baptism because baptism is the identifying mark of the Christian life. Now I know some of you are saying, now wait a minute, let's not make a big deal out of baptism. I agree. Let's not make a big deal out of baptism, let's make a big deal out of things that the Bible makes a big deal out of and the Bible makes a big deal about baptism.

Hear me carefully. Baptism is not a denominational issue. Baptism is not a tradition issue. Baptism is not a personal issue. Baptism is not a stylistic issue. Baptism is a biblical issue. When you confess that you belong to Jesus Christ, then each of us that has done that have entered into a relationship whereby we affirm that this book we hold in our hand becomes the authority source of our lives and everything we do we want to come in compliance with the truth of this book. Consequently, the authority on the issue of something like baptism really is not anywhere or anything less than the Bible itself. If the Bible speaks about it authoritatively and if the Bible speaks about it seriously, then ladies and gentlemen if we are serious about the Bible, we have to take the issue seriously. Jesus said specifically, you are to baptize. Not only did he do that but we find that those who were standing there, who heard that that day, went out and began to do exactly what Jesus told them to do. They went into all the world. The Bible tells us they started in Jerusalem and that there was a day, on the day of Pentecost, in the Book of Acts, Chapter 2, when Peter, one of the followers of Christ one who had on one occasion denied Christ, stood up and confessed Christ openly. When he finished preaching the Bible says in Acts, Chapter 2 and in verse 38, that he looked at them and he said, repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Bible simply says that he told them to repent, to put their faith and trust in Christ, and then to take an active step called baptism.

We find again over in Acts, Chapter 16 that Paul, one of the followers of Christ, who had been an adversary, who had really been, as though it were, the greatest thorn of affliction to the church in the early days, was transformed and came from being dead to being saved. When that happened in his life Paul went out and began to preach. He went into the region of Macedonia. He went to the community of Philippi and when he stood there in that ancient city he began to preach and a woman by the name of Lydia, who was a

wealthy lady and who was a seller of fine fabrics and linens, saw and heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Bible says in verse 14 in Acts, Chapter 16 that the Lord opened her heart to heed the things that were spoken by Paul. When she and her household were baptized they begged them and said, if you have judged us faithful to the Lord, then come to our house and stay. She believed and then she was baptized.

In the same passage of scripture, because they preached again and another young lady who had been a servant girl and made money for a group of fortune tellers came to know Christ and walked away from her old ways. She was saved. She put such an impact in the economy, in the pockets of some that were in that community that they had Paul arrested and thrown into prison. That night when he and Silas, his traveling companion, were in prison they began to sing and praise the Lord. The prison doors rocked and opened. The prison guard ran into the prison assuming that all of the prisoners had escaped. He was ready to take his own life because he knew there was a penalty of death if any prisoner escaped. Paul said, sir, don't harm yourself, we are all here. He thought, my goodness, what kept them here? Paul began to talk to him and shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with him. After he finished talking, in verse 30 of Acts 16, the man said, what must I do to be saved? Paul said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved you and your household. Then the Bible goes on to say in verse 32, and they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house and he took them that same hour of the night and washed their stripes. Immediately, he and all his family were baptized. You see, I am afraid that sometimes we are given the idea that baptism is some step of progress that is made as you come along into maturity in the Christian life but I want you to know that if you will study the biblical pattern you will find that people were baptized after they confessed Christ.

There must be a clear confession and I want to make it absolutely clear that there are two great errors when we talk about baptism. One error is the error that would say you must be baptized to go to heaven and I want to be absolutely clear today that you understand and that you know that I would affirm publicly that I do not believe any baptism by anybody in any place ever takes anyone to heaven. You are not saved by infant baptism. You are not saved by immersion baptism. You are not saved by baptism. You are saved by grace through faith and that alone, it is not of yourselves.

I want you to know that just as much as it would be an error to ever preach that we had to be baptized to be saved there is another error we need to be careful about. That error is this – Baptism is just a symbol so it is not important. Jesus authoritatively said, believe and be baptized. Over and over that was the pattern of scripture. I simply believe it is the heart cry and the heart affirmation of a person who puts faith in Christ that when they trust Him they want to follow Him because Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments.

Ladies and gentlemen, the baptistery that is behind me here, though the curtain is blocking it today, is not simply here for presence. It is here for practice. If you have never followed Christ in the waters of believers' baptism indicating the death of Christ and the death of your old life, the burial with Christ, and the putting away of your old

life, and the resurrection of Christ then, frankly, you need to take that step of obedience in your life. Biblical baptism is important. We baptize down into the water and up out of the water. That is the method of baptism called immersion. We do that because the method tells a message. The message of baptism is that Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again and when a person is baptized what they are saying publicly is that the person I was I am no longer. I am identified with Jesus Christ! A part of the new covenant is taking the identity of that covenant and saying openly that I belong to Christ. There is no such thing as a dry, clean Christianity. There isn't!

Not long ago we were in a theme park with our family. We were getting ready to get on a ride and there was a big sign that said you WILL get wet. You know what? They were right. I got wet, I was cold, and I was soaked. I got wet! It didn't say you MAY get wet, it said you WILL. I am simply saying to you that I just don't want to make any bones about the fact that I believe with all of my heart that the Bible teaches that a person must make a clear confession and that a person should have a biblical baptism. I believe the integrity of our ministry stands on our administration of the ordinances of Christ according to biblical patterns. I am not saying to you that if you have had any other type of baptism or you have not been baptized that there is anything wrong with you or you are standing before God in your faith. Please don't hear that, I don't mean to be communicating that. I am talking as a pastor to a people saying, hey, what is the issue of integrity for our church. The issue is that we must administer it biblically and challenge people to be faithful and to follow Christ obediently.

There is a third thing that needs to happen according to the scripture. That is we are to go and we are to make disciples of all nations. The first step of discipleship is baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit identifying them with Christ, just like a man who is married or a woman who is married wears a wedding ring. It is not the ring that makes the marriage; it is the commitment of the heart. It is not baptism that saves, it is the symbol, but there is a willingness to be identified. Jesus says, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and teach them to observe whatsoever things I have commanded you. Did you think the commandments were only in the Old Testament? There are commandments in the New Testament as well. The commandments relate to us being identified with Jesus Christ. Here the Bible speaks of the commandment to be identified with him and the teaching ministry of the church. I believe there is emphasis here on teaching and on the practice of the church. You go to the Book of Acts, Chapter 2, and you immediately find that the Bible says that those who believed were baptized and then they continued daily in the apostle's doctrine and teaching, breaking bread, and praying. We see the pattern of the first church in Acts, Chapter 2.

What am I trying to say? If you are saved then you need to be connected with a local community. You need to have an identity and you need to have a responsibility in the local community, the local church. Once again, because of the great emphasis that we put in recent days upon the individuality of faith, it seems as though we have totally overlooked the issue of commitment to a local body. Because the reigning definition of salvation is so much focused on the personal relationship with Christ, we seem to have

forgotten that there is any sense of a corporate one. But I want you to know the Bible never talks about a Christian just being alone. The Bible speaks of the Christian as being in body, incorporate. Just as there are no secret agents there are no lone rangers. Don't get the idea you can just be a Christian and that is fine and you stand alone because you have an identity in the body of Christ and you are to be connected with the body of Christ. Obviously, at the point of faith that becomes with the body of Christ, universally, the family of God, you are a part of the family. If you will read the Bible, you will find the emphasis of the Bible was on specific things in specific churches, the church at Philippi, the church at Ephesus, and the church at Thessalonica. You will even find that over there when the angel spoke to the churches in the Book of Revelation that the angel spoke to seven specific churches in seven specific places with seven specific messages. I believe there is an emphasis in the Bible not just on being a part of the worldwide church of God but also there is an emphasis on getting connected to a local community and being a part of that community.

Now, it is no surprise for me to say to you today that our world is driven by consumerism. We are a consumptive society. In some ways consumerism has helped the church. It really has. I think that consumerism has helped the church because many times, in the process of searching for churches today, people have gotten outside of manmade boxes and the result of that has been they have discovered there are bodies of people they can identify with on the fundamental issues of faith and they have learned to appreciate different backgrounds, different traditions, different denominations, and it has been a very positive thing. But I want you to know that I think, on the other hand, consumerism has been an injurious thing. It has been injurious because it simply says, what is in the church for me and me only and so, therefore, I have no loyalty, I have no responsibility, and I simply just pick and choose and do what I want to do.

I want you to know that I do believe that being a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ involves getting connected and committed in a local church, a place where you can be identified, a place where you can be accounted for, a place where you can specifically serve Christ in a specific body to make a difference. There are no perfect bodies and we are not a perfect body. We are in process. We are in growth. We are in discovery. There are many churches that have strengths we don't have and we may have some strengths some other churches do not have. There is no place for pride in that but there is a place for responsibility. Every one of us needs to find our place and to be connected and committed in the body. In the Book of Hebrews the scripture says, let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some but exhorting one another in so much the more as you see the day approaching. I am simply saying that if you are saved, you need to focus on faithfulness to a church.

Let me say on the other side we need to open some connections, folks. If we want people to be connected, then we have got to create some open places for connectiveness to take place. Sometimes people come with some desire or some inkling of need to get connected but they don't find anywhere they can connect. That is one of the reasons we are making transitions as we are next week, transitioning our entire Sunday morning

schedule in order to make the time in which we meet a more convenient time to connect with people we are trying to reach. It is not just so it is more convenient for us. It is about trying to become a host to people who may not be here yet. It is about creating a forum, a place called Community Central, where between two worship services there will be a point of merger where literally we will have, as though it were, a church-wide reception every Sunday morning. Now let me just be honest. It would be a lot easier just not to do that. That is going to be a hassle. But we are not doing it because it is easy, we are doing it because it is important to create a forum where people can come and experience church in a way that maybe they have not experienced it before, a place where they can meet someone on a one-to-one level. It is not synthetic. It is not planned. It is not me saying turn and greet somebody, it is them getting connected because we have a group of people who have a connectivity concept in their minds. It is not about whether it is convenient for us, it is about whether or not it helps people to get connected to the church of Jesus Christ and helps a church begin to be what God wants that church to be. You see, our thinking has gotten all wrong. We keep thinking it is about us. It is not. The church is the corporate body of Christ that is ever to be doing the work of the head and Jesus came in order that he might seek and save those who are lost. That is what the church is to be about. That is where the identity of the church is to be found.

If you were to go home today as a member of this fellowship and you were to stand and look into a mirror and ask yourself one question and that question was this, if everybody in this church were just like me, what kind of church would this church be? If everybody in this church were just like me, what kind of church would this church be? What would that answer be? What would that mirror reflect to you? Would that mirror reflect faithfulness to attend? Would it reflect someone who invites people to come? Would it reflect someone who gives and invests and makes a difference in the ministry through their lives? Would it reflect someone who is a good testimony and a good reflection of the church itself? This is not our church. Boca Raton Community Church does not belong to us; it belongs to Jesus Christ. What I care about passionately as your pastor is that we would be a people who care about our identity, identifying people as followers of Christ, and our identity collectively as we follow him.

I had six points. I have only completed three. Someone has said the mind can only engage what the seat can endure and it probably is good for me to quit.

I never saw Sarah the same because she had been saved. Saved in a literal physical way. Ladies and gentlemen, what I want our church to be is a place where the campus of this church is filled with people who have been through the consequential moment of being snatched from lost to saved and where what we do is focusing on how to help people who are saved become followers of Jesus Christ and to do it openly and to do it willingly and to do it consistently, and to do it with integrity, and to see a community of people that will say to the world, Jesus Christ is Lord because we belong to Him.

Father, this morning we know that we have no identity apart from our Savior. Lord, while we talk about steps of practice and behavior today, what really matters in our lives is that every one of us would be serious about the things you are serious about. Lord, I

don't know the condition of the people in this building. I don't know what denomination they may have come from. I don't know what their background is, what their heritage is. I don't know how long they have been here, whether they have been here just a few days or a long time. Lord, I just want to thank you today for the fact that there is power in the gospel of Jesus Christ and that anyone who believes on the Lord Jesus is changed from death to life. Father, I pray that if there is a man or woman, boy or girl in this building today who has not received Christ that this moment would be that moment of clear confession of Him. I pray that what happened personally in their seat that maybe they would just open their heart right now and say, come into my heart dear Jesus. Lord, I pray you will give some the grace to confess you openly this morning and Lord, that they would not be ashamed and that they would go public and say I want to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Father, I pray for others who need to settle this matter of baptism. Father, we never want to be legalistic about anything but God, we don't to be lax on things you have talked about and that you are serious about because Lord, we know we can't be your church if we don't do what you have told us to do. Give us hearts of obedience. Lord, whether it is a teenager who has trusted Christ and just has never taken that step of public identification or a child who needs to talk with their mom and dad about what does baptism mean and have they received Christ that maybe you would open the door for this to be a point of defining moment of salvation for a child. Lord, maybe even a senior adult who has known you many years but who does not want life to come to a close without having done everything to reflect love and obedience to Christ, let it be this morning, Father. Lord, for people who need commitment and connectedness in a local community I would simply ask that you would lead those here who need to be with us. Lord, I know there are many that need to be in other places and I thank you for that. I pray you will help them to be faithful there. Lord, gather us with those people here who will be faithful and who will seek to make a difference. Lord, I commit these moments to you and trust you with the outcome even now. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Sermon by David McKinley
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